

INTERVIEW: COL. RICHARD BLACK

The U.S. Is Leading the World to Nuclear War

Mike Billington: This is Mike Billington with *Executive Intelligence Review* and the Schiller Institute. I am here today with Col. Richard Black, Sen. Richard Black, who, after serving 31 years in the Marines and in the Army, then served in the Virginia House of Delegates from 1998 to 2006, and in the Virginia Senate from 2012 to 2020. I'll also allow Colonel Black to describe his military service himself.

Colonel Black, welcome! The U.S., UK and NATO surrogate war with Russia taking place in Ukraine, and the economic warfare being carried out directly against Russia, has been accompanied by an information war which is intended to demonize Russia and especially President Vladimir Putin. One repeated theme is that the Russian military is carrying out ruthless campaigns of murder against civilians and destruction of residential areas, often referring to the Russian military operations in Syria, claiming that they had done the same thing in Syria, especially against Aleppo. These are supposedly examples of their war crimes and crimes against humanity.

You have been a leading spokesman internationally, for many years, exposing the lies about what took place in Syria and the war on Syria. So first, let me ask: How and why did Russia get involved in Syria militarily? And how does that contrast with the supposed justification of the U.S. and NATO for their military intervention in Syria?

Col. Richard Black: Well, let me begin, if I could, by telling our listeners that I'm very patriotic: I volunteered to join the Marines and I volunteered to go to Vietnam. I fought in the bloodiest Marine campaign of the entire war. I was a helicopter pilot who flew 269 combat missions. My aircraft was hit by ground fire on four missions. I then fought on the ground with the First Marine Division, and during one of the 70 combat patrols that I made, my radiomen were both killed and I was wounded while we were attacking and trying to rescue a surrounded Marine outpost.



Schiller Institute

Col. (ret.) Richard Black

I'm very pro-American. I actually was a part of NATO and was prepared to die in Germany, to defend against an attack by the Soviet Union.

But Russia is not the Soviet Union at all. People don't understand that, because the media have not made it clear. Russia is not a communist state; the Soviet Union was a communist state.

One of the things that I've seen claimed, that has been particularly irritating to me because of my experience with Syria: I have been in Aleppo City. Aleppo City is the biggest city in Syria, or it was at least before the war began. There was a tremendous battle. Some call it the "Stalingrad of the Syrian war," which is not a bad comparison. It was a terribly bitter battle that went on from 2012 until 2016. In the course of urban combat, any forces that are fighting are forced to destroy buildings. Buildings are blown down on a massive scale. And this happens any time that you have urban combat. I have walked the streets of Aleppo, while combat was still in progress. I have looked across, through a slit in the sandbags, at enemy controlled territory; I've stood on tanks that were blown out, this type of thing.

What I do know and I can tell you about Aleppo, is



UN OCHA/IRIN/Tom Westcott

In the bitter battle for Aleppo, 2012-2016, the urban combat destroyed buildings on a massive scale. Too poor to leave, most surviving Syrians lived in the carcasses of shattered apartment blocks, on streets clogged with bombed out vehicles. October 2012.



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that Russia was extremely reluctant to get involved in combat in Syria. The war began in 2011, when the United States landed Central Intelligence operatives to begin coordinating with Al-Qaeda and other terrorist groups. We had been unwavering supporters of Al-Qaeda since before the war formally began. We are supporters of Al-Qaeda today, where they're bottled up in Idlib province. The CIA supplied them under the secret Operation Timber Sycamore. We gave them all of their anti-tank weapons, all of their anti-air missiles. Al-Qaeda has always been our proxy force on the ground. They, together with ISIS, have carried out the mission of the United States, together with a great number of affiliates that really are kind of interchangeable. You have the Free Syrian Army soldiers move from ISIS to Al-Qaeda to Free Syrian Army, rather fluidly.

We started that war. The United States has a strate-

gic policy of using proxies to engage in war. Our objective was to overthrow the legitimate government of Syria, and in order to do that, we employed proxy soldiers who were the most vile of all terrorists. Something very similar is happening right now in Ukraine.

Going back to Aleppo, [there was the] the Syrian army, together with Hezbollah, which was very effective; there were some troops that were organized by Iran also, but it was pretty much a Syrian show, certainly directed by Syrian generals. They had fought this bitter urban combat, very brutal, very deadly. And they had fought it for four years, before Russia ever joined the battle. After four years, the city of Aleppo had [sustained] enormous destruction. At that point, the Russians, at the invitation of the legitimate government of Syria, entered the war. But unlike many of the media reports, they did not enter the war as a ground force. They had some small ground forces;

they had military police, they had a few artillery units, a few special operations people, and quite a number of advisers and that sort of thing. But they were not a significant ground force.

On the other hand, they were a significant and very effective air force, that supplemented the Syrian Air Force. But it really was just the last year of the war, the battle for Aleppo, just the last year when they entered and their air power was very effective. By this time, the Syrians had pretty well worn down the terrorist forces, and the Russian assistance was able to tip the balance. Aleppo was *the* grand victory of the entire Syrian war.

To blame the Russians for the massive destruction that took place within Aleppo, it's bizarre: Because they were not there; they were not even present when this happened. This is simply another part of the propaganda narrative, which has been very effective for the

West, demonizing Russia, and making claims that have no substance. But people don't remember the history of these things—they're rather complex. So, no: Russia was not in any respect responsible for the massive destruction of the city of Aleppo.

U.S. and Russian War-Fighting Contrasted

Billington: How would you contrast the methods of warfare in Syria followed by Russia, as opposed to the U.S. and allied forces?

Col. Black: Well, first of all, the American involvement. The United States war against Syria is a war of aggression. We put in a highly secretive CIA special activities center. These are kind of the James Bond guys of the Central Intelligence Agency, total Machiavellian; they will do anything, there's no—it's no holds barred with these guys. We sent them in and we started the war in Syria. The war didn't exist until we sent the CIA to coordinate with Al-Qaeda elements. So, we began the war and we were not invited into Syria.

In fact, the United States has seized two significant parts of Syria. One is a very major part, the Euphrates River, which carves off about a third of the northern part of Syria: The United States invaded that portion. We actually put troops on the ground, illegally—against any standard [of] international law of war—it was just a seizure. This was referred to by John Kerry, then Secretary of State, who was frustrated at the tremendous victory by the Syrian Armed Forces against Al-Qaeda and ISIS. And he said, "Well, we probably need to move to Plan B." He didn't announce what Plan B was, but it unfolded over time: Plan B was the American seizure of that northern portion of Syria.

The importance of taking that part of Syria is, that it is the breadbasket for all of the Syrian people. Before the war, Syria actually had a significant wheat surplus and the people were very well fed in Syria. We wanted to take the wheat away, to cause famine among the Syrian people.

The other thing we were able to do, was seize the major part of the oil and natural gas fields, also located in that northern portion beyond the Euphrates River. The idea was that by stealing the oil and then the gas we would be able to shut down the transportation system

and at the same time, during the Syrian winters, we could freeze to death the Syrian civilian population, which in many cases were living in rubble, where these terrorist armies, with mechanized divisions, had attacked and just totally destroyed these cities. We wanted to starve and we wanted to freeze to death the people of Syria. That was Plan B.

We became frustrated at a certain point that somehow these Syrians, these darned Syrians—it's a tiny little country, and why are these people resilient? They're fighting against two-thirds of the entire military and industrial force of the world. How can a nation of 23 million people possibly withstand this for over a decade? We decided we had to take action or we were going to totally lose Syria. And so the U.S. Congress imposed the Caesar sanctions. The Caesar sanctions



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Plan B for the U.S. was the seizing of Syria's oil and natural gas fields, to deny Syrians fuel for electric power, transportation, and heating, causing them to starve and freeze to death. Here, a pumpjack in Syria's Rmelan oil field.

were the most brutal sanctions ever imposed on any nation. During the Second World War, sanctions were not nearly as strict as they were on Syria.

We weren't at war with Syria! And yet we had a naval blockade around the country. We devalued their currency through the SWIFT system for international payments, making it impossible for them to purchase medications. Syrian women would contract breast cancer, just like here in this country. But instead, where in this country breast cancer has become relatively treatable, we cut off the medical supplies so that the women in Syria would die of breast cancer because they could not get the medications, because we slammed their dollars through the SWIFT system.

One of the last things that we did—and the evidence is vague on it—but there was a mysterious explosion in the harbor in Lebanon, a massive explosion of a ship-load of ammonium nitrate fertilizer. It killed hundreds of Lebanese people. It wounded thousands and thousands; destroyed the economy of Lebanon. Most importantly, it destroyed the banking system of Lebanon, which was one of the few lifelines remaining to Syria. I don't think that explosion was accidental. I think it was orchestrated, and I suspect that the Central Intelligence Agency was aware of the nation that carried out that action to destroy Beirut Harbor.

Throughout you see this Machiavellian approach, where we use unlimited force and violence, and at the same time, control the global media, to where we erase all discussions of what's truly happening. So, the man or the woman in the street thinks things are fine, everything is being done for altruistic reasons, but it's not.

U.S. Empire Policy Violates International and Military Law

Billington: Part of your military service was as a JAG [Judge Advocate General] officer, and for a period of time, you were the Army's head of the Criminal Law Division at the Pentagon. In that light, how do you look at the Caesar sanctions from the perspective of international law and military law?

Col. Black: Well, now, I was not the international law expert. I was the criminal law expert. But I would say that making war on a civilian population is a crime of grave significance in the law of war.

One of the things that we did as we allied ourselves with Al-Qaeda, and on and off with ISIS— I mean, we fought ISIS in a very serious way, but at the same time, we often employed them to use against the Syrian government. It's kind of a love-hate. But we have always worked with the terrorists. They were the core.

One of the policies that was followed was that under this extreme version of Islam, this Wahhabism, there was this notion that you possess a woman that you seize with your strong right arm in battle. This goes back to the seventh century. We facilitated the movement of Is-

lamic terrorists from 100 countries, and they came and they joined ISIS, they joined Al-Qaeda, they joined the Free Syrian Army, all of these different ones. And one of the things that they knew when they arrived is that they were lawfully entitled to murder the husbands—I'm not talking about military people, I'm talking about civilians—they could murder the husbands, they could kill them, and then they could possess and own their wives and their children. And they did it in vast numbers.

There was an organized campaign of rape across the nation of Syria. There actually were slave markets that



Syrian Presidency

Somehow, the very resilient Syrian people frustrated two-thirds of the entire world's military and industrial force for over a decade. Here, Syrian President Bashar al-Assad visiting with Syrian Army troops, who rallied behind him and his government to destroy and expel ISIS and Al-Qaeda. Near Damascus, March 19, 2018.

arose in certain of these rebel areas where they actually had price lists of the different women. Interestingly, the highest prices went to the youngest children, because there were a great number of pedophiles who wanted to possess small children, because under the laws that were applied, they were permitted to rape these children repeatedly. They were able to rape the widows of the slain soldiers or the slain civilians, and possess them and buy them and sell them among themselves. This went on.

I'm not saying the CIA created this policy, but they understood it was a widespread policy, and they condoned it. They never criticized it in any way.

This was so bad that I spoke with President Assad about it when I visited a number of battle zones and the capital in 2016. Assad said that at that time, they were

working on legislation in the parliament, to change the law of citizenship. They had always followed the Islamic law, which was that a child's citizenship derives from the father. But as there were so many tens, hundreds of thousands of Syrian women impregnated by these terrorists who were imported into Syria, it was necessary to change the law, so that they would have Syrian citizenship and they wouldn't have to be returned to their ISIS father in Saudi Arabia, or in Tunisia. They could be retained in Syria. When I checked later, that law had passed and was being implemented.



Courtesy of Col. Black
Richard Black meets with Syrian President Bashar al-Assad in Damascus, September 2018.

It just shows the utter cruelty. When we fight these wars, we have no limits on the cruelty and the inhumanity we're prepared to impose on the people, making them suffer, so that somehow that will translate into overthrowing the government, and perhaps taking their oil, taking their resources.

Billington: Clearly, the same policy against Russia today, by the current administration.

Col. Black: Yes. Russia is perhaps more blessed with natural resources than any other nation on Earth. They are a major producer of grain, of oil, of aluminum, of fertilizers, of an immense number of things that tie into the whole global economy. No doubt there are people who look at this and say, "If we could somehow break up Russia itself, there will be fortunes to be made, to where trillionaires will be made by the dozens." There's some attraction to that. Certainly, you've seen some of this taking place already, with foreign interests taking over Ukraine, and taking their vast resources.

We began a drive towards Russia almost immediately after the Soviet Union dissolved in 1991. The Soviet Union dissolved; the Warsaw Pact dissolved. Unfortunately, one of the great tragedies of history is that we failed to dissolve NATO. The sole purpose of NATO was to defend against the Soviet Union. The

Soviet Union no longer existed. NATO went toe-to-toe with the Warsaw Pact. The Warsaw Pact was gone; it no longer existed. There was no purpose in NATO's continuing to exist. However, we retained it; it could not exist unless it had an enemy. Russia was *desperate* to become part of the West.

Shortly after the demise of the Soviet Union, I met with the head of Gazprom, the largest corporation in Russia. He described for me how they were struggling to have their media be as free as it was in the West. They perceived us as being much more free and open than they were. He said to me, "You

know, we've got this problem because we have this uprising in Chechnya, which is part of Russia. The Chechnyan rebels send videos to Russian television and we play them on Russian television, because that's the way freedom of speech works."

And I said, "Are you kidding me? You're publishing enemy propaganda films?" He said, "Yeah. Isn't that the way you do it in the United States?" I said, "No. In the Second World War, we took the head of the Associated Press and we put him in charge of wartime censorship, and it was very strict."

This is just an example of how they were struggling. They went from being an officially atheist country, to where they became the most Christianized major nation in Europe, by far. Not only were the people the most Christianized people in any major country in Europe, but the government itself was very supportive of the Church, of the Christian faith. They altered their Constitution to say that marriage was the union of one man and one woman. They became very restrictive on the practice of abortion. They ended the practice of overseas adoptions, where some people were going to Russia and adopting little boys for immoral purposes. They became a totally different culture.

In any event, the United States has this long-standing strategy, this political-military strategy, of expanding the empire. We did it in the Middle East, where we attempted

to create a massive neocolonial empire. It's become rather frayed. The people don't want it, and it seems to be doomed to extinction sometimes—but it may go on for another 100 years. In any event, we are trying to do something similar, as we roll to the East, right up virtually to the Russian border.

Pumping Arms into Ukraine Only Extends the Slaughter

Billington: The U.S. and UK position on the war in Ukraine, just over these last few weeks, has now become not only supporting the war, but for victory at all costs. This has been declared by Defense Secretary [Lloyd] Austin and others. They are pumping in huge quantities of not only defensive but offensive military weaponry to the Kyiv regime. What do you see as the consequence of this policy?

Col. Black: One thing it will do is ensure that a tremendous number of innocent Ukrainian soldiers will die needlessly. A lot of Russian soldiers will die needlessly. These are kids. You know, kids go off to war. I went off to war as a kid. You think your country, right or wrong, everything they're doing, is fine. It just it breaks my heart, when I look at the faces of young Russian boys, who have been gunned down—in some cases very criminally by Ukrainian forces. Likewise, I see Ukrainian young men, who are being slaughtered on the battlefield.

We don't care! The United States and NATO, we do not care how many Ukrainians die. Not civilians, not women, not children, not soldiers. *We do not care.* It's become a great football game. You know, we've got our team. They've got their team, rah rah. We want to get the biggest score and run it up. And, you know, we don't care how many of our players get crippled on the playing field, as long as we win.

We are shipping fantastic quantities of weapons, and it's caused the stock of Raytheon, which creates missiles, and Northrop Grumman, which creates aircraft



DoD/Chad J. McNeeley

Lloyd J. Austin III, U.S. Secretary of Defense. He supports victory at all costs in the war in Ukraine.

and missiles, to rise. All of the defense industries have become tremendously bloated with tax dollars. I don't think it's ultimately going to change the outcome. I think Russia will prevail. The Ukrainians are in a very awkward strategic position in the East.

Look at the way this unfolded. President Putin made a desperate effort to stop the march towards war back in December of 2021. He went so far as to put specific written proposals on the table with NATO—peace proposals to defuse what was coming

about. At this point, Ukraine was massing troops to attack the Donbas, and so he was trying to head this off. He didn't want war. NATO just blew it off, just dismissed it; never took it seriously, never went into serious negotiations.

At that point Putin, seeing that armed Ukrainians with weapons to kill Russian troops were literally on



USAF/Marco A. Gomez

Since 2014, the U.S. has committed more than \$5.4 billion in total assistance to Ukraine, including security and non-security assistance. Here, a shipment bound for Ukraine is being readied at Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, March 20, 2022.

their borders, decided he had to strike first. You could see this was not some pre-planned attack. This was not like Hitler's attack into Poland, where the standard rule of thumb is that you always have a 3-to-1 advantage when you are the attacker. You have to mass three times as many tanks and artillery and planes and men, as the other side has.

In fact, when Russia went in, they went in with what they had, what they could cobble together on short notice. They were outnumbered by the Ukrainian forces. The Ukrainian forces had about 250,000. The Russians had perhaps 160,000. So, instead of having three times as many, they actually had *fewer* troops than the Ukrainians. But they were forced to attack, to try to preempt the battle that was looming, where the Ukrainians had massed these forces against the Donbas.

The Donbas is adjacent to Russia. It is a portion of Ukraine that did not join with the revolutionary government that conducted the coup in 2014 and overthrew the government of Ukraine. They refused to become a part of the new revolutionary government of Ukraine, and declared their independence. And when Ukraine had massed this enormous army to attack against the Donbas, Russia was forced to go in to preempt that planned attack. You could see Russia very much hoped they could conduct this special operation without causing undue casualties for the Ukrainians, because they think of the Ukrainians, or at least they *did* think of the Ukrainians, as brother Slavs; they wanted to have good relations.

There is a famous picture with a Russian tank, that had been stopped by a gathering of maybe 40 civilians who just walked out in the road and blocked the road and the tank stopped. I can tell you, in Vietnam, if we had had a bunch of people who stood in the way of an American tank, going through, that tank would not have slowed down, in the slightest! It wouldn't honk the horn; it wouldn't have done anything; wouldn't have fired a warning shot. It would have just gone on. And I think that's more typical—I'm not criticizing the Americans. I was there and I was fighting, and I probably would have driven the tank straight through myself.

What I'm saying is that the rules of engagement for the Russians were very, very cautious. They didn't want to create a great deal of hatred and animosity. The Russians did not go in—they did not bomb the electrical system, the media systems, the water systems, the



Russian President Vladimir Putin made specific, written proposals in December 2021 to defuse the march towards war as Ukraine was massing troops to attack the Donbas.

bridges and so forth. They tried to retain the infrastructure of Ukraine in good shape because they wanted it to get back. They just wanted this to be over with and get back to normal. It didn't work. Resistance from the Ukrainians was unexpectedly hard. The Ukrainian soldiers fought with great, great valor, great heroism. But now the game has been upped and it's become much more serious.

It is amazing to see that even though Russia dominates the air, they haven't knocked out the train systems, they haven't knocked out power plants, they haven't knocked out so many things. They've never bombed the buildings in

the center of Kyiv, the capital of Ukraine; they haven't bombed the buildings where the parliament meets. They've been incredibly reserved about these things, hoping against hope that peace could be achieved.

But I don't think Ukraine has anything to do with the decision about peace or war. I think the decision about peace or war is made in Washington, D.C. As long as we want the war to continue, we will fight that war, using Ukrainians as proxies, and we will fight it to the last Ukrainian death.

The Potential of War Directly Between the U.S. and Russia

Billington: How do you project the potential of a war breaking out directly between the United States and Russia? And what would that be like?

Col. Black: Go back to the First World War in 1914, and the assassination of the Archduke of Austria-Hungary. He and his wife were killed. As a result of those two people being killed, you had a domino effect of all of these alliances, and anger, and media hysteria. And before it was over, I think it was 14 million people had been killed. It's always hard to get true numbers, but anyway, it was an enormous number of millions of people who died as a result of that.

We need to recognize the risk of playing these games of chicken. For example, the Turkish media just pub-



CC/Chad Nagle

Part of the Azovstal iron and steel mill in Mariupol, Ukraine. Thousands of Ukrainian and other fighters, and non-combatants, have been holed up in the mill, surrounded by Donbas and Russian military forces.

lished an article saying that at Mariupol, where there was a great siege, the Russians ultimately won. The one area they haven't taken over is this tremendous steel plant. There are a lot of Ukrainian soldiers who are holed up there. It has now come to light that apparently 50 French senior officers are trapped in that steel plant along with the Ukrainians. The French soldiers have been on the ground fighting, directing the battle.

This was kept under wraps, ultra-secret, because of the French Presidential election that just occurred. Had the French people known that there were a large number of French officers trapped and probably going to die in that steel plant, the election would have gone the other way. Marine Le Pen would have won. It was very important for the entire deep state that it not come to light that these French officers were there.

We know that there are NATO officers on the ground in Ukraine as advisors and so forth. My guess is—and this is a guess, I could be wrong—but the flagship of the Russian Black Sea Fleet, the *Moskva*, was sunk as a result of being struck by anti-ship missiles. My guess is that those missiles—I think there's a good chance—were fired by the French. I could be wrong, but those missiles are so ultra-sensitive and so dangerous to our own ships, that I don't think that NATO would trust the missiles to Ukrainians, or to anybody else. I think they have to be maintained under NATO control and operation. I think it was probably NATO forces that actually sunk the *Moskva*.

And you can see we're taking these very reckless

actions, and each time we sort of up the ante—I happen to be a Republican—but we have two Republican U.S. senators who have said, "Well, we might just need to use nuclear weapons against Russia." That is insane. I think it's important that people begin to discuss what a thermonuclear war would mean.

We need to understand. We think, "Oh, we're big, and we're bad, and we have all this stuff." Russia is roughly comparable to the United States in nuclear power. They have hypersonic missiles, that we do not have. They can absolutely evade any timely detection, and they can fire missiles from Russia and reach San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago,

Detroit, Baltimore, Washington, D.C., New York City.

Think now just about Virginia, where I happen to live. Russia has a very large and effective fleet of nuclear submarines that lie off the coast of the United States. They have a great number of nuclear-tipped missiles that can evade any defenses we have. If there were a nuclear war, all of Northern Virginia would be essentially annihilated. There would hardly be any human life remaining in Loudoun County, Prince William County, Fairfax County, Arlington, Alexandria. The Pentagon lies in Arlington County: The Pentagon would simply be a glowing mass of molten sand. There would be no human life there. There would be no human life for many miles around it. Just across the Potomac, the nation's capital, there would be no life remaining in the nation's capital. The Capitol building would disappear forever. All of the monuments, all of these glorious things—nothing would remain.

If you go to the coast of Virginia, you have the Norfolk Naval Shipyard, you have the Port of Norfolk. You have the greatest accumulation of naval power on the face of the Earth. This is where we park all of our aircraft carriers, our nuclear submarines, all of those things. There would be nothing remaining. There would be *nothing remaining* of any of those shipping industries there.

You can carry this on. Talk about New York City. Not only would everybody be killed, but it would probably be impossible for people to inhabit New York City for hundreds of years afterwards. Not only would it cease to



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“Russia has a very large and effective fleet of nuclear submarines that lie off the coast of the U.S., which can evade any defenses we have.” A nuclear war is unwinnable. Here, a Russian Akula class nuclear-powered attack submarine.

be a place of vibrant human life, but maybe for half a millennium it would not recover any sort of civilization.

We need to understand the gravity of what we’re doing. Perhaps if it were a matter of life and death for the United States, what happens in Ukraine would be one thing. Certainly, when the Soviet Union put missiles in Cuba that targeted the United States, that was worth taking the risk, because it was right on our border and it threatened us. It was a battle worth fighting and a risk worth taking. The Russians are in this in exactly the mirror image of that situation, because for them, the life of Russia depends on stopping NATO from advancing further right into Ukraine, right to their borders. They cannot afford *not* to fight this war. They cannot afford not to win this war.

I think that toying with this constant escalation in a war that, really—Ukraine is a place that has *no* significance to Americans, Ukraine is meaningless to Americans; it has no impact on our day-to-day lives. And yet we’re playing this reckless game, toying with this constant escalation in a war that risks the lives of all people in the United States and Western Europe for nothing! Just absolutely for nothing!

Poor Response to Reason from U.S. Flag Officers

Billington: Many flag grade officers certainly understand the consequences you just described in a rather hair-raising way. Why is it that, while there are some Generals speaking out in Italy, in France, in Germany,

warning that we are pursuing a course that could lead to nuclear war, there are no such voices from U.S. flag grade officers—retired, perhaps—saying what you’re saying here today?

Col. Black: There’s been a tremendous deterioration in the quality of flag officers, going back to, well, certainly the 1990s. We had very, very fine flag officers during the time I was on active duty—I left in ’94—just superior quality people. Subsequently, we had President Clinton take over; later, we had Obama. We’ve got Biden now. They apply a very strict political screen to their military officers, so that we now have only “yes men.” These are not people whose principal devotion is to the United States and its people. Their principal devotion is to their careers and their ability to network with other military officers upon retirement. There’s a very strong network that can place military Generals into think tanks, where they promote war, into organizations like Raytheon and Northrop Grumman, and all of these defense operations, where they can get on boards and things like that.

There’s quite a personal price to pay for saying, “Hey, stop! War is not in the interests of the American people!” If we had a better quality of individual, we would have people with the courage who would say, “I don’t care what it costs me personally.” But it is very difficult to get into the senior ranks, if you are an individual guided by principle, and patriotism, and devotion to the people of this nation. That’s just not how it works. At some point, we need a President who will go in and shake the tree, and bring a lot of these people falling down from it, because they’re dangerous. They’re very dangerous to America.

‘A Breath of Ugly Truth’

Billington: Helga Zepp-LaRouche and the Schiller Institute are circulating a petition, “Convoke an International Conference to Establish a New Security and Development Architecture for All Nations.” On April 9 we held a conference on the same theme—that the only way to really stop this descent into hell and into potential nuclear holocaust is for a new Peace of Westphalia. In this case, an international conference to secure a new security architecture and a new development architecture, the right to development for all countries. And like the Peace of Westphalia, one in which all sides sit down together, recognize their interests, their sovereign inter-

ests, as including the sovereign interests of the others, and forgiving all past crimes.

Anything short of that is going to keep intact this division of the world into warring blocs. Just like I asked, “what’s keeping the Generals from speaking out,” what will it take to get Americans to recognize that we can and must sit down with Russians, and with Chinese, and with all other nations, and establish a true, just world based on the dignity of man and the right to development and security?”

Col. Black: I think, unfortunately, there’s going to have to be enormous pain to drive that, just as there was with the Peace of Westphalia. A nuclear war would do it; an economic cataclysm of unprecedented proportions, resulting from the unbridled printing of money that we’ve engaged in over the last 20 years. There are things that could bring it about. But at this point, the media have been so totally censored and so biased that the American people really don’t have a perception of the need for anything of that sort. It’s going to be difficult.

Here’s something interesting that has happened. Here in this country, you would think the entire world is against Russia. It’s not. In fact, there are major countries of the world that lean towards Russia in this war, starting with China, but then there is Brazil, South Africa, Saudi Arabia—a wide array of countries. India. India is tremendously supportive of Russia. The idea that somehow we have this enormously just cause; it doesn’t strike a great deal of the world that it is just, and much of the world does not accept the latest propaganda about war crimes.

For example: this thing about Bucha. That’s probably the most prominent of all the war crimes discussions. What was Bucha? There was a film taken of a vehicle driving down the road in Bucha, which had been recaptured from the Russians. And every hundred feet or so there was some person with his hands zip-tied behind his back, and he’d been killed. It was not announced until four days after the Ukrainians had retaken Bucha.

We knew almost nothing about it. We actually didn’t even have proof that people had been killed. But assuming they had, we didn’t know where they had been killed. We did not know who they were. We did not know who killed them. We did not know why they were killed. No one could provide an adequate motive for the Russians to have killed them. The Russians held Bucha for a month. If they were going to kill them, why didn’t

they kill them during that month? And if you’re going to slaughter a bunch of people, wouldn’t they all be in one place and wouldn’t you gun them all down there? Why would they be distributed along a roadside, a mile along the way? It makes no sense!

What we do know is that four days after the Mayor of Bucha joyously announced that the city was liberated, four days after the Ukrainian army had moved in with their special propaganda arm, all of a sudden there were these dead people on the road. How come they weren’t there when the Russians were there? How come they only appeared after the Russians were gone?

If I were looking at it simply as a standard criminal case, and I was talking to the Criminal Investigation Division of the FBI, or military police, or something, I’d say, “OK, the first thing, let’s take a look at the Ukrainians.” My guess would be—and you start with a hunch when you’re investigating a crime—that the Ukrainians killed off these people after they moved in, and after they looked around, and said, “OK, who was friendly towards the Russian troops while the Russians were here? We’re going to execute them.” That would be my guess. Because I don’t see any motive for the Russians to have just killed a few people on their way out of town. And nobody questions this, because the corporate media are so monolithic.

We know for a fact, from the mouth of the head of a Ukrainian hospital—the guy who ran the hospital—who boasted that he had given strict orders to all of his doctors, that when wounded Russian POWs were brought in, they were to be *castrated*. Now, this is a horrific war crime, admitted from the mouth of the hospital administrator, and the Ukrainian government said, “we’ll kind of look into that,” like it’s no big thing. I can’t think of a more horrific, horrific war crime, ever. Where did you hear about it, on ABC and MSNBC and CNN and FOX News? Not a whisper. And yet the proof is undeniable.

We had another clip where the Ukrainians would bring POWs to a central point for processing—and this is about a seven-minute video—and the Ukrainian soldiers simply gunned them all down. Probably 30 of these wounded Russian soldiers were lying on the ground, some of them clearly dying from their wounds. They put plastic bags over the heads of some of them. Now, these guys are lying there, sometimes fatally wounded with their hands zip-tied behind their backs, and they’ve got plastic bags over their heads, making it difficult to breathe. And because they can’t raise their hands, they

can't take the bags off, so that they can breathe.

At the end of the video, the Ukrainians bring in a van, and there are three unwounded Russian POWs. Without the slightest thought or hesitation, as the three come off, and their hands are bound behind their backs, two are gunned down, right on camera, and they fall over. The third one gets on his knees, and begs that they won't hurt him. And they gun him down!

These are crimes. And these were not refuted by the Ukrainian government. But you'd never even know that they occurred! I'm not saying that there aren't war crimes happening on both sides. I'm just telling you that the only ones I have seen—fairly irrefutable proof of war crimes—have been on the Ukrainian side.

Often you hear it said, "Well, the Russians have destroyed this or destroyed that." Well, go back to the wars that we fought, when we invaded Iraq, the "Shock and Awe." We destroyed virtually everything in Iraq, everything of significance. We bombed military and civilian targets without much discrimination. The coalition flew 100,000 sorties in 42 days. Compare that to the Russians, who only flew 8,000 sorties in about the same period of time. 100,000 American sorties versus 8,000, in about the same time.

I think the Russians have tended to be more selective. Whereas we went out—the philosophy of Shock and Awe is that you destroy everything that is needed to sustain human life and for a city to function. You knock out the water supply, the electrical supply, the heat, the oil, the gasoline; you knock out all of the major bridges. And then you just continue to destroy everything.

It's really ironic. Keep in mind, Iraq is a relatively small country. Ukraine is a huge country. 100,000 sorties in 42 days, 8,000 sorties in about the same time. A tremendous difference in violence between what we did in Iraq, and what they have done in Ukraine. So, there's simply no credibility when you actually get down to the facts and you look at the way that the war has been conducted.

Billington: Well. Senator Black, Colonel Black. I think the way you have described the horror that's already taking place, and considering that we can't wait for a nuclear war to provoke a new a Peace of Westphalia, I would suggest that what you have described is already horrific enough. And when combined with the hyperinflationary breakdown now sweeping the Western world, with everybody being affected, we believe that we have to take that as the adequate horror, and a

recognition of a descent into a dark age, to motivate citizens in Europe, in the United States.

We are finding that there is a waking-up of people who have not wanted to look at their responsibility to the human race as a whole in the past, but who now are forced to consider that, which is the basis on which we've called for this, in this petition for an international conference of all nations, with the U.S., Russia, China, India and so forth, sitting down to end this horror; but to also bring about a true peace for mankind and an era of peace through development.

We thank you for giving this breath of ugly truth to a population which needs to hear it. If you have any final thoughts?

Col. Black: I thank the Schiller Institute for the tremendous effort that you've made towards achieving world peace. It is one of the most important efforts ever made, and I certainly applaud that. I'll just add one thing.

The Russian troops who went into battle in Ukraine, for the most part, had never experienced combat. This is a peacetime army. Russia doesn't fight overseas wars. Syria is the only significant overseas engagement that they have had. Compare that with the United States, where literally speaking, a soldier who retires today after a 30-year career in the military, will not have served a single day when the United States was at peace. Kind of an amazing thing. And you contrast that with the Russian military, where, with few exceptions, the country has been at peace.

We really need to start thinking about peace and about the limits of warfare, this idea that somehow we need a zero sum game where we take from you and that enhances us. We're in a world where everyone can gain and prosper by peace. I'm concerned that the hyperinflation may be the wake-up call that jolts the world into a recognition that we must have a new paradigm for the future, and I think the Peace of Westphalia at that point might become a possibility.

Thank you again for the opportunity to be here. There's always hope, and I think there'll be good things in the future, with the blessings of God.

Billington: Thank you very much from the Schiller Institute, The LaRouche Organization, and *EIR*. We'll get this posted as quickly as we possibly can, because it's going to have a tremendous impact.

Col. Black: Thank you very much.