

At Abu Dhabi, Dialogue Of Civilizations

by Our Special Correspondent

Speaking to an audience of high-ranking politicians, diplomats, and media representatives from the Arab world, Helga Zepp-LaRouche delivered a lecture at the Zayed Centre for Coordination and Follow-Up, in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, on June 3, the day after Lyndon LaRouche's strategic address there (see *EIR*, June 14, 2002). Zepp-LaRouche discussed the need to launch a dialogue of cultures, to defeat the dangerous scenario of religious wars. She opened her remarks, by emphasizing the difference in media coverage, between Arab and Western outlets, regarding Israel's aggression against the Palestinian people. Particularly, in the United States, this terrible reality is almost completely suppressed, she said.

Since the events of Sept. 11, the war against Afghanistan, and the escalation in the Middle East, followed recently by the conflict between Pakistan and India, the "Clash of Civilizations" promoted by Harvard ideologue Samuel Huntington has unfortunately become a reality in the whole of South and West Asia, and a scenario which the practical policy thrust of the United States follows. Huntington's basic thesis is that there are no common features among the great world civilizations—Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, or Confucianism—and that, therefore, conflict among them is inevitable.

This proves only, Zepp-LaRouche told the Arab leaders, that Huntington has not the slightest understanding of any of these cultures. Instead, what lurks behind his thesis is the old colonialist trick of "divide and conquer."

'Peace of Westphalia' in Mideast

Zepp-LaRouche asserted the need for countering this idea and policy, by reaching into the past, and finding precedents to overcome religious warfare. Most important of these, is the Peace of Westphalia, which ended the European religious wars of the 16th and 17th Centuries.

In order to establish a dialogue among cultures, and prevent wars, Zepp-LaRouche drew on the example provided by the great Cardinal Nicholas of Cusa, who responded to the fall of Constantinople in 1453, with a work, *De Pace Fide* (*On the Peace of Faith*). In it, Cusa elaborated a dialogue among religious leaders and philosophers, through which the higher principle of Unity, the One, prevails over the principle of Multiplicity, the Many. Such an approach, she said, together with Cusa's method of the "coincidence of opposites,"



Helga Zepp-LaRouche speaks on civilizational dialogue to the Zayed Centre's conference on "The Role of Oil and Gas in World Politics," June 3.

is what provides a way out of the political problems now plaguing the region.

To illustrate this dialogue of cultures through history, Zepp-LaRouche identified the common, universal principles in ancient China, Egypt, India, and Mesopotamia, then through the Greek Classical period, into Christian civilization, followed by Islam. Among the highpoints of the dialogue, she singled out the relationship between Charlemagne and the Caliphs of Baghdad, Haroun al-Rashid and al-Ma'moun, whose work, especially in translations, helped Europe rediscover the Classical works of the Greeks.

Addressing the current situation, she appealed to leaders of the Arab and Islamic world to make the Abbasid dynasty's (750-1254 A.D.) greatness, a model to be replicated. She stressed the importance of the contribution made by Islamic Spain, Andalusia, which was a bridge between Abbasid culture and Europe.

These examples demonstrated that the dialogue of cultures is indeed a reality, absolutely self-evident in thousands of years of human history, during which the torch of progress has been carried by first one, then another culture.

Zepp-LaRouche stressed that today, however, mankind is sitting all together in one boat. Whereas in earlier epochs, the collapse of one civilization was paralleled by the rise of another elsewhere in the world, today civilization as a whole is threatened. Either mankind succeeds in finding a solution, or it will plunge into a dark age.

Thus, to avoid the threat of a Clash of Civilizations and a "Hundred Years War," as some have predicted, it is urgent to revive the best tradition of every culture, and to engage in a dialogue from that standpoint. Zepp-LaRouche expressed her confidence that through such a dialogue—engaging the noble ideas of a Plato, an al-Farabi, al-Kindi, Confucius, Ibn Sina, Nicholas of Cusa, and so many others (in comparison to whom Huntington is an intellectual dwarf)—the participants would be elevated to the point of greater wisdom and good will.

The fact that Zepp-LaRouche carried out this discussion at the leading intellectual center in the United Arab Emirates, was emblematic of the dialogue of cultures, already in process.