

Senator Mike Gravel Speaks on the Incoming Trump Administration

The following is excerpted from an edited transcript of the LaRouche PAC Manhattan Project Dialogue, which took place on January 21, 2017.

Dennis Speed: Hello, my name is Dennis Speed, and on behalf of the LaRouche Political Action Committee, I want to welcome you here today for our first post-Obama dialogue. [applause] We're going to make sure that we don't veer off topic, because of course, there's a lot of that going on right now in the United States. A lot of people are saying things about the Trump speech which they don't really have the right to say. But we do have an assessment and an evaluation from Lyndon LaRouche, both from yesterday and some additional remarks from today. So, I want to first indicate—because many people would not have heard this—what Lyn had to say immediately after the speech; and then follow up with a few remarks about things he said today.

So regarding the inauguration speech, LaRouche said that it was very confused on the surface, and we'll have to see what is behind the surface. On the basis of what had been presented, there wasn't really a clarity on principle there. Helga said that the most important question to consider is, how does Trump deliver on the domestic front on the promises he made; what are the actions he'll concretely take? And on the international side, she pointed out that it's very important for Donald Trump to realize that the world doesn't work the way he indicated in his speech. While there's something important about this slogan "America First!"—and I'll come to that in a moment—the issue is, how do you find common interest shared by many nations, not just "America First." What are the common objectives



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Maurice Robert "Mike" Gravel (born May 13, 1930), is a former Democratic United States Senator from Alaska, having served for two terms, from 1969 to 1981. In 1971 Gravel played a key role in the release of the Pentagon Papers—a large collection of secret government documents pertaining to the Vietnam War—which were made public by former Defense Department analyst Daniel Ellsberg. Gravel inserted 4,100 pages of the Papers into the Congressional Record of his Senate Subcommittee on Buildings and Grounds.

—Wikileaks

of multiple nations, and how do you act in pursuit of those objectives? What we sometimes also call the common aims of mankind. Lyn also elaborated from there, saying there's no clear principle; it could go in the direction of a unifying principle. But from what's been presented so far, it isn't clear whether that will be exactly the case.

Today, I should say that Lyn made it clear that he was very concerned about the existence of one particu-

lar nut in the Trump administration. He was referring to Steven Mnuchin, the Treasury Secretary-designate nominee—and the exchange, in particular, that Mnuchin had with Senator Maria Cantwell on Glass-Steagall. We'll refer more to this, but LaRouche's point was that this guy is a real nut, and this is a real problem. This causes a very dangerous situation, if you allow someone to muddy the waters and be very unclear. Actually, Helga had made some remarks about that as well, saying that it was very good that Cantwell has now made it very clear, that she used her entire time allocation to question him about his intentions on reinstating Glass-Steagall. When the exchange began, when Cantwell asked him simply "Do you support returning to Glass-Steagall?" he replied, "No, I don't support going back to Glass-Steagall as is. I don't support taking a very old law and saying we should adhere to it."

Now of course, Lyn has been extremely clear—as everybody knows—that Roosevelt's Glass-Steagall, as it was, is what has to be reinstated. It is true—and Lyn has made this point, too—that these matters are complicated, but the main point is that this guy Mnuchin is a sophist. You have the problem that we have to have clarity, and that's what we have as a problem as a whole right now in anything we've heard. Lyn also stated that what we have to do is let them clarify their intentions; we don't want to get wrapped up in the commentary which is going on right now. Maybe Trump will reveal what he truly means, but as of now, there is no clear answer. When people think there is an answer, they're wrong; we need to hold back on this. Trump has gotten into things that he has not yet explained, so let him explain them.

We're going to hear from Mike Gravel. I asked Mike to be on, and he wanted to know why. I said, you've seen a lot of administrations; you've seen the good, the bad, the ugly, and the unspeakable. But also, he's done some things on behalf of justice, as people know, about the "Pentagon Papers" and his role with that. Since we don't have Lyndon LaRouche available,



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Donald Trump at his inauguration ceremony.

I wanted to have somebody play the role of the Dutch uncle; meaning, in other words, keeping people honest in refusing to react to the momentary, what's in front of you; the immediate reflex to somehow respond to the latest media assessment of another assessment of another moron who speaks about a process they have no idea about. This we don't want to have; and I thought that in this context, it would be good for him to say a few things and help us in this regard. So, Mike, take it away!

Sen. Mike Gravel: First off, let me associate myself with the remarks that Ben Deniston has just made about the search for a governing principle, and particularly join Lyndon and Helga in their comments and views with respect to the speech at the inaugural by President Trump. The society we live in right now is one where the media is controlled totally by corporate interests, and now you see them jumping around, trying to analyze what Trump means with every word, and so they parse every word that Trump makes; it's a ridiculous situation, truly. Because the inaugural speech was essentially very superficial; and it was typical Trump. When you say well, what does he mean? These are superficial statements, and that's what he means; because his knowledge at this point is very superficial. Just appreciate where he's coming from; here's a real estate developer who's used to dealing in land development; that is, building buildings and golf courses and hotels. Now, that's not rocket science; that's pretty straightforward. He picked up that schooling from his dad, who was a developer in Queens; and now Trump is a developer around the world. There's nothing wrong with that; and it clearly shows that he's got some smarts—he's intelligent. The question is, does he have experience in the role that he's now going to play, as President of the major power of the world? I don't think he has it at this point; so it could go several ways.

If you look at his—you just mentioned Mnuchin for Secretary of the Treasury—he's got a few wing nuts in his Cabinet; there's no question about that—

more than one. They make statements at variance from his statements; and what he's instructed them to do—which is pretty clever—is that they should accurately give their views. They don't have to parrot his particular outlook. His particular outlook doesn't have any depth at this point in time; but there's two things. It can get really bad with the wing nuts taking over the administration; or, he may mature to the point where when a Cabinet member does something and gets him in trouble, that will attack his ego. Let me tell you, from my judgment, the biggest asset we have with Trump is the fact that he's got an out-sized ego; out-sized worldwide ego. That ego brings about a discipline on him, because he's got to defend himself. Here's the example that I see, which is very optimistic; maybe more so. He keeps talking about China, but also, he keeps talking about his guiding principle which is, to make a deal, to arrive at something concrete and positive. That's all well and good. With respect to China, I think his ego will understand that the biggest deal in the world that he could make, which will nurture his out-sized ego, is a deal with China to join China on the Silk Road project. That's the biggest deal that I see in the world right now; and as soon as he understands that, he'll latch on to that and take possession of it and take credit for it, and thereby join China and Russia and the BRICS in this colossal global deal which is to raise the economic level of all the peoples in the world.

What argues against that is his jingoistic attitude that the United States has got to be Number One. That's a very dangerous course to take, and of course, that's what we've been taking for the last 50 years. What's led us to the mess that we're in today, is that when we put ourselves unilaterally as Number One in the world, commanding everything in that direction, what we do is we beggar thy neighbor in the world, and that's the tragedy of what we've been doing in our foreign policy for the last 50 years. So now, what is Trump going to do? He could do something great; he could do something ridiculous and inconsequential, jumping all over with his wing nut Cabinet. That would be a missed opportunity. What will happen is, if he does pursue the nega-

With respect to the foreign policy, that's a whole other area. Clearly, Trump will solve the problem that was created by Obama and Hillary. Had she won, we'd probably be going to war with Russia... we're going to back away from that; and Russia, Putin, if he can develop a personal relationship with Trump, Putin can help educate him on an equal basis...

tive, I think that there may be enough reasonableness in the world—particularly among the BRICS and others—that would limit that; wouldn't let that get out of hand, I hope. And it's a lot of hope.

What it comes down to is, right now don't worry about his inaugural speech. Six months from now, it will be inconsequential. What will be consequential, will be what they specifically do in terms of policy and interaction with foreign nations. There are two elements; there's his domestic element, and I just hope that he does throw the resources to refurbish the American infrastructure, which is a mess. The last time I was in New York, I came off the Triborough Bridge down on the East Side. I used to be a taxi cab driver in New York City, so you can

imagine what age has done to me when I'm not sure east and west. But the East Side Highway was like a Third World country; it was terrible. This is in New York, the mother city of the world. We've let it get into such disrepair; and this is the situation right across the country. Just refurbishing the United States will bring about the employment level that he wants to bring about; because there's just so much to do. Now it's the question of moving the resources in that direction; that's the domestic program which we hope he will implement. I think he will, because he's made his bellwether jobs.

With respect to the foreign policy, that's a whole other area. Clearly, he'll solve the problem that was created by Obama and Hillary. Had she won, we'd probably be going to war with Russia, which is just a ridiculous, tragic situation if that would have come to pass. So, we're going to back away from that; and Russia, Putin, if he can develop a personal relationship with Trump, Putin can help educate him on an equal basis, not a paternalistic way, but on an equal basis. Putin is very clever in that regard; and he could ameliorate the situation between the United States under Trump's leadership, and China under Xi's leadership. Putin could pave the way in trying to persuade Trump that his program domestically—which is to refurbish our society—not go back to what it was in the old days; just refurbish and bring it up to speed with the most modern



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Neocons Robert Kagan and Victoria Nuland, with Italian Ambassador Aldo Amati.

technology possible. So, he could do that; and he will do that, in my mind.

What we've got to do is translate that goal domestically into an international goal, and that's where him joining China and the BRICS onto the Silk Road program around the world comes in; raising the economic standards of the people worldwide.

Will Trump do that? I think that the odds are that he will. What will mitigate against that, is, of course, the neo-cons—and he's got a couple of neo-cons in his Cabinet. But the real neo-cons, Victoria Nuland and her husband and that ilk—the neo-cons who took us into an invasion in Iraq—they're still around out there. And by and large, they are represented by mainstream media. Keep in mind, the problem that we have is the military-industrial complex and Wall Street controlling our government, along with Israel; controlling our government lock, stock, and barrel. So, will Trump go along with that? His son-in-law is going to be his main advisor; who apparently is religious, and so that's going to play out in a certain kind of way.

What's interesting from a political science point of view, which is certainly my point of view, is how this is going to play out. It could move in various directions, but one thing will be the lodestar of it all, and that is the President's personal ego and his sense of worth of himself and what he can accomplish. That is the biggest

asset we have working on what we hope will come about.

With respect to a defined paradigm and principle—I think how quickly will Trump mature and understand what's really going on, I think that's not necessary. What is important for him is to act on what *is* necessary and what is going on and what the choices are; right now it's bifurcated. Which way will he go? Circumstances will dictate that, so it's how the wing nuts in his cabinet will act, foolishly or intelligently, and if they act foolishly, it will impact upon him and his ego, and how he will react to that remains to be seen.

I just want to have a cautionary note that I personally believe that the military-industrial complex and Wall Street control our society, not just our government, control our society, and they can be very dangerous. I'm happy that Trump is keeping

his own personal security system that he's paying for, enmeshing that with the security system of the Presidency. He is well aware of the fact that if he gets too far off the reservation, it would not be that difficult a thing to assassinate him.

These are all the things that are in front of us that are going to play out. The least informed facet of this is going to be mainstream media. They're just on a witch hunt, ego trip, neo-con—trying to make the case for the rationale of the outsized military capability that we have, and we don't need that. Will Trump change that? He hasn't said he will; in fact, just the opposite, he feels that we should build up our military even more. That may not be possible if we pursue the Silk Road globally and if we pursue the equivalent of the Silk Road domestically. That is my take on it.

I don't think anybody can make any formed conclusions as to which way he'll go, but I think it's important to underscore what Lyndon and Helga have said, that at this point in time it's a waste of time to over-parse every little word he makes. He's still under the aura of the campaign and the success of his campaign, and that's why he continues to articulate the same thing over and over again. Here again, he's an intelligent person and he will develop; which way, that's the question. I leave it at that. That's the big question. What door will he open and go through? Thank you.