

Helga Zepp-LaRouches interview på “Diplomatisk samtale” fra Kina: Kinas initiativer udstikker kursen for løsning af globale kriser

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Afskrift på engelsk:

Diplomacy Talk program

Global crises need solutions, not empty rhetoric – and according to Helga Zepp-LaRouche, founder of the German think tank Schiller Institute, China’s comprehensive plan is the only serious proposal on the table.

In this episode of “Diplomacy Talk,” Zepp-LaRouche explains how President Xi’s three initiatives – the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative – offer practical solutions to pressing world issues.

The conversation also examines China’s remarkable journey from manual farming to technological leadership, its successful poverty reduction program that lifted 850 million people out of poverty, and its role in developing global infrastructure through the Belt and Road Initiative.

At a time when the world faces unprecedented challenges and needs desperately to find the way forward, this discussion

highlights the vital role of Xi's initiatives in addressing global challenges.

Following is the transcript of the interview.

Diplomacy Talk (Gao Anming): The Schiller Institute has been doing great work in promoting cross-cultural understanding and cooperation. What inspired you to create it?

Helga Zepp-LaRouche: I created the Schiller Institute in 1984, and that was just in the period when in Europe we had the medium-range missile crisis. So many people were extremely concerned that we were on the verge of a global war, and hundreds of thousands of people went into the streets.

At that time, the relationship among all nations was terrible. I thought that one needs to have a different concept of foreign policy. So I developed a different conception about foreign policy, which was the idea that, first of all, you need justice, economic justice. The first aim was to have a just new world economic order. And basically, this, however, would only function if it would be combined with improvement of the culture. I did not like the Americanization of the culture, which was very strong at the time. And I thought if every nation and every civilization goes back to their own best tradition, and has a classical renaissance, then you have a dialogue among these best traditions, then communication and friendship is very easy.

Diplomacy Talk: You had the opportunity to visit China multiple times throughout your career. Could you share your observations about the country and its people based on these direct experiences?

Helga Zepp-LaRouche: I must say that the encounter with China had for me a very profound impact in my whole life, because I came here as a young journalist in 1971. And I could travel around in Shanghai, Tianjin, Qingdao, and Beijing. The agriculture was totally manual, no mechanization. The people

were very poor. And then I came back 25 years later. I participated in a big conference in Beijing. And already then it was so transformed.

But then in the following years, when I came more frequently, every time you come, you find new buildings, new technologies, new science. I keep telling people in Germany that you go into a fast train, and you put a glass of water on the desk, not one drop will ever jump out. And I read a lot naturally about the space breakthroughs China has made, to go to the far side of the moon to grow a little plant. That's incredible.

China is so inspiring that I think it is a model for the world. I personally think the Chinese should be much more self-confident in telling the rest of the world how they did it. I think this is something the other people should learn from.

Diplomacy Talk: Over the years, China has transformed from a poor country to an important global player. However, these days, some countries call China a "threat." What do you think about this, given what you've witnessed in China?

Helga Zepp-LaRouche: People forget that China, until the 15th century, was a leading nation anyhow. China has a 5,000-year-old history. It has contributed so many discoveries over the millennia. That is just the shortness of the memory. Why people said China is a "threat?" They say it because they have a Euro-Atlantic spectacle on their nose. They project what they are doing to China. And I think that the Chinese have not engaged in war. They are no threat. I cannot verify this remark other than it is a threat to the unipolar world or those people who think they should run a unipolar world.

But the reality is that unipolar world has gone already. I think this notion that China is a threat is just not true. And I find it very unfair, frankly. Since I know China a little bit, I'm not claiming to be an expert, China, in my view, is

doing a lot of good with Africa, with other places. And then to be slandered like that is just an injustice. It reveals more about the mindset of those people who say China is a threat than about China.

Diplomacy Talk: In the 1990s, Samuel Huntington proposed the theory “clash of civilizations,” which predicted that cultural differences would be the primary source of global conflict. Last year (2023), President Xi Jinping presented a contrasting vision with the Global Civilization Initiative. This initiative advocates for mutual respect and harmony among world civilizations. Given that your institute has long rejected Huntington’s idea, what significance do you see in President Xi’s initiative?

Helga Zepp-LaRouche: I personally think Samuel Huntington knows very little. He knows little about Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Confucianism. So I dismiss his thesis as more propaganda. It’s not science.

I think, on the contrary, that President Xi has proposed three initiatives— the Global Development Initiative, the Global Security Initiative and the Global Civilization Initiative, which I think represent together with the concept of a global community of shared future, the only available proposal from a leading government on how to solve the strategic crisis. It’s a concept to establish a higher one – the interest of the one humanity, which I think is necessary today.

The idea that you have a group of nations who have the right to impose their will on another group of nations... This geopolitical outlook has caused two world wars in the 20th century, and right now in the danger of nuclear wars. If you don’t overcome that, we may end up annihilating the entire human species.

So I think President Xi Jinping’s conception is the most advanced. I would hope that it is being put on the

international agenda, not just talking about it, but in the form of a serious proposal, like the UN General Assembly. There could be a UN General Assembly meeting discussing these three initiatives of President Xi Jinping as a way to address the problem of every single country in the world.

Diplomacy Talk: We still see a lot of tension between different civilizations today. What do you think are the real root causes of these conflicts?

Helga Zepp-LaRouche: Francis Fukuyama, he said “This is the end of history.” What that meant was that the whole world would be based on the neoliberal model of democracy.

They offer China the WTO membership in the hope that China would also take the Western liberal economic model. China used, based on Deng Xiaoping’s reform and opening-up policy, the opportunity to participate in the global market, but China did not take the Western model. China went back to its own tradition of 5,000 years of history and revived that. I have visited many museums, and I have seen how much culture has been restored and made available to the general population.

So these people, instead, they had hoped China would become liberal. Actually, China did not. But they pursued this idea through regime change, color revolution. So that’s how we ended up in the present, really dangerous, extremely dangerous situation.

But I think the main cause is the attempt by some forces to keep the unipolar world order when it does no longer exist. They are terrified, because at the G20, they just recognized that the Global South is not voting with them anymore.

Diplomacy Talk: How do you view China’s role in promoting exchanges and mutual learning among civilizations?

Helga Zepp-LaRouche: I participated in several conferences. One of them was called the Conference on Dialogue of Asian

Civilizations. And then I know what the Africans are thinking about China. Churchill famously has said that there is no friendship among countries, only interest. But I have talked to many Africans. And they say China is the friend of Africa, because ever since China started to invest in infrastructure, industrial parks, fast train systems, these countries have started to develop in having for the first time the perspective of overcoming underdevelopment. So naturally, they turn to China because they feel that what comes from China is good for them. And they don't want to listen to the Sunday sermons of the Europeans anymore who come and preach but deliver nothing. So I think that the role of China in promoting real friendship is spectacular.

Diplomacy Talk: Looking ahead, what do we hope to see happen between China and Western countries in terms of cultural exchange?

Helga Zepp-LaRouche: The most important task I find is that we have to convince the countries of the West that it is in their interest and the interest of the whole world to cooperate with China.

I think cultural dialogue would greatly help to make it a joyful undertaking to work with other countries. We are human beings. We should enjoy each other and not regard each other as enemies. For example, when I experience for the first time, Chinese painting, I said, "This is so different than European painting, because there is, for example, literati painting, where you have a painting, calligraphy, and the poem." And the meaning of that piece of work lies in the three of them. We don't have that in Europe. It gave me a new dimension of my understanding. When you have a dialogue of culture all the time like that, you discover why it is beautiful that we have different cultures and we have dialogue, and then we get all lit up.

Diplomacy Talk: China just joined the Global Alliance against

Hunger and Poverty at the G20 meeting in Brazil. Why do you think fighting poverty is so important for everyone, not just developing countries?

Helga Zepp-LaRouche: First of all, there is a lot of poverty in Europe and in the United States, but China was the only major country which had actually the plan to alleviate and eliminate poverty. I looked in the European Union. We do not have a program to alleviate poverty. Can you imagine? Despite the fact that I think there are 90 million poor people or people who are, they put it differently, they say that people who are in danger of being poor, but they are really poor. Two billion people have no fresh water. Many people have only one meal a day, or are not sure that they will get a meal the next day.

Now, if you put yourself in the shoes of these people, they are in many countries, Haiti, Yemen, Afghanistan, Mali, many more, then you have to spend all your energy to get the next meal or to be sure that you have a next meal. You have absolutely no time to develop your potential as a human being. You cannot learn. Lifelong learning is a virtue which Confucius promoted. You cannot do that when you are poor, because the burden of daily life is depriving you from what is most important about human beings – their access to their own creativity.

So I think that given the fact that China has brought up 850 million of its own population out of poverty, therefore, in my view, China is the country which has done the most for human rights of all countries. The definition of what is human rights may be different. But I think the Europeans, for sure, are violating human rights of not fighting against poverty.

Diplomacy Talk: Your institute came up with the idea of Eurasian land bridge, which is similar to the China-proposed Belt and Road Initiative. They both aim to connect people. What are your thoughts on China's Belt and Road Initiative?

And are you surprised by how big it has become globally or by how the Western media has responded to it?

Helga Zepp-LaRouche: When Xi Jinping in 2013 announced the New Silk Road, we were so happy. This is fantastic. I think what is now coming into being is exactly this idea that eventually the whole world will be integrated infrastructure-wise.

Diplomacy Talk: What about the smear and accusation it received from the Western media?

Helga Zepp-LaRouche: It's just colonial thinking, because this is what prevented the Europeans or the Americans from having built up infrastructure in Africa, Latin America. They could have made friends with these countries.

But now these countries have turned away from them because they feel that they have been kept a new colonial state. Even if colonialism was ended and the so-called independence was accomplished, the new colonialism continued to exist in the form of unfair trade relations that the cartels would control the raw material prices.

That is what is ending now. Because of the help of China, the countries of the Global South now have for the first time the opportunity to not export their raw materials, but to keep the value chain in their own country, to have a full set industrial production, and to have the profit of their own work and own raw materials in their own country. And therefore, they have the hope to become middle-level-income countries in the near future.

Diplomacy Talk: You read some of President Xi's books. From what you've read, what impression did you get of him as a leader?

Helga Zepp-LaRouche: I think the thing which has impressed me the most is, first of all, the all-around knowledge. When he travels to other countries, he always makes speeches or writes

articles ahead of time, which demonstrates his incredible knowledge about what is the most important contribution of that country.

For example, he one time went to India, and he emphasized all the important points: the Vedic writings, the Gupta period, the Indian renaissance... When he came to Germany and France, he mentioned the most important scientific discoveries or poets. So I find him a very, really universal mind.

Given the fact that China is such a big country... It has 1.4 billion, even more people. How well is this country functioning? The trains are in time. In Germany, no more. It used to be. Everything is organized; everything is digitalized; and everything goes smoothly.

I must say that I regard Xi Jinping as a leader who is giving confidence, not only for China, but for the whole world, because you have to have responsible leaders. And unfortunately, we don't have everywhere responsible leaders. I don't want to make any names right now. I could give you a long list. I think that I'm very happy that you have some leader like that in a very dangerous moment in history.

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