

Hvorfor vi må afvise vejen til atomkrig.

International fredskoalition møde 106 den 13. juni 2025

ANASTASIA BATTLE: Velkommen allesammen. Dette er Den Internationale Fredskoalition. Dette er vores 106. møde i træk. Mit navn er Anastasia Battle, og jeg vil være ordstyrer sammen med Dennis Small og Dennis Speed.

Jeg vil gerne takke alle, der har været med os i denne proces i 106 uger. Jeg er sikker på, at alle er klar over de angreb, som Israel netop har foretaget på Iran. Hvis I føler jer forvirrede, overvældede og ikke helt sikre på, hvad I skal mene om situationen, så er det netop meningen. Dette er helt klart en operation, der har til formål at skabe denne slags problemer og uro. Vi er her for at bringe mennesker sammen på tværs af deres ideologier. Jeg siger til jer, tag et øjeblik og indse, at menneskeheden er på randen af udryddelse. Vi må samle os på trods af vores forskelle og problemer og redde menneskeheden.

Med det vil jeg give ordet til Helga Zepp-LaRouche, som er grundlægger af Schiller Instituttet og medinitiativtager til Den Internationale Fredskoalition. Værsgo, Helga.

HELGA ZEPP-LAROUCHE: Velkommen til jer alle. Da vi diskuterede det kommende IPC-møde på fredag, havde vi oprindeligt tænkt os at starte diskussionen med den video, Tulsi Gabbard har lavet, hvor hun advarer om, at der er fare for en atomkrig, og hvad det ville betyde. Da vi diskuterede dette, troede vi, at det primært havde at gøre med det ukrainske angreb på atombombeflyene inde på russisk territorium, og vi troede, at hun henviste til en optrapning i den forbindelse, efter at hun havde besøgt Hiroshima.

I morges kl. 3 fik jeg et telefonopkald og blev informeret om,

at Israel var begyndt at angribe Iran. Det kunne meget vel være, at hun havde forhåndsviden eller en fornemmelse af det. Under alle omstændigheder står vi lige nu på randen af 3. verdenskrig. Den er måske allerede begyndt, og det er ikke nogen overdrivelse, for vi er nu i fare for en optrapningsspiral, som, hvis den ikke ændres ved en eller anden indgriben, på relativt kort sigt kan føre til en global atomkrig, hvor hele menneskeheden vil blive udslettet.

Det, der er sket, er, at Israel har angrebet både atomanlæggene – eller nogle af atomanlæggene – i Iran, samt nogle civile steder og dræbt lederen af den iranske revolutionsgarde, Hossein Salami, og generalmajor Gholam Ali Rashid, chefen for de væbnede styrker, samt visse yderst vigtige atomfysikere i Iran. Den meget præcise eliminering af disse personer afslører, at der er blevet leveret efterretninger i realtid. På nuværende tidspunkt er det endnu ikke klart, om det kom fra samarbejde med amerikanske, britiske eller andre såkaldte vestlige kræfter. Dette benægtes af udenrigsminister Rubio, der sagde, at USA ikke kendte til angrebet, og at det var en ensidig handling fra Israels side. Præsident Trump sagde på en eller anden måde, at han var informeret, men det er ikke klart, om han forsøgte at stoppe det eller godkendte det.

Under alle omstændigheder skaber dette nu en forværret situation, hvor Rubio advarede om, at hvis Iran som gengældelse ville angribe nogle af de amerikanske styrker i regionen – og der er omkring 90.000 amerikanske soldater i forskellige lande i Mellemøsten, der er et mål, fordi de ikke har noget luftforsvar. Iran er naturligvis fuldt ud klar over – og det er alle andre også – at Israels mål åbenbart er at fremprovokere en handling, der derefter trækker USA ind i krigen, hvilket ville åbne en spiral uden ende, for hvis USA bliver involveret, ved jeg ikke, om Rusland og Kina vil eller kan stå passivt til, når et af nøglelande i Bælte- og Vej-Initiativet, Shanghai-Samarbejdsorganisationen og BRIKS bliver angrebet på denne måde.

Der er altså en overhængende risiko for, at dette kommer helt ud af kontrol. Det er et åbent spørgsmål i mine øjne, og måske

kan nogle af verdens bedste eksperter, der deltager i denne diskussion i dag, kaste lys over det. For mig er det ikke klart. Er præsident Trump velinformeret? Mener han, at de angreb og bombninger, der hidtil har fundet sted i Iran, er en del af taktikken med maksimalt pres? Tror han, at han kan tvinge Iran til endelig at indgå en aftale, hvilket han har gentaget mange gange? For to måneder siden sagde han, at der var et ultimatum om, at de skulle indgå en aftale, og han gentog stadig, at de skulle indgå en aftale. Det er et åbent spørgsmål, hvad Iran skal indgå en aftale om, for så vidt vi ved, var der intet i Irans adfærd, der kunne have legitimeret et sådant angreb. Amerikansk efterretningstjeneste har gentagne gange sagt, at Iran ikke i øjeblikket forsøger at anskaffe en bombe. Der var forhandlinger i gang, hvor flere kræfter fremsatte meget korrekte forslag til, hvordan situationen kunne afspændes. Ikke mindst foreslog den russiske udenrigsminister Ryabkov konkret hjælp fra Rusland til at mægle mellem USA og Iran ved at tilbyde at overtage noget af det berigede uran og afspænde hele situationen ved at give Iran mulighed for fredelig atomkraft, men uden mere højt beriget uran. Det gav naturligvis ikke det nødvendige resultat, og nu er det store spørgsmål – Iran vil helt sikkert reagere på en eller anden måde; jeg tror ikke, at noget land kan acceptere disse gentagne forsøg på at halshugge dets ledelse uden at reagere. Hvis Irans reaktion på Israel bliver, som man kan forvente, er det naturligvis det store spørgsmål, om USA straks vil gribe ind, og så har man en optrapning til 3. verdenskrig.

Så jeg tror, at det, der er nødvendigt nu – og alle mulige mennesker er kommet frem og har forsvaret Israels ret til at forsvare sig, hvilket ikke har været på spil; det er en ting, man skal være meget klar over. Set ud fra FN-pagten er dette en fuldstændig ulovlig aggressionshandling. Derfor opfordrer mange andre statschefer til tilbageholdenhed for ikke at optrappe situationen. Men det forekommer mig, at dette er den slags situation, hvor der er behov for en helt anden tilgang. For hvis man ser på den større sammenhæng, har vi i den seneste tid set massive angreb på det Globale Syd, nemlig BRIKS-landene, som forsøger at danne et nyt økonomisk system, der i højere grad er baseret på økonomisk retfærdighed og lige

muligheder for alle lande til at udvikle sig. Vi har set angreb på Sydafrika, Egypten, Brasilien, Argentina er sandsynligvis det mest fremskredne tilfælde, naturligvis Rusland og Kina. Det underliggende problem er, at det Globale Syd forsøger at få et nyt økonomisk system.

Jeg kan kun berøre disse ting i baggrunden, men jeg tror, at situationen er så kompleks, at vores eget krav, som blev stillet af Den Internationale Fredskoalition og Schiller Instituttet lige fra starten efter den særlige militæroperation i Ukraine, nemlig at vi skal katapultere hele diskussionen ind i et nyt paradigme. Vi har opfordret til en ny global sikkerheds- og udviklingsarkitektur, som skal tage hensyn til alle landes interesser på kloden. Vi må ikke glemme, at det er Israel, der sandsynligvis har omkring 200 atombomber, mens Iran ikke har nogen. Man kunne argumentere for, at en af grundene til, at Iran til tider har forsøgt at få atomvåben, hvilket de ikke har gjort i det sidste år, er, at der er en ubalance i Mellemøsten. Der er endda en udtalelse fra deres øverste leder Khamenei, at Iran ikke er ude efter atomvåben. Men man kunne muligvis argumentere for, at det er den ubalance, der er i Mellemøsten, der er årsagen til, at hele situationen har udviklet sig, som den har.

Uanset hvad eksperterne nu vil diskutere – og vi bør lytte til alle deres argumenter og forsøge at få dagens video fra IPC ud til så mange som muligt, som Anastasia sagde, for hvis vi ikke mobiliserer verdens befolkning nu, er der måske ikke en chance til. Men min konklusion er, at vi absolut må vokse op som menneskehed, vi må nå frem til en situation, hvor vi stopper disse geopolitiske spil og opnår en ny sikkerheds- og udviklingsarkitektur i traditionen fra Westfalen-freden og genopretter verdensordenen på en fredelig måde, ellers risikerer vi vores egen undergang. Det var alt, hvad jeg ville sige i begyndelsen.

Resten på engelsk:

Remarks during the Discussion:

[1] I think there are many questions which cannot be answered; at least until some hard evidence has been produced. One of them naturally is, what is the real reason? I just want to

repeat what I alluded to in my initial remarks that if one does something which the modern word for is contextualization of what is happening in the Middle East, as well as between Russia and Ukraine, I think the overall picture remains what I said. I think the motive behind a lot of these things is the fact that there is an attempt to stop the rise of a new system—the BRICS+ and so forth. I can only repeat that we have to be, as the effort to create an international peace movement, apart from analyzing the particular crises which is extremely important, and unfortunately, I tend more to be on the worried side that this could get out of control. For example, if in the escalation, Israel would attack the Iranian oil fields, we could have a blow-out of the financial system; the oil price could go through the ceiling. There are many ways this could go out of control in an extremely volatile situation.

That is why I want to re-emphasize that we in the international peace movement, or a significant part of that peace movement, we must not only analyze the situation, trying to be correct by getting as many expert opinions mobilized to get as close to the truth as possible; but I want to urge that we have to also provide an alternative. Xi Jinping has proposed his three initiatives; his global security, development, and civilizational initiatives, which is one way of formulating—the Chinese way—the security and development architecture. I'm absolutely certain that if it's not Ukraine, then it will be Iran or Israel or tomorrow Taiwan or China. As long as we are not resolving this underlying conflict and going in the direction of establishing a security and development architecture which, in the tradition of the Peace of Westphalia, takes into account the interests of every single country. In this particular situation in the Middle East, that means both Israel, emphatically the Palestinians, and it also means Iran and all the other neighbors. That can only happen through development; which is why we have been pushing this idea that the new name for peace is development,

which brings up the Oasis Plan and the whole idea to move to a new development architecture.

So, I just wanted to reiterate that, because I'm afraid that because we are looking at an epochal change, where one system is clearly going under; but the new system is not yet established. There are efforts, but it's not yet decided. But I think that is the gigantic task in front of us.

[2] I just would like to add one thought to what I said just before, and that is that what we are experiencing—especially in relation to the events in Gaza—is much more than a tragedy for the Palestinian people. I think if we as a world community cannot rectify, or at least attempt to make good; you can't do that, but at least try to re-establish some living conditions for all the people in the region, I'm afraid that the impact on the moral order of the world will be devastating. So, I think we are called on in a much more profound way than just the day-to-day politics. I think what is at stake is the moral fitness of humanity to survive. It is my firm belief that only if we go into something which used to be called natural law, that you try to establish legitimacy on the planet in correspondence with the actual call of creation, that we will get out of this. That requires the best contribution of the most profound thinkers around the globe.

[3] I think the migrant issue, which is obviously handled in a way which is antagonizing many people—I mean, we have a completely different suggestion. I would like to put this on the table, because we have a migrant crisis at the Mexican-American border. My late husband, Lyndon LaRouche, wrote in a very important article, I think it was published in 1999, the absolute worst way to deal with any social upheaval is to use the military against your own people. That is what is apparently happening, and that gives room for all kinds of gang-counter gang provocations. I think it is definitely the wrong approach.

What we suggest instead, also for Europe, the Middle East, and Africa, is that the only way we can get out of this present calamity is to stop geopolitics. If we would get the European nations and even the United States to say, "Let's just remove the root causes for the migrant question," which are hunger, war, desperation, lack of food, lack of water. Let's collaborate in a multi-level way to build up the economies of Latin America, the Middle East, Asia, and Africa. And join hands to make crash programs for economic development to uplift the economic conditions in the countries where the migrants are coming from. Even a credible gesture that that is the intention of these nations working together would go a long way in resolving the problem. Many of the people who are now risking their lives trying to get to the United States or into Europe, crossing the Sahara, drowning in the Mediterranean, ending up in refugee camps which the late Pope Francis called concentration camps because people get in and don't get out for years, being behind barbed wire and similar things.

Can we not become rational? Can we not just say the way to solve the migrant question is to bring economic development and build up the economies of all the countries from which people are currently running away? That obviously has not been the philosophy, but is it not time to recognize that the policies of the last 3.5 decades since the end of the Cold War, have been an utter failure? Can we not, as rational people gifted with reason, correct our view?

I would like to put this suggestion to create 1.5 billion new productive jobs in the next several years in Latin America, Asia, and Africa, on the table as an alternative. The people in Los Angeles and other affected places, why don't they start to discuss how this refugee problem can be solved? It does require that people think a little bit beyond their immediate concrete situation. I'm absolutely certain that is the way to go.

Q: Israel has explained it had no choice but to bomb Iran, due to the serious concern that peace talks with the U.S. were about to succeed. Was the U.S. really in talks, or just pretending in order to facilitate the Israeli attack?

ZEPP-LAROUCHE: I wish I knew the answer to that. If you look at the different experts who were speaking at previous IPC meetings over the last several weeks, many were also vacillating between the hope expressed in Trump's intention to normalize relations with Russia, and the phone calls between Trump and Putin. Whenever this happens, one tends to give him the credit that he does want to do that.

But then, other developments happen, like the fact that it is true that the only power in the world that could change the view of Israel is the United States; but then Trump doesn't do it. So, then you have the whole situation with the ominous warnings of Tulsi Gabbard about former FBI head Comey. Her very dramatic video on Hiroshima and the danger of nuclear war; saying this is an actual question. One gets the feeling that she is—and Ray McGovern was hinting at that—in the middle of a situation which everyone knows is very factionalized. You have the MAGA people in the Trump administration who clearly don't want war. Marjorie Taylor Greene is always coming out very powerfully against the bombing of Iran and similar things. Then on the other side, you have the presence of neo-cons in the administration; some of whom were then ousted. So, the picture which comes together is not easily transparent; it seems to be a very mixed bag. That's why I think we absolutely need a mobilization of the global population, and to strengthen especially the voices of the Global South, because it seems that between the so-called established powers of the UN Security Council, it is sort of blocked. It's geopolitical concerns, and that's why I think the voices of the Global South need to come out much more strongly. As Nehru, Zhou Enlai, and Sukarno already said at the Bandung Conference in 1955, when it comes to nuclear world war, the countries of the

Global South may die a few weeks later, but they will die anyway because of the nuclear winter which unfolds; which Tulsi Gabbard referred to in her very important video.

I really think we should strengthen the ability of the countries of the Global South to speak out; because the existence of humanity is as much concern and right, as that of the Americans or Europeans for that matter. People like Ray and Larry Johnson and others from the VIPS probably have a better inside reading of how this actualization looks like. You have in the intelligence community in the United States, clearly also opposite views. The intelligence estimate of the U.S. repeatedly was in the recent period, that Iran is presently making no sign of trying to acquire a nuclear weapon. That has been stated emphatically by U.S. intelligence. But then at the same time, there seem to be other voices contradicting the situation.

Since this is all very murky—at least to somebody who does not have access to these privileged sources, I say the only thing we can do is to express very clearly the need for mankind to move to a totally different approach to make relations among nations human. We are human beings, and we are the creative species. If we cannot come up with a solution, who should? There is no other force which can intervene and remedy the situation other than people of good will on this planet.

[4] I think that the likelihood that there was some complicity, pre-knowledge, and even possible aid is very likely. On the other side, as we saw in the case of the operation in Russia, where Ukraine attacked the nuclear bombers at five military bases, they had penetrated Russia and put in these drones; concealed them in trucks and other facilities. So, I think something similar has been reported about Iran, that the Mossad—or whatever intelligence services of Israel—also had infiltrated Iran and put their drone facilities there. So, this is all very difficult. It is a fact that the Mossad is known to have one of the best intelligence

services in the world.

However, I think the situation probably is more complex, given the aspect which Dennis Small just mentioned. It is the old debate: Is the United States controlled by the Zionist lobby, which some people have been saying? Or, is it the other way around, that it is forces inside the Anglo-American empire which are periodically using Israel for their own strategic purposes? Then, you have a coincidence of interests like Netanyahu has an interest right now not to go to jail; and that is then being used in a certain way.

I think that in a certain sense the big question is, did President Trump know? In the case of Ukraine, he claimed he didn't know. That was then used by the British media to the hilt to say he lost all authority, he's not in the loop. He's not really in charge. Here in this case, Trump said he was informed ahead of time, leaving open the question of whether he agreed, or tried to stop it, or none of the above. It's very difficult to answer that question. I think we have a situation where even in the Trump administration, there are still a lot of remnants of what was called the Deep State from the previous Biden administration. It's very difficult to judge to what extent what belongs to whom. So, I hate to tell you that I can't give you a more satisfactory answer, other than to say that to run an operation in a country which is more than a thousand kilometers away—because that's the distance between Israel and Iran—it used to require refueling from NATO refueling planes. I can only say that the likelihood that it was known, they were aided; but I cannot answer that question for the reasons I just said.

Q: Aside from online forums, couldn't we organize an international peace summit or event in person? For example, in Paris, Johannesburg, or another country, to definitively bring peace to all four corners of the world?

ZEPP-LAROCHE: Well, we are trying to do something

approximating that. We just had a very relevant conference of the Schiller Institute in the United States. We will have one in Germany at the beginning of July. You can send in your registration, and then we will inform you of the details.

I think it would be very important to keep building the IPC. Actually, if you take the discussion of today and last week, they are so important. I think we need to increase the number of individuals and organizations who are participating in this. I think we are making progress, but we are still very far from being powerful enough to do exactly what you are proposing. I can only say, let's make the intermediate step to double, quadruple, increase ten times the power of the IPC weekly dialogue. Then maybe if we get some more organizations from around the world who will respond to what you are saying, I think this idea of a peace summit is a very laudable idea.

[re Q on Brits fueling India/Pakistan conflict, Ukraine/Russia conflict] I think that question requires some real attention. In the recent period it was very clear that the British government—especially in the case of Ukraine—had a leading role in sabotaging the peace in March 2022. Boris Johnson flew into Kyiv after a deal had been reached between Russia and Ukraine in Istanbul; he told Zelenskyy to keep on fighting. In the recent period, it was always Starmer going to Biden, encouraging him on the long-range missiles to be used inside the territory of Russia. So, it was a long history. But especially in the very recent period, after the drone attacks on the nuclear bombers in Russia, several Russian officials from Putin to Lavrov to Zakharova, Ryabkov, Medvedev, Volodin; many of them referred to the specific role of the British in being responsible for providing the Ukrainians with the necessary intelligence and support.

Now, that is such a serious accusation; and Lavrov said it's actually proven that that's the case. Whereupon the *Financial Times* had nothing better to do than to say, "No, the Ukrainians were capable all by themselves to do this. They are

now the leading force in drone fighting because of their experience on the battlefield. So, there was no involvement on the side of the British.

I think we need to investigate this internationally very solidly. Before today, Friday the 13th, the day Israel attacked Iran. But until yesterday evening, I believed that the hottest situation was the one between Ukraine and Russia; very much because of this attack on the nuclear triad of Russia, which, as mentioned earlier, was a sacred law in the Cold War that you would never do that, because it brings about the danger of triggering a nuclear war extremely closely.

I think that in all international law, preparing for a war of aggression is outlawed. The argument that Russia committed an unprovoked war of aggression is being debated by a lot of people; especially American scholars from Mearsheimer to Jeffrey Sachs to Alistair Cooke. I could make a long list of people who have provided evidence that that story doesn't hold. If it's the case that there is a government instigation of what could easily lead to a nuclear war, and therefore the annihilation of the human species, does that not require an independent commission of experts trying to put the story together? Trying to establish that the British have this role, isn't that the time to raise that as an issue? For example, in the other countries of the Coalition of the Willing, do we want to follow an example? Germany, without any explanation, will cease to exist.

Ted Postol was on a program with us a couple of months ago, in which he showed in detail the graphics of the hundreds of nuclear bombs which will fall on Germany if this escalates. The sending of the Taurus would be exactly such an escalation. This is being mooted repeatedly by Chancellor Merz. Is that not an issue which we have to raise in the population of the Coalition of the Willing? Do we want to support this, if it can be established that the British have this role? Even more, in the other countries in Europe in NATO? The reason we have a

Coalition of the Willing is because not everybody is on the same line. The East Europeans are not on that line; Hungary, Slovakia, Croatia, even Georgia, Serbia. There are many countries in the Balkans which do not agree with that. Southern Europeans—Portugal, Spain, Italy—are clearly not on the same line; otherwise they would be part of the Coalition of the Willing, or it would be just the EU and NATO. But it's not, because they don't agree.

I think what we need to do before it is too late, is really look at this question and put this story together. If the British are doing what the Russians claim, it would be an absolute question of self-preservation and survival for the other countries to completely distance themselves from such a policy. I think it really calls for a group of independent intellectual scholars and experts to investigate this question with great speed.

[re Q on role of Pope Leo XIV] I think the role of Pope Leo XIV in my view can be a very positive one. The very first statement he made as Pope was to call for peace. Now, I think the other important statement he made was to say, "Let's use development as the new weapon for peace." The encyclical *Rerum Novarum* clearly was a watershed in the history of the Church and the history of mankind in general, because it established the social doctrine of the Church; which was an idea which was always debated. The question was, is the Church just to be praying; do you just have to be faithful? Or, should it have an effect in the real world with good works? The Leibnizean tradition was that it has to be combined with good works; and that was an idea which was taken up in a different form in Vatican II, where the idea was that the Church has to intervene in earthly affairs. This was a very important step, and I think likewise today, if the religious leaders of the world would unite around the conceptions we have been talking about, and we had an open letter to Pope Francis calling on religious leaders to do exactly that. Now, we have a new open

letter to Pope Leo XIV which I think could help to catalyze this. The Vatican has repeatedly through both Pope Leo XIV, but also Cardinal Parolin, offered the venue of the Vatican for peace negotiations. I still think that between Istanbul and Rome, these are two places where such rallying of religious leaders could take place. Any kind of organizing effort to encourage that would be helpful, because religious leaders should be the moral instance. Unfortunately, many of them are emphatically warning against war, the military-industrial complex, the use of force to settle conflicts; but I think there are still many steps to add.

So, I can only encourage it, but I think it does require a much more determined idea to intervene in the world now. So, that's what I would say.

Closing Remarks

Q: Would there be lasting peace if the Islamic world accepted the Biblical authority of Israel over the land and absorbed the Palestinians into their lands? From an evangelical point of view, Israel has a 3,500-year historic presence in that land; plus a divine promise in the Old Testament.

ZEPP-LAROUCHE: I don't want to go into the Old Testament, because I'm not that firm; I'm not even that firm in the New Testament, because I'm Catholic. And contrary to the Protestants, we Catholics are not known to be so Bible secure—I'm kidding. This is a joke we have in Germany between the Catholics and the Protestants.

I think that the question of who has the rightful access or property rights to what some people call the Holy Land, and others call other names; I think we need a two-state solution. I think it's such a loaded history. Should the Palestinians pay the price for what the Germans committed in terms of the genocide against the Jews? I don't think so, because it's the perpetuation of injustices. It's what Friedrich Schiller

called in his *Wallenstein* trilogy, the curse of the evil deed, that it must permanently give birth to more evil deeds. [says it in German] I think that is a principle which Dennis was alluding to before. You have to have a certain fresh start. The two-state solution in my view has much more potential for resolving that than if there would be a one-state where the Palestinians are absorbed as you say into the Israeli state. Simply because I think the question of sovereignty of a people is a fundamental right, and in my view the precondition that people can organize their own affairs. That eventually, we will overcome national borders, I also believe. If you look at humanity 10,000 years ahead, I don't necessarily think we will have the same kind of nation-states because we will have grown into a completely different species because of space travel, by making colonies on the Moon and Mars and other nearby heavenly bodies. I think the identity of mankind will change to become more one.

But for the time being, I think the principle of national sovereignty and the right to organize your own affairs accordingly, I see as an irreplaceable prerequisite to solve this question. So, also what will be the shape of these two states? If you look at it now, it's a very thin strip of places where people can live because they have access to water. The management of water has been a big source of war. It looks desperately unsolvable. But if you take the approach of the Oasis Plan, let's say the countries of the West agree to take the Belt and Road Initiative proposed by China several years ago for the Middle East, you could extend the Belt and Road corridors. You can expand all of the big corridor projects—the north-south corridor from Russia to India, the CPEC corridor between China and Pakistan, and similar projects. You do the Oasis Plan large-scale; desalination of ocean water. You create a new system of weather patterns by having plenty of water. You reconquer from the desert arid land which can be used for agriculture, for forestry, for orchids. You build infrastructure, because you need water to

have infrastructure. You can build new cities. If you think ahead by 20, 30, 40 years, 50 years, can you not imagine that the entire region between India and the Mediterranean, the Caucasus and the Persian Gulf and the Gulf States; that that entire region which right now is almost entirely desert. If we use these methods of manmade agriculture—not where water already is, but you reconquer the deserts which are now growing every year. You reverse that and make them shrink that every year by making more land livable for the people.

My idea is that the Middle East in a few decades could look like Europe in terms of infrastructure. If you look at the infrastructure network in Europe, you have waterways, highways, unfortunately not so many fast trains—but still, there is a train system which is connected. Such an approach in terms of infrastructure could be developed all over Southwest Asia. That would create completely different conditions for everybody to live in. I think if we want to solve this horrendous situation, I can only hope that by the time we end this discussion today, we don't have a new horror in the news in terms of escalation. We are sitting on a powder keg.

I think the best thing we can do is promote this idea of economic development for all of Southwest Asia. Maybe we cannot stop this immediate war escalation; that requires diplomatic interventions and things like that. But if we give a vision of a completely different future to all the people in the region, maybe we can activate a social process whereby the forces will become stronger than the forces of war. I personally think that is the only way we can arrive at a lasting peace. That will also be a topic at our upcoming European conference. We will propose very concretely how to make the Oasis Plan a real perspective. We will have a gigantic perspective of joint ventures to develop Africa.

So, I think the idea of development is the new peace should be the message which everybody goes out of today's discussion

with.