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From Panel 1 The World Land-Bridge: It’s Being Built!

The Power of the BRICS Process: Views from the UK — Robert Oulds

Interview with Robert Oulds, Director of the Bruges Group; Councillor
 (Conservative), London Borough of Hounslow, UK

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Gabrielle Peut: Good afternoon, my name is Gabrielle Peut and I am here in Westminster, London and today I am joined by Robert Oulds who is one of the directors of the Bruges Group. Good afternoon Robert.

Now Robert, just for our audience, I know you are a military historian, you’re also a local government councillor for the London borough of Hounslow. You’re very active in the Conservative Party and of course, you have been a long-time director of the Bruges Group, an organisation opposed to the European Union’s encroachment on the sovereignty of European nations, and of course you have just written the book, *Everything You Wanted to Know about the EU—but Were Afraid to Ask*, which of course documents the EU’s dictatorial powers, which has a good circulation here in the United Kingdom for you. And you’re also a regular commentator in the media. The actual president of the Bruges Group, Lord Norman Tebbit, was a senior cabinet minister in the Margaret Thatcher government and former chairman of the Conservative Party. He has been very outspoken in his support for Glass-Steagall, to actually rein in the City of London, elements of which have played a leading role in creating the European Union in the first place. So, could you give us your thinking on the necessity for Glass-Steagall?

Robert Oulds: Well, in Britain at the moment, there’s a situation where, of course, depositors’ money has been put at risk by financial activities that have been done without people’s consent and has been railroaded through. We have a situation where the British government really isn’t in control of things. There are international institutions, the European Union being just one of them, but also Basel, the Financial Stability Board, a whole host of global and sub-regional organisations like the EU, which are making decisions which affect our lives, and this really does have to end. And power isn’t actually in the hands of normal people, people who would vote in elections. Often their elections don’t make any difference because power has rested with elites who have the political and of course the financial control. And we’ve seen recently, just within a few years, about how the City of London, through making massive losses, put billions at risk, and millions are in danger of losing their deposits and had to be rescued at tax payers’ expense. This situation just cannot continue.

Peut: Obviously Glass-Steagall is the very key piece of legislation that would end that immediately.

Oulds: Absolutely! That would make a separation between mad financial speculation which is not under the control of ordinary depositors, and protect people's deposits within the banks, which would be safe and which would separate the two arms of banking.

Peut: Now, Robert, I had the privilege of seeing this. About 12 months ago, the Bruges Group made a documentary which featured several prominent Conservative Party MPs and they were attacking the expansion of the EU and NATO because of it expanding right on to Russia's borders. You were narrating that video, and you yourself sharply warned against this policy, and of course I know you are looking at going back to Ukraine very soon to make another documentary on the same subject. How do you see the situation there at present?

Oulds: Well, really one of the whole issues about the European Union is that it puts big business interests and big financial interests above those of ordinary citizens. That is why we see massively high unemployment across Southern Europe, when of course indebted nations are still having to hand over money to financial institutions that have recklessly lent them money, and we are seeing this system being expanded right up against the borders of Russia, taking in Ukraine, against the strong objections of many people within that country. And there was a democratically elected president who won an election fairly in 2010, the former president Viktor Yanukovich who was overthrown in what was really a western-backed putsch, or some describe it as a coup, and replaced by a rump that was pro-European Union, pro-United States. This caused a great deal of divisions within Ukraine and led to a war, effectively, when people rejected the coup government and [were] then subject to attack from the new authorities that had taken power in Kiev.

We warned that this would happen and the western meddling in Ukraine has destabilised that country, created a failed state. Really, a lot of this is to do about isolating Russia. It is not just about the expansion of the European Union, an expansion of western influence, although that is part of it, but also they want to restrict Russia as an independent voice in the world. Russia has a different vision that isn't subservient to European Union or American-led institutions. It has its own voice in the world, and for some that can't be tolerated. Ukraine's neutrality was not tolerated or accepted by the West, so a puppet government, which is actually in reality what is running Ukraine at the moment, was put in power. Thousands of people have now lost their lives and a million people have been forced out of their homes, primarily by the Ukrainian Armed Forces and various militias, and these people have sought refuge in Russia, which is actually very telling. They are not fleeing the Russians, they are actually fleeing the Ukrainian Armed Forces and paramilitary organisations, some funded by various oligarchs, and [who] are deeply unsettling people.

Peut: Exactly, and of course this isolation of Russia is not just Russia on its own, as we know with our own policy in Australia, the Government's policy in Australia, with the targeting of China.

You, among hundreds of personalities, prominent personalities internationally, have signed a call issued by the Schiller Institute chairman, Mrs. Helga Zepp-LaRouche, that is entitled, “The U.S. and Europe Must Have the Courage to Reject Geopolitics and Collaborate with the BRICS”, and of course, it is Russia/China/India/Brazil and South Africa, that has become a new cultural paradigm, [which] is the threat to western interests, both in the City of London in the UK and of course Wall Street in America. Since you endorsed the call Robert, can you elaborate why you did so?

Oulds: The isolation of Russia is not just about foreign policy, it is also about protecting American and European-led institutions like the World Bank and the IMF, both of which have a very bad reputation amongst developing nations. And it is about really accepting that there is a growing world out there, there are growing alternatives to the common, in a sense failed, economic systems put out by the EU, which has just created massive unemployment, and of course American-led domination, all of which come with very heavy strings attached. If one is going to be close to the United States and organisations such as the World Bank, then often you have to accept American foreign policy. Being close to the EU means you are tied down to EU policies, and of course an emerging EU foreign policy and a defence policy which is closely operating with the United States. At times there have been tensions, but usually the EU and the U.S. act together on the global stage. Europe and America have basically been stitching things up. Such as: the leadership of the IMF always goes to a European, and the World Bank always goes to someone from the U.S. They’ve been stitching things up for far too long; and one-sided trade deals—when practicing protection at home, [but] harming developing nations. But the world is beginning to change.

There is much more economic growth now outside of the old European powers, even outside of the United States. There are emerging countries that want to have trade, that want to develop their economies, often without strings attached, without the political consequences. One can trade with China without them demanding that you follow their foreign policy. They are not, in a sense, imperialist states, to use old language. They are nations that want to open up their economies, but they want our economies to be opened up, as well, and there are real opportunities out there. The world is changing. We need to recognise that. We need to treat these countries as equals and partners. Really, social development, eliminating poverty, will happen through economic growth, and there’s much economic growth going on in other parts of the world. Let’s engage with that and break free of political chains which have tied up independent democratic nation states in large parts of Europe, and around the world, and tied up citizens’ interests, and put those first, and go out into the world and trade freely.

Peut: The more [people], here in the United Kingdom, that come out in support of the BRICS proposal (because it is a real new paradigm), do you think that that will also help change the attitude that is coming from the UK, particularly from Cameron, who has been supporting the expansion of NATO onto Russia’s borders, and has been supporting with trainees going into Ukraine? Is that one of the other reasons that you

and the Bruges Group have made such an emphatic stance, to change a certain direction coming from the United Kingdom?

Oulds: Yes, the attitude of the United Kingdom is one of being subservient to the United States and also the European Union interests and has actually been sending weapons to Ukraine, Scorpion armoured personnel carriers. So far, they have resulted in the deaths of civilians, when they've accidentally been crashed. Really, these are weapons that will be used on the front line.

David Cameron himself has called for the expansion of the European Union from the Atlantic to the Urals. That is actually deeply insulting to the Russians! This is actually reminiscent of language that was used in the 1930s and 1940s. I don't know whether David Cameron realises that or not, but Russia is very worried about its security, it feels bullied by western nations. Russia has been recently establishing its own Eurasian Customs Union, yet the United States has been opposed to that because they don't want Russia to have good trade links with other nations, even though other countries within the Commonwealth of Independent States, the former Soviet states, have good trade links with Russia, as most certainly Ukraine did. They don't want those expansions.

The United States was even objecting to the development of the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank. Yet of course these activities should actually be welcomed, because this is about a new economic paradigm, it's about economic growth being spread to other regions. Really, the United States and the European Union need to let go, need to stop bullying and need to allow other countries to fulfil their own destinies and expand their own economies, and improve their citizens' lives accordingly, without such strings attached.

Peut: Excellent. Thank you Robert for your time today.

Oulds: My pleasure.