The ongoing collapse of the global financial system is unstoppable, Lyndon LaRouche told an audience in Washington, D.C. on May 17, in his keynote address to a Schiller Institute conference on global economic development. The conference was attended by elected officials, diplomats, and Schiller Institute supporters from across the U.S. and around the world.

The collapse will continue, said LaRouche, until the patient collapses—or until remedies are introduced equivalent to a Chapter 11 bankruptcy. LaRouche said the measures he has proposed for ending the global financial crisis, which derive from the American System of political economy, must be adopted soon, or humanity itself will be at risk.

His wife, Helga Zepp-LaRouche, a former candidate for German Chancellor and the founder of the Schiller Institute, gave a second keynote speech, reporting on the growing awareness of the nature of the crisis in Europe. We can revive the world economy, she said, with the methods the Americans used after World War II, to rebuild Germany from a rubble field into one of the world’s strongest economies.

Shape Public Opinion

The challenge to policy-makers, most importantly President Clinton, LaRouche stressed, is whether they are dominated by opinion polls, or shape public opinion.

Speaking directly to the policy-makers in the audience, which included many state legislators, LaRouche urged them to “not ask what the public thinks; instead, ask what the media has done to brainwash them.” The public is illiterate, he said, watching television news programming that is worse than soap opera.

Congress is perhaps even worse, he said, and more divorced from reality than politicians at the state level. A typical Congressman is looking for $10,000 a day to finance his next election campaign. He hires a media consultant, or hitman, who says, “You have to talk to the money.” But those with money are engaging in speculation, so the agenda of the media consultant is the same as Phil Gramm and Newt Gingrich. They tell the Congressman, “you must stroke these money sources as an ant strokes an aphid to get the milk.”

“We must go against prevailing public opinion,” LaRouche said, to provide real leadership, of the sort given by the best American Presidents: Washington, Lincoln, FDR, Kennedy. As Kennedy discussed it in his Profiles in Courage, we require leaders of people with the courage to shape public opinion, not follow it.

President Must Lead

LaRouche underscored the fact that the solution to the economic crisis lies in President Clinton’s leadership. What we’re asking the President to do, LaRouche said, in a period of great crisis and with little support even in his own party, is to stick his neck out; to come to a conclusion that corresponds with reality, not the opinion of CNN or Rush Limbaugh. We’re asking it because he’s President, and only from that office can leadership be provided to solve this crisis, as Roosevelt did in World War II, and as Kennedy did in his short tenure.

Our job, LaRouche stressed, is to see that President Clinton is well advised and supported in these matters. He has to do the job. And if he does it in the U.S., it would be welcomed and supported in Russia, Ukraine, China, Japan, and throughout Africa and South and Central America.