



## The Threat of Nuclear Weapons with Noam Chomsky

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**Bianca Mugenyi (BM):** Welcome. Welcome to everyone at home. Today is a landmark day in the struggle to abolish nuclear weapons. The Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons entered into force today, making nuclear weapons illegal under international law. The treaty prohibits nations from developing, testing, producing, manufacturing, transfer and possessing, stockpiling, using or threatening to use nuclear weapons. But Canada has not signed the treaty and we want to change this. So given the dangers, the tremendous dangers of nuclear weapons, the TPNW is a beacon. And in 2017 there were one hundred and twenty two countries that voted in favor of the treaty's adoption at the United Nations. But Canada was not among them and voted against establishing talks for the treaty and then boycotted the negotiations, which two thirds of all countries attended. More recently, Canada voted against the December UN resolution supporting the TPNW. A vote backed by one hundred and thirty UN member states that reaffirmed support for the treaty on the Prohibition of nuclear weapons. Simply put, our government has been hostile to the initiative. The Trudeau government voted against holding the conference to negotiate the treaty, failed to attend the 2017 conference at which two thirds of the world were represented, as I mentioned. And incredibly, they've been doing all of this while asserting their commitment to achieving a world free of nuclear weapons. The liberals also claim they're seeking to advance a feminist foreign policy, seeking to advance international rules-based order. Yet we know the TPNW has been dubbed the first feminist law on nuclear weapons as it recognizes the disproportionate impact of nuclear weapons on women and girls. So we know that the TPNW strengthens the international rules-based order by making weapons that have always been immoral, also illegal. But there's this huge gap between the words and action of the government on nuclear policy and it's up to us to increase the pressure on Trudeau to live up to this rhetoric, to sign the UN nuclear ban treaty. But the good news is that the momentum is high. There have been a series of initiatives just this week to pressure the government. Nearly one hundred groups placed ads in The Hill Times. The Senate was briefed on the need to sign the TPNW. There was a Liberal NDP bloc Green press conference that took place yesterday, and there's multiple positions in circulation, which you'll see in the chat. So that's our celebration. We're celebrating by urging the government to join the TPNW and get on the right side of history. So it's in this context that I'm incredibly excited to be hosting this talk

with world renowned intellectual Noam Chomsky, who graciously accepted our invite to mark this momentous day in a struggle to abolish nuclear weapons. Noam Chomsky is a linguist, professor, a cognitive scientist, historian, social critic and political activist. He's currently a laureate professor of linguistics at the University of Arizona. Welcome, Noam.

**Noam Chomsky (NC):** Thank you very much. And hello to the many friends whose names I've seen flashing across the screen and to everyone else. April 6th, 1945, is a day that's indelibly etched in my memory. And not just the hideous events themselves. Also, the recognition that human intelligence was sending... Maybe descending to the level where we'll soon be able to destroy everything. That achievement came a few years later when the U.S. and USSR included thermonuclear weapons and the minute hand of the famed Doomsday Clock moved to two minutes to midnight, the closest it has been until recently. If I can interpolate a personal anecdote, which still has pertinence today, maybe more than ever: on April 6th, I happened to be a counselor at a summer camp. In the morning, the loudspeaker of the camp announced that Hiroshima had been attacked by an atomic bomb. It was huge destruction, the city in flames, an enormous number of people destroyed. Everyone heard the announcement. The next minute, they went back to their normal activities, baseball game, swimming pool, whatever it might have been.

I was so appalled, I couldn't believe it. I simply took off and went off into the woods by myself and tried to think about it. A couple hours later I came back. I've never gotten over that feeling. And we are in exactly the same situation now. Yes, horrible. Destroy the world, destroy all life. Let's go on with our next activity. I'm not the only one who thinks this. Others do. William Perry, the former defense secretary who's spent his entire life in the nuclear weapons system, describes himself as terrified by the growing threat of nuclear war and doubly terrified by the fact that so few seem to care. That's the situation we're in. Well, let's go back to the Doomsday Clock. When President Trump took office, the minute hand began to move towards midnight. It's a process that has continued every year that he's been in office. More recently, also taking into account the destruction of the environment that sustains life. Two years ago the minute hand once again reached two minutes to midnight. Last January, the analysts abandoned minutes and shifted the seconds. 100 seconds to midnight. That's some of the bad news. There's also good news. Trump is gone, at least temporarily, though the poisons he has unleashed are not gone.

The next setting of the clock in a few days will probably cease the grim course towards terminal destruction. And there's more good news: there are feasible solutions to the extraordinary challenges we face for nuclear weapons. The solution is straightforward. Rid the earth of these monstrous creations of the human drive to species suicide. Today marks a momentous step forward in the path towards sanity, the entry into force of the United Nations Treaty for the Prohibition of nuclear weapons signed by 122 nations that could herald a new dawn. It could if it were not for the bad news. The bad news is that the signers do not yet include the nuclear powers themselves, and that little word yet signifies the momentous task

that lies before those of us who hope for a better future. In fact, the future at all. Those who've reviewed the record know that it's a near miracle that we have survived the nuclear age thus far.

Whether because of numerous accidents or in some cases, the reckless actions of political leaders, the threats are now increasing or returned to that. They now include non-state actors who prey on the spread of nuclear weapons technology. There are some leading authorities, like Graham Allison of Harvard, who assign a very high probability to nuclear terrorism, most likely a dirty bomb that spreads radiation with lethal effects over large areas. If that happens, it will be the second case of explosion of a dirty bomb. The first was conducted under tight secrecy on July 16th, 1945. That was the first detonation of a nuclear device. The Trinity test is another date which will live in infamy. The test was conducted with little planning about possible civilian casualties. It was rushed so that the results would be available to President Truman in the imminent Potsdam Conference on the shape of the nuclear - of the postwar world. After many decades of evasion and deceit, it was finally conceded that although the explosion was in an area that had been assumed to be largely uninhabited, there was in fact a sharp spike in infant deaths after the explosion. Details remain obscure. A second dirty bomb in densely populated New York could make 9/11 seem like a minor accident. There's more to say about the Trinity test. According to the eminent physicist Hans Bethe, shortly before the test, his colleague, Enrico Fermi took bets on whether the Earth's atmosphere would be ignited by the test, destroying all life on Earth. It was considered a remote possibility, according to Hans Bethe's calculation reviewed by other leading physicists. A remote possibility, but not impossible.

Was this experiment necessary? Well, let's assume that the project should have been carried out at all, could there have been a delay until technology was more advanced and the risks of total incineration, however slight, could have been averted? Not to speak of the dead babies. Such questions were dismissed in face of the need to strengthen Truman's hands at Potsdam were he alone, knew the terrible secret and could act accordingly. Well, this is indicative of the mentality that has prevailed through the nuclear age up to the present. That's nothing new among great statesmen of the past. But now the stakes are vastly greater than ever before.

Though the nuclear armed states have not yet signed the treaty on the prohibition of nuclear weapons, even among them, prominent figures have at or advocated this stance. In the United States, in a joint statement by Henry Kissinger, joined by Reagan's secretary of state George Shultz, Sam Nunn, Senate's leading specialist on nuclear weapons, and former Defense Secretary William Perry, whose career has been devoted to nuclear weapons in Canada, seven former Canadian prime ministers and foreign defense ministers, including Lloyd Axworthy signed an open letter in September 2020 calling on the government to, in their words, show courage and boldness by joining the treaty. I'm quoting this morning's National Observer, Canada. Even short of abolition, important steps can be taken. One category is the elaborate arms control regime that was laboriously constructed in the past 60 years. Another

is the establishment of nuclear weapons free zones around the world. The fate of these measures tells us a great deal about the world we are now facing.

Until this millennium, there was slow but significant progress in constructing an arms control regime since 2000, it has been virtually dismantled. The destruction began with President George W. Bush. He withdrew the United States from the Nixon version of ABM Treaty. The demolition job was virtually completed by Trump, who canceled the Reagan-Gorbachev INF treaty. More recently, the Open Skies Treaty that goes back to Eisenhower and rejected Russian requests to renew the new START treaty due to expire in a few weeks. With these gone, the arms control regime collapses. Fortunately, in the first few days in office, President Biden offered to extend the new START treaty, offering some hope. Equally good news this morning, the Kremlin accepted, in fact, welcomed this acceptance of what had been their position. Well, dismantling the limited protections afforded by arms control, Trump also escalated the threat of catastrophe by developing new and much more dangerous weapons systems. The lesser powers have been making their own similar contributions to disaster.

I'll return in a moment to the second way to mitigate the awesome threat of nuclear weapons, nuclear weapons free zones. The fate of these endeavors is highly instructive. But let me take a step aside for a moment with a brief reflection on what's taking place before our eyes. There've been almost four billion years of life on Earth. During these years, one creature very recently has developed higher intelligence of the kind that is completely lacking in the tens of billions of other species that have inhabited the planet. Today, this unique species is using its marvelous gift to race towards species suicide. While knowing full well how to avoid the catastrophe. If this is not an illustration of sheer insanity, I'd like to hear a better one. It's worth thinking about. One can imagine what an extra terrestrial intelligence, if one exists, would make of this spectacle. Well, let's return to Earth and turn to the second way to address the threat of nuclear war, the establishment of nuclear weapons free zones. Now, this approach has had some success. Much of the world has indicated its abhorrence of these hideous inventions by establishing such zones. Latin America, Africa, the Pacific and Canada. A couple of dozen localities, not the government. There are flaws - the Pacific nuclear weapons free zone could not go into effect because France insisted on testing nuclear weapons and its dependencies for some years. They finally stopped. It continues because now the United States maintains nuclear weapons facilities on the islands that it controls. The African nuclear weapons free zone faces a similar barrier.

Great Great Britain insists on maintaining its former colonial possession, Diego Garcia. Britain rejects the judgment of the World Court and the United Nations General Assembly that the true sovereign is African Mauritius. Britain expelled much of the population in order to provide the United States with a military base. This was upgraded to accommodate nuclear weapons under Obama. It's not mere symbolism. Diego Garcia is a major base for U.S. bombing in Central and West Asia, and it blocks full implementation of the African nuclear weapons free zone.

Well, despite these flaws, the steps are important. By far the most important nuclear weapons free zone would be in the Middle East. If it were established, it would eliminate what the United States, Israel, the Gulf dictatorships, what they claim for many years to be one of the greatest threats to world peace. Iranian nuclear programs. The recognition of this threat is not unanimous. United States intelligence has informed Congress that if Iran has plans to develop nuclear weapons, it would be part of Iran's general strategy to deter aggression from its more hostile neighbors, Israel and the Gulf states, which are far more advanced military systems than Iran. But let's put this belief aside. Let's accept the claim that Iran's nuclear programs exist and that they are a leading threat to world peace. Well, every sane person should therefore welcome the possibility of ending the threat peacefully without criminal assassinations, sabotage, large scale cyber war, murder or sanctions to which the world is forced to conform under US threat. Serious tensions, provocations that might lead to a devastating war and war is not a remote possibility. Iran is openly under threat. Threat of attack by the United States and Israel. If it's attacked, it would very likely retaliate with missile attacks on the world's major petroleum facilities in northeast Saudi Arabia. Well, within range after that, one hates to imagine. Well, surely putting an end to these terrible ongoing crimes, horrifying possibilities. That would be a most welcome development if it were possible. And it is possible. In fact, it is simplicity itself. And everyone knows how to establish a nuclear weapons free zone in the Middle East with intensive inspections. Can those extra inspections be reliable? We know the answer. Yes, definitely. Even U.S. intelligence agrees that they were highly reliable before Trump withdrew from the joint agreement on nuclear weapons with Iran. Are there obstacles to establishing the zone? Not from the Arab states, they actually initiated the proposal decades ago. They've been strenuously advocating it ever since. Not from Iran, which for years has strongly called for establishing a nuclear weapons free zone. Not from the global south, former nonaligned countries, G77, now over 130 countries. They, too, have strongly endorsed the proposal. There are no objections from Europe or Asia. So what's the problem? One country stands in the way of the United States. Whenever the opportunity to move forward arises in an international forum it's vetoed by Washington, most recently by President Obama in 2015. Various pretexts are offered, but the real reasons are perfectly evident. The United States wants to protect Israel's nuclear weapons systems from inspection. In fact, the United States does not even officially recognize their existence, though it's not in doubt. And there's a good reason for this stance. If Washington were to recognize officially that Israel has developed nuclear weapons, U.S. law would come into play. It bans U.S. military and economic aid to countries that develop nuclear weapons transfer technology outside the framework of the international nuclear weapons regime. Arguably, then, the vast flood of U.S. aid to Israel, far beyond any parallel, would be illegal. Neither political party in the United States wants to open that door. And no organized force presses the matter, unfortunately. In fact, it is almost totally undiscussable in the United States outside of narrow arms control circles, critical literature. Individuals like me are free to give talks about it reaching a few people. The idea is not officially suppressed in a free country, but it's virtually unmentionable in respectable circles, despite its enormous import.

Also unmentionable in the mainstream is the fact that the United States and Britain have a unique responsibility to establishing a nuclear weapons free zone in the middle in the Middle East. When these two governments were planning their invasion of Iraq, they tried to construct some thin legal cover for the aggression by appealing to United Nations Security Council Resolution 687, 1991, which had called on Iraq to terminate its development of weapons of mass destruction. The two aggressors, U.S. and Britain, claimed falsely that Iraq had failed to do so. You take a look at Resolution 687, you discover that it commits its signers to move to establish a nuclear weapons free zone in the Middle East. So although Iraq under Saddam had in fact complied with Resolution 687, the United States and Britain continue to violate it in isolation. These are no minor facts. Tensions in the Middle East are very real and ominous for the region and for the world. Many of the tensions arise from Iran's nuclear programs and the alleged threat that they pose. An existential threat that calls for a violent reaction in the official Israeli version, often echoed in the United States, is then of considerable import that there's a straightforward way to resolve the matter peaceably, and that is beyond discussion. Forty years ago, some of the largest demonstrations in history took place in North America and Europe, protesting plans to install highly destabilizing weapons in Europe. That was a large part of the background for the Reagan-Gorbachev treaty in 1987, banning these weapons, significantly lowering the threat of war. The treaty was demolished by Trump's wrecking ball on the eve of Hiroshima day in 2019, followed at once by deployment of weapons violating the treaty so as to show that Trump really meant business in marching to disaster. With today's progress in ending this hideous era, we should remember the events of 40 years ago. And the many other occasions when popular mobilization, dedicated action made a difference. Without it, we will drift between regression and normalcy, a state that cannot be tolerated. The tasks are very clear. Thank you.

**BM:** Thank you so much, Noam, for your brilliant presentation for filling us in on both recent developments, as well as the very critical history that we need to be able to piece all of this together and for reminding us just how very, very terrible the threat posed by these weapons is and by extension, the need for action and pressure from civil society.

So we're now moving on to the Q&A portion, looking very forward to hearing more from you, Professor Chomsky, during this period. And we have lots of questions from the audience. We have a question from Phillippe Michelle-Simmer: "What is the best counter argument to the proposition that nuclear weapons deter great powers from waging direct wars against each other?"

David Sambora asks: "I studied political science and international relations as an undergrad in the late 70s, and they had us read a lot of scary stuff by Kissinger regarding, quote unquote, options for tactical nuclear warfare. Do you know if this mindset still exists in Washington?"

**NC:** You can argue that possibly the threat of suicide has deterred powers from waging war. It's not very easy to give an argument for that, but it's not impossible. But we have to balance that against something else. The very serious possibility that nuclear weapons will be used. If you look over the record, as I mentioned, there have been literally hundreds of cases where just some accident - misinterpretation of data - brought us close to the point where the president had to decide whether to push the button. We only have data from the United States and it's shattering enough. Now the Russian systems are much more primitive. They don't have the same satellite observation possibilities. We can be certain that there have been many more near accidents on their side. In fact, we know of some cases. So 1983, the Reagan administration had made the brilliant decision to try to probe Russian defenses by simulating attacks against Russia. Ground air sea attacks, including nuclear attacks that took for granted that the Russians would understand this is just an exercise. Well, it wasn't so simple. One point - this is called Operation Able Archer, if you want to look it up, there's debate now when the Russian archives came out about how seriously they took it. In 1983, there was an event where the Russian system, response automated system, detected a major missile attack. The protocol was that it went to an individual whose name happened to be Vladimir Petrov. His task was to transmit it to the Politburo and then on to the senior commanders. Then to the decision whether to launch a strike before they're destroyed. He decided not to do it. He thought that it didn't make sense under the conditions at the time for the United States to be launching an attack, so he made a decision not to do it. Suppose he'd been replaced by somebody else or by the kind of artificial intelligence system that's now being considered? We might all be dead. We don't know how many incidents like that there were. We do know of others. Another one that we know very well known here as a case of radically irresponsible acts by leaders, was in 1962, described often as the most dangerous moment in world history - the Cuban Missile Crisis. We tend to look just at the crisis, Khrushchev putting missiles in Cuba. Dangerous enough. Reckless enough, but there's something behind it.

The United States had been carrying out a major terrorist war against Cuba. Launched by President Kennedy in the hands of his brother, Robert Kennedy, for whom it was his prime responsibility to bring what was called the terrors of the Earth to Cuba. And it was very serious. There's some talk here about efforts to assassinate Castro, bad enough. That was the least of it. It was major attacks all through Cuba. In August 1962, President Kennedy authorized officially a escalation of the attacks intended to lead to an uprising in October 1962, which would be followed by a U.S. invasion in October 1962. How much the Cubans and Russians knew about this? We don't know for sure. But they could see the escalation on the ground and they could imagine what might be happening. Khrushchev sent missiles. One major reason was to deter an impending invasion. Well, that led to the crisis. Very close to total destruction at one moment in the crisis towards the end, the United States had imposed a quarantine around Cuba, blocking ships from entering Cuba. There were Russian nuclear armed submarines in the area. They were not designed for the Caribbean. They were designed for the North Sea. They were barely livable inside. Temperatures up to, you know,

impossibly high temperatures. Crewmen fainting. They were being attacked by American destroyers who were dropping death bombs. At one point, they lost contact with high authorities. The commanders then had the authority to launch torpedoes, which were, in fact, nuclear tipped nuclear weapons. In one submarine, the commander decided to launch them. Protocol was the three officers had to agree. Two agreed. One - Vasily Arkhipov - didn't agree. We're alive. If they had launched those nuclear missiles, the U.S. surely would have attacked with nuclear missiles in Europe. We'd be done. That's the downside of maintaining nuclear weapons, a small part of it. So with that history understood, and it should be placing that in the balance against the conceivable possibility that the nuclear weapons might have a deterrent effect. It leads to a judgment which I think is pretty clear. We cannot risk living in a world like that.

**BM:** The next question is: what incentive may there be for Canada to sign the TPNW beyond the obvious threat of nuclear weapons? What might push the government more towards becoming a signatory instead of hesitating behind deterrence policies and their NATO membership? First part of the question. Second question: is it possible to sign the treaty and remain in NATO or for that matter, be allied with the US? Does signing mean outlawing all of the ways Canadian industry supports nuclear weapons?

**NC:** If I understood the first had to do with membership in NATO, the second with helping in the design and development of nuclear weapons.

**BM:** Correct.

**NC:** Very good questions. I think they answer themselves. Should Canada be part of an international military organization that is dedicated to the use of nuclear weapons, meaning terminal destruction? That's a question for Canadians to answer. My own feeling is that if membership is continued, it should be contingent on the commitment to join the treaty for the prohibition of nuclear weapons and to act effectively to move in that direction. If membership is accepted at all on the second question seems to me criminal for anyone in any fashion to contribute to the development of weapon systems that are capable of destroying life on Earth and in fact are being designed for that purpose. Just take a look at the latest strategic planning, a nuclear strategic program of the United States, the Trump administration's 2018 strategy program - nuclear strategy program. Just read what it says. It says it wants to shift U.S. policy away from what was called the global war on terror, which is in fact radically increased the threat of terror around the world, but shift attention away from that to a confrontation with major nuclear powers. The United States, it says, should develop the capability of waging a simultaneous war against China and Russia and defeating them. That is... The word insanity isn't the right word. There is no word in the language to describe this form of inconceivable madness. Any struggle, any conflict with Russia and China would wipe us all out and we have to have a strategy designed to destroy both of them. I mean, how do you even talk about this, how can you be an ally of a lunatic country like this? And if you

think this is new, look back at what's public but suppressed. Let's go back to the Clinton years, sane Clinton years. Post-Cold War years. Threat of whatever the threat was of the Soviet Union's gone. We're in the post-Cold War era. The Clinton administration did produce a study of how to react to it. STRATCOM, Strategic command, which is in charge of nuclear weapons, published a very significant document which everyone should read. It's called Essentials of Post-Cold War Deterrence 1995. An amazing document from the liberal side of the spectrum said the United States must maintain a policy of first use of nuclear weapons, even against non-nuclear states. We must create a national persona of irrationality and vindictiveness so that others will be frightened and terrified of us. Now we'll back off. We use nuclear weapons and exactly the way Dan Ellsberg has been describing for years, he's pointed out that if you and I have a gun and we go into a store to rob it and I aim the gun at the storekeeper so he hands over what's in the cash register. We're using the gun even though we didn't shoot it. And that's what we do with nuclear weapons, as this document states explicitly, our national persona - because of our national persona of irrationality and vindictiveness, the shadow of possession of nuclear weapons looms over every crisis. In other words, better get out of the way if we say something because we are irrational and vindictive. Now we can send our nuclear weapons at you. That's using nuclear weapons. I've been very closely paraphrasing. I don't have the text in front of me, but if you look, it's almost an exact quote from the leading document on strategy in the post-Cold War era from the liberal side of the spectrum. So we're between that and the Trump administration, the decision to fight simultaneous wars against two nuclear powers, totally wiping out everything in the world. That's the spectrum within which we are apart from the 122 countries who have signed and supported the treaty on prohibition of nuclear weapons to which we must press others to join.

**BM:** The next question is: could you speak to how the emancipation of women and anti-racist struggles like BLM is linked to the fight against neoliberalism, its toxic offerings such as nuclear weapons of mass destruction?

**NC:** Well, if we look over history, we see the abolition of some form of repression and violence - if it has succeeded - has opened the way to moving on to new forms. The ending of the hideous system of slavery in the United States opened the way for working people to ask the question, what about wage labor? How different is that from slavery? Lead on to very important development. That's been the case over and over. Emancipation of women, amazingly delayed, finally beginning to take shape in recent years, is critically important in itself, but opens the door to consideration of other forms of intolerable violence and threat of violence in the world of the rising concern over racial oppression. Those are the same. We just a couple of days ago commemorated Martin Luther King, mainly remembered for his 1963 "I have a dream" address. That was over - the address was about a pretty narrow issue - voting rights. Though bigger issues were in the background. Well, winning voting rights was a major achievement. It opened the door to furthers. Let's go on with the rest of the program of early 1963, early 1960s, ending poverty in the United States for everyone, blacks and whites, and any other forms of discrimination later years pursued. Finally, it's kind of broken

through by no means sufficiently, but somewhat. And I think that's the dynamism. So going back to emancipation of women, some major issue in itself, it has an impact and it instigates other movements. Partly this one, and in fact, women have very often typically been in the forefront of the struggle against nuclear weapons.

**BM:** Thank you. So I'm going to put forward the next two questions just because we're running out of time together. The first one is: with most of our trade in the US and a long border, how can Canada disengage from US hedge money and develop an independent foreign policy? That's the first one. And then: thank you for your wonderful talk, dear Professor Chomsky? What can the people do at the grassroots level to counter the nuclear threat?

**NC:** Well, at the grassroots level, there's no limit. I mentioned the huge uprisings in the early 80s, biggest demonstrations in history. They had an effect, not enough, but some. They chipped away at the danger. They're part of the background for the INF Treaty of 1987, which was a major step towards giving us some time to survive and to move on to eliminate the threat. Well, those demonstrations ended when the INF treaty was signed. They shouldn't...they should go on to the next step. And that's true right now that we know how it can be done. All through history, demonstrations, mobilizations, popular action have had an impact on public policy. Well, let's pick up the gauntlet and run with it. It can be done right now on all sorts of issues. It's being done. Not enough to some extent on nuclear weapons, to a greater extent on environmental catastrophe. Not enough, but it's having an impact. It can have more. And this relates directly to the question of Canadian foreign policy. Canada's not in a position to confront the Godfather, the United States. We should remember that the world is run kind of like the Mafia. Confronting the Godfather is very dangerous. Not just Canada, but much more powerful states. And take Iran again, the European Union, which could potentially have power comparable to the U.S. if it got its act together. It's not a small place - bigger economy than the United States - is strongly opposed to the Iran sanctions, but they have to conform. Because if they don't conform, the Godfather throws them out of the international financial system. So they complain, but they conform. In fact, we just saw the most dramatic illustration of how the world works. The U.N. sanctions on Iran, which are crushing, destroying the country, killing massive people. The sanctions are opposed by Europe. The U.N. sanctions ran out. The United States called on the United Nations to renew them. Security Council refused. Every U.S. ally was opposed. No problem. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo went back to the Security Council and said, sorry, folks, you're instituting the sanctions. Here they are, they're renewed. Europe complained, but they're not going to do anything about it. The power is too strong. The world doesn't have to be like that for Europe or Canada. Alternative financial systems can be constructed. Pressures can be placed on the United States. Or Canada, countries like Canada, can do things by themselves. Take a look at the Canadian Press this morning, you'll see that, you know, oil and gas companies are screaming their heads off because President Biden canceled the Keystone XL pipeline and they say that's going to harm the growth and development of Canada's oil and gas industries.

In other words, it's going to hamper Canada's commitment to destroy the environment in which human life can continue. Big tragedy. OK. Well, does Canada have to do that? That's part of Canada's foreign policy. Canadian mining enterprises are the bane of the developing world. I've seen it personally for countries where Canadian mining projects are just destroying the possibilities of life. Does Canada have to do that? Does Canada have to refrain from joining the treaty to ban nuclear weapons? Officially, at least, Canada claims not to have any nuclear weapons on its territory. Fine, then sign the treaty saying we're going to join Latin America in a nuclear weapons free zone. That's further pressure on the United States, the whole deal. Well, lots of things can be done. There are limits. As the world now exists, the Godfather imposes limits, but internal forces in the United States can undermine that power in solidarity with actions of others abroad. We can move towards a much better world, not only in the sphere of U.S. power and influence, but in other spheres of violence, repression, as well as China's particularly. All of these things can be done.

**BM:** Thank you. Thank you so much, Professor Chomsky, for reminding us about the power that we do have. That's all the time we have today for Q&A. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you to our audience for your excellent questions. I'm so sorry we couldn't get to all of them. It's been an extraordinary, extraordinary afternoon. Thank you. Thank you to Noam Chomsky for your brilliant presentation.

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