



Former CIA Officer McGovern on Ukraine, NATO & Nord Stream at UN Security Council

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Darren Camilleri (Malta) Security Council President for February 2023: I now give the floor to Mr. Ray McGovern.

Ray McGovern: Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, I would associate myself completely with Professor Sachs's comments. I do not have a prepared text. I was asked to do this less than a day ago. No one suggested what I might say and of course, no one even asked me what I would say. So these are my personal remarks based on my experience for 27 years as an intelligence analyst and as an observer. And I notice that I am called a political activist. Well, this is my way of paying back for the education I got as an intelligence analyst in the US intelligence community.

Now, I would say that on my way here in two airports this morning I noticed a bunch of children, little children and school aged children. And it made me think back to my days as a school age child. I was one of those who hid under my desk because of the threat of the Russian atom bomb, as though that would protect me. Fast forward when I became a professional analyst in chief of the Soviet foreign policy branch at CIA. I was able to tell the president and Henry Kissinger that the Russians were really interested in putting a cap on the arms race. Suffice it to say, I was instrumental in the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty signed in May of 1972. I was there.

30 years of strategic stability. 30. Count them, three decades. When Mr. Bush Jr decided he would leave the ABM Treaty without any real explanation and then Mr. Trump left the INF treaty, which I thought could never be concluded because it involved the destruction, the destruction of a whole class of nuclear tipped intermediate range ballistic missiles in Europe and in Siberia.

Then we had the Open Skies Treaty from which the US left. And now we are warned that the New Start is also in danger. I must say that after the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty was signed, I was feeling euphoric. I need not worry about whether they're building this building just to be demolished by the next nuclear weapon. And it's very sad for me to watch what's going on now where people can't get together and deal. "Verhandeln". That's the German word for negotiate, deal. If you look at it, it comes from the word "Hand". "Die Hand", you reach out "die Hand" and you get to know and you get to understand what is bothering the other party.

Now, I don't want to get ahead of myself here. I do want to talk about Seymour Hersh's article. And I have to say upfront - full disclosure - that I am a friend of Seymour Hersh, and so I will not opine myself. I will cite a very distinguished former US ambassador and also Assistant Secretary of Defense. These are the words he said about Seymour Hersh: "Hersh attracts whistleblowers because he has a perfect record of protecting their identities and accurately publishing what they reveal after due diligence, despite the government denials and slanderous attacks that invariably follow. His reputation is such that people of conscience seek him out". People of conscience.

As a US Army officer and as a CIA employee I took an oath, one oath. It was to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic. Some of us took that oath seriously. And when we see this kind of thing going on, we go to somebody who might be able to protect us and might be able to get the word out. Now, that was two weeks ago. Has The New York Times mentioned Sy Hersh's article? Or has it even reported the denials? No. Not yet. This is quite... The Germans would say "merkwürdig". This is very, very remarkable.

Now, let me go on here and talk about. Well, how do we evaluate those who are smearing Seymour Hersh? Well, as Jeffrey Sachs has already said, the CIA spokesperson said the claim is "completely and utterly false" quote unquote. Oh! Now, I have to confess, being an alumnus of the CIA that our PR people, our public relations people do not have a very good record. No one wants to go back 20 years to Colin Powell's speech before this Security Council. We all know about that. What I would like to do is simply say what happened before that speech. Before that speech, some conscientious whistleblower gave the text of a UN debriefing of Hussein Kamel, one of Saddam Hussein's sons in law. And who was he? He was supervisor over the radiological, biological, chemical and nuclear program, such as it was in Baghdad. And he said to his interviewers, UN interviewers, US interviewers, U.K. interviewers, he said the following: "All nuclear, chemical, biological and missile programs have been destroyed". Now, they asked him, the interrogators did. Well, how do you know? And Kamel said, well, I was in charge of them. I mean, I don't know how it works in your country, but when I order something destroyed, it gets destroyed. Yeah. How do you know? Did you check? Well, yeah, I checked the couple... Are you trying to get me to say they were not destroyed?. This is 1995.

Now someone leaked... Someone leaked that transcript to Newsweek. Newsweek, on the 24th, almost exactly 20 years ago, Newsweek published this report saying "Hussein Kamel, the highest ranking Iraqi official ever to defect from Saddam Hussein's inner circle told the CIA and British Intelligence officers and US inspectors in the autumn of 1995 that after the Gulf War, Iraq destroyed all its chemical and biological weapons and the missiles to deliver them." Kamel had direct knowledge of what he claimed. For ten years he ran Iraq's nuclear, chemical, biological and missile programs.

And in a classic understatement the author, John Barry in Newsweek, says "the defectors tale raises questions about whether the WMD stockpiles attributed to Iraq still exist".

Well, I guess... What happened? Newsweek published this in a little blurb. First on their site, their website. Then the members of the media went to a fellow named Bill Harlow, who was CIA PR person, CIA spokesperson for the agency and he said, look, these.. This report is incorrect, it's bogus, it's wrong, and it's untrue. Well, incorrect, bogus, wrong and untrue. And what do the members of the press do? They breathed a sigh of relief and said, Uff! I'm so glad you told us that, because we were going to publish it. It looked pretty documentary, it looked pretty authoritative. It was indeed. The transcript of that debriefing.

Now, just a word about those who are smearing Sy Hersh. They don't have a really good record for credibility. Let me move on here. I'd like to talk a little bit about unprovoked. Now we have heard more than a 100 times that the Russian Invasion of Ukraine was unprovoked. This goes back to the widening of NATO despite the promise not to. And I had a personal experience with one of Gorbachev's chief advisers. His name is Kuvaldin Viktor Borisovich. And about eight years ago I saw him in Moscow and I said: "Mr. Kuvaldin, why is it that this agreement was not written down?" And he said: "Mr. McGovern, I'll tell you the usual reasons. The Germans hadn't bought into it yet, and the Warsaw Pact still existed. But really and truly, Mr. McGovern, here's what it was. We trusted you."

Now we all know the history of how NATO more than doubled in size. With all countries to the east, more than one inch to the east. I want to not belabor that point. It's simply that, you know, it's more than just NATO enlargement. When Crimea was annexed by Russia, Mr. Putin got up a month later and said, we had to annex Crimea because of the coup in Kiev in February of 2014. And even more important than NATO membership for Ukraine was the prospect that medium range ballistic missiles would be put on the periphery of the United States. Which indeed they are capable of doing, because there are capsules, holes in Romania and Poland that accommodate Tomahawk missiles, cruise missiles, and will eventually accommodate hypersonic missiles. This is very, very serious. Mr. Putin made this point in December of last year. Not last year, but the year before in talking to his chief military.

Now, how do I end this? I would like to do a little human business here. The "verstehen". Let me just point out that when I was in Germany last, there was a button that one put on the lapel and it said "Putinverstehher", okay? Now, those of you who know German know that

means someone who understands Putin. And I thought to myself, Wow! Somebody is interested in understanding Mr. Putin. And my friend said: "No, no, no! For God's sake, don't wear that button. That's pejorative. That means you're in Putin's pocket!" Now, "verstehen" comes from the word "stehen", to stand. Okay. If you can understand where people stand, you can understand what bothers them and what bothers Mr. Putin, as well as membership in NATO for Ukraine, is the emplacement of these holes already operational in Romania and Poland, right on the periphery of the United States. They are disguised as ABM systems, but they can easily accommodate cruise missiles and as I say, hypersonic missiles.

Now, there was a motto in the recent German demonstrations, it said "verhandeln statt schießen". Now "verhandeln" is the word for negotiate, to talk. "Hand". You reach out the hand to the other person, you try to understand them. "Verhandeln statt schießen", "schießen" is to shoot. Okay? Now, that makes good sense. But I have to tell you, that is not welcome in Germany. A good friend of mine, Heinrich Bücker has been convicted of saying we ought to put ourselves in the shoes of Mr. Putin and we ought to realize the far right influence in the government of Kiev. He was convicted in a German court. He's appealing, but he's not going to pay the €2,000 fine. So it's likely he will end up in jail for several months. Now, that's freedom of speech. We enjoy that here in the United States. I really am concerned about what will happen to my friend. Just suffices to end here and to say that this "verhandeln", you know, "verhandeln", reach your hand. Let's be human here. Let's not dust each other off. Let's extend our hands "verhandeln statt schießen".

Well, it was very, very bleak in our country during the suppression of blacks. And I had the privilege of working with Vincent Harding, Dr. Harding, who was the author of Martin Luther King's Speech on Vietnam. He had a song. And the song was: "We got to keep on moving forward, never turning back". Well, what I would suggest is that we need to, we need to keep on moving forward. And I would recommend the second stanza of this to you all. And if you would listen, I would really appreciate it.

"We're going to keep on moving. Oh, word. We're going to keep on loving our enemies. We're going to keep on loving our enemies. Going to keep on loving our enemies, never turning back. Never turning back".

In closing, I would just refer to those children that I noticed more than I usually notice children in the airports today. And when I ask you all because you have the power to do so, given to you after the last Major World War. I ask you to do what's necessary so that no one kills the children anymore. Thank you very much.

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