



Former CIA Officer McGovern on the CIA & Ukraine War (PART 1)

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Zain Raza (ZR): Thank you for tuning in today and welcome back to another episode of The Source. I'm your host Zain Raza. In this episode, I'll be talking to Raymond McGovern, a former CIA officer who served the agency from 1963 to 1990 as an analyst. In the 1980s, he chaired the National Intelligence Estimates and also prepared the President's daily brief. In 1990, at his retirement, he received the CIA's Intelligence Commendation Medal. He's now a political commentator and activist. This is a two part discussion. In this part, I'll be focusing on Ray's biography and experience at the CIA and also having a fundamental discussion about the war in Ukraine. In the next segment, I will be focusing on the recent developments surrounding the war in Ukraine. Be sure to subscribe to our channel if you don't want to miss part two. Ray, thank you so much for your time today.

Ray McGovern (RM): You're most welcome, Zain Raza.

ZR: Let us begin this interview with your biography. The CIA is known by many watching our channel as an agency that is responsible for assassinations, coup d'états, sabotage and more. You joined this agency in 1963 and stayed there for 27 years. Talk about your motivations for joining this agency as well as your personal experience there.

RM: Well, Zain, I joined the agency because it was a newly created agency. I had majored in Russian, undergraduate and had a master's degree in Russian studies. There was a coincidence that the Russian problem became the biggest of all, back in the late fifties and early sixties. So, after my military service, I joined the CIA as an analyst. Now, we analysts were kept hermetically sealed from the operations people. When Truman created the CIA, he had in mind one place to go for an honest answer on foreign policy issues. He didn't want to put his intelligence people under the Pentagon for obvious reasons. The Russians, the Soviets were always ten feet tall. He knew that they weren't quite that tall. He didn't want to put us on the State Department, which was always defending its particular policies. He wanted what he called "untreated intelligence", intelligence without bias. One place where he could go and say, look, you tell me what you really think. You work for me, I give you career protection, tell me what's going on. You know, that really attracted me, right? It was true. As far as those of us working on the Soviet Union it was true until Bill Casey and Bobby Gates came in in the eighties and then it became not true. And even the analysts were tarnished. There was no

"untreated intelligence", it became treated intelligence if you will, treated by Casey and Gates, who thought and told President Reagan, Gorbachev is just a clever commie. He's cleverer than the others. But no commies will give up power in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, forget about it. So don't be taken in.

Anyhow, it went downhill from then. But my point simply is that when the CIA was being set up, when Truman had legislation incorporating this idea of one unvarnished, one way to get untreated intelligence (from) the OSS, the Office for Strategic Services guys, the spies. Now, there's no gainsaying, in fact these were very courageous, talented, enterprising, imaginative people, right? They jumped behind enemy lines and did all kinds of mischief during World War II and they came back to Washington and they said, thanks a lot for the applause - and again, the applause was well deserved - now, should we hang around or should we go back to our law firms or corporations or, you know, academe? And Russia was taking over Eastern Europe and the question then answered itself: "No, no, no! Stay around, for God's sake! We need you. The Russians are overthrowing governments! we need to be able to do that. The Russians are assassinating people! We need to be able to do that. We got to!".

So, long story short, somebody and it mostly, I think most people believe it was George Kennan of all people. He said, no, we need these guys, we're creating this analysis group. But it's got to be secret because we're going to be collecting information from spies. So let's put the operations people, the covert action people right in with the others, they'll be one happy family. A structural fault from the beginning. Now people realize that at the beginning because there were...get this now, you know, the kind of turnstiles you used to have in the subways? There were turnstiles on each floor of the seven story CIA new building in Langley, Virginia, separating the analysts from the operations people. We didn't know anything more about what the operations were than people reading The New York Times, mostly.

There was one exception to that and I have to mention this because Bill Colby, for whom I worked directly often gave us a little look at what covert action was planned, okay? So, for example, he'd say, you know, the President wants us to blow up the Nord Stream pipeline and we found out the operations guys will do it. What do you guys think? Hello? Are you serious, Mr. Colby? Yeah, well, this is crazy. Okay, write me a memo. I'll send that down to Kissinger at the time. That's what we did. And we spiked many a cockamamie covert operation. So, anyhow, that was the one exception, out of nine CIA directors under whom I served. One exception where the analysts were given by Colby, who was a pretty renaissance man, if you believe it. He gave us a chance to say, to fortify his position and say: don't even think about that, Henry [Kissinger], and don't tell Richard [Nixon] that either.

So that's how you explain these kinds of things, these blowing up things, these assassination things. These are unfortunate operations that people think they can do with impunity. Why? Because, and I'll finish up this thing with pointing out this, that when the National Security Act of 1947 was signed off, it included one sentence that said, and I quote, the Director of Central Intelligence shall "perform such other functions and duties" as the president shall "from time to time direct", okay? Now, that gives an operative kind of some protection based on 'well I'm just doing what the director tells me': it doesn't make it legal. It doesn't make it moral. It doesn't

make it sensible. But it's sort of allowed by the legislation. That's a very noxious clause, it's been used to "justify", in quotes, all manner of well, stupid and worse things.

ZR: In 2006, you returned the CIA's Intelligence Commendation Medal, which you received in 1990. What prompted you to make this decision?

RM: In in that year, the head of the CIA, his name was Porter Goss, was asked by Dick Cheney who is, you know, the sponsor of a lot of these extreme measures, so to speak, "enhanced interrogation techniques" right out of the Gestapo handbook, I might add. So, Cheney was very much in favor of this and when John McCain, who had been tortured by the Vietnamese, when he was going to pass legislation prohibiting not only the military, but the CIA from torturing people: Cheney was not going to allow that. So, he asked Porter Goss head of the CIA to come down with him and lobby against McCain doing this, banging on his door and saying no, you have to make an exception to us!

And I thought, I mean, I kind of knew that the CIA was sponsoring liaison services, so to speak, that did all manner of trouble in places like Central America, torture, I mean. But you know, this was too much for me. The agency to whom I gave 27 years was now openly identified as pleading with legislators in our government for permission to continue torture. That was too much. I'll tell you one other thing that I was thinking back on this today. I moved in circles, including gutsy, courageous nuns and priests who worked in Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala. One of them was Sister Diana Ortiz, who was tortured by liaison operatives in a hard way. I had met her, I talked to her shortly before deciding to do this. And that fortified my resolution to do something driven by my conscience and not just acquiesce saying, "oh, well, these things happen". Expose it to the degree I could and expose the people who sponsored it, namely Porter Goss and Donald Rumsfeld and Alberto Gonzalez and all these creeps that really...no, I won't say any more about what adjectives I could use. But it was so distasteful.

I mean, I had one proud moment, and that was I think July 6th, 2006. I was an Army intelligence officer before I joined the CIA. And the head of Army intelligence got up, his name was John Kimmons, at the Pentagon on the very same day that George W Bush, president at the time, advertised what he called an "alternative set of procedures", which later became known as "enhanced interrogation techniques", also known as torture, okay? On that same day, Kimmons got up at the Pentagon and he said, I have to tell you that no good information has ever come from torture techniques. History shows that to be the case and the experience of the last five years mind you this is 2006. The experience of the last five years also demonstrates that, period, end quote. So, the army knew, the military knew and everybody fell in line behind Cheney and Porter Goss and the likes of George W Bush. And did these "alternative techniques", "enhanced interrogation techniques". We all know what they were.

You know, people say, well, don't they work? No, but, you know, I mean, there are so many reasons against it. One would be your own people could be tortured if you torture others. Another is that you squander opportunities. I mean, when there was island hopping in the Pacific by the Marines in World War II. There's one true story where they were cleaning up, and out comes this Japanese soldier with his rifle out of a cave. And a platoon leader and a

sergeant see him. And the platoon leader says, you want me to plug him? And the platoon leader says well, no, he's got his hands up. Let him come out. Now, if the Marines had a reputation of plugging everybody like that, that guy would have come out firing, right? He turned out to be the code clerk for the head of the Japanese fleet, for God's sake. They took him to Washington right away. And, you know, this really helped them break the Japanese code. So that's another reason. You squander opportunities if you have a reputation of killing everybody as soon as you see them.

Another reason is it's really not a respectable thing to do internationally. At least that's the way it used to be when I grew up. I mean, the big thing is that it doesn't work. It's illegal, right? But it's not bad because it's illegal. It's illegal because it's bad. Human beings don't do that to each other. You know, I had a really interesting experience for me. We all need to grow up on these things. I was out in Berkeley, California, and I gave a little speech on torture and the heinous things that were going on. And I made an allusion to the fact that I'm a follower of Jesus of Nazareth, ok? And he was tortured to death. I have a kind of a special interest in these things, all right? So, the Jewish fellow with whom I was staying way up in the Berkeley Hills, took me aside and said, Now, Ray, thanks very much. That means very nice that you, Jesus, was tortured. But, you know, you don't have to be a follower of Jesus Christ to realize that torture is always wrong for God's sake. People don't do that to one another. I said, Oh, that's right. So that used to be the case. It was so heinous. That's kind of a long-winded explanation of why I did it. And last, the bottom line, of course, is that it doesn't work. And we know Kimmons said it didn't work. General Kimmons. But when on the Senate Intelligence Committee, to its credit required the CIA to fork over its internal documents about torture and how it worked or didn't work the upshot was that the CIA had lied through its teeth. It never worked. They claimed that work, but it never worked. Now, Dianne Feinstein, to her credit, I don't really like her very much, but to her credit, she stood up to those investigators that she had working for her. And just before Congress, the Senate changed hands. She forced that thing out into the open against the strong opposition of President Obama, her Democratic Party president. So, she did that. And that sort of revealed chapter and verse. And it also revealed or she revealed that in the process of doing this investigation, her investigators had their computers hacked by John Brennan's plumbers. John Brennan's hackers okay? I mean, hello? The legislative branch overseeing the executive branch? Not supposed to do that. I mean, they're not supposed to do that to the Congress. So, it was fraught with all kinds of awful stuff. In the event only the summary of this intelligence report was published, but it was put in to show exactly what was going on. And when the Senate changed hands, the new senator, head of the Senate Intelligence Committee, said, 'I recall all copies of that study. I own that study. It was my committee that did it. I'm going to put them in my safe'. And there they rest, the full investigative report since that time. Okay, that's 2015, 2016. So, you know, enough about torture, I guess. But that's where I come from on that. And I must say that I was disappointed that not too many of my colleagues, my former colleagues, analysts even thought that torture was beyond the pale, so to speak.

ZR: Let us move to a fundamental argument regarding the war in Ukraine. Russia justified its war based on demilitarization and de-Nazification. One of the main arguments surrounding

demilitarization was that NATO, has encircled Russia, directly threatening Russia's security despite Western assurances that it would not do so. Is there any legitimacy to these arguments?

RM: Only about 98% legitimacy, I would say. Of course, if you've been around a while and you have read things other than what appears in The New York Times or The Washington Post, you know that. Well, in February 1990 after the Berlin Wall fell, after it was clear the Soviet Union was falling apart, George H.W. Bush, for whom I worked when he was director of Central Intelligence and whom I later briefed for four years during the first Reagan term when he was vice president, he said, 'look, Mikhail Gorbachev, we sympathize with your problems. I'm not going to dance on what's left of the Berlin Wall'. Wow I said to myself, you know, that was a good guy to have served. I had just retired, patted myself on the back and said, well, the Soviet Union is going to fall apart. Mission accomplished. There were a few other people involved, of course but I said good job, McGovern, okay? It didn't happen. Why? Because, Bush said, his lawyer, a fancy lawyer from Texas Jim Baker (I have this directly from Chet Matlock, who is ambassador there, I don't have to make it up or read it in a document) says, look, we want a reunited Germany. Zain, I have to tell you that I was alive during World War Two. Maybe I saw too many World War Two movies or something. But even as a CIA analyst, I didn't want a reunited Germany: it'd scare me to death! I mean (Russia) is a country that lost 26 plus million people at the hands of a united Germany, right? We Americans lost about 440,000, all military people. That's a lot. But, you know, compared to the math, 26 million is a lot more. So, you ask Gorbachev and you say 'we want a reunited Germany'. So they say well, hello, what's the quote? I mean it's untasteful, hard to swallow, we quit. And Jimmy Baker says, and this I have from Matlock: "well, how would it be if we promise not to move NATO one inch toward the east? Toward the Soviet Union?" Well, long story short, they were in bad shape. The Soviet economy especially, they expected a lot of help from the West. They said, okay, (do you) promise? And Jimmy Baker says, "oh yeah, I promise". Now, Baker was a lawyer, right? A slick lawyer from Texas. I mean, every lawyer says we've got to write that down, right? Unless you have an ulterior motive as to why you don't want it written.

My father was a lawyer, he said, get it in writing, for God's sake, get it in writing. So anyhow, I had a chance to talk to one of Gorbachev's closest aides in those days, whose name was Kuvadin Viktor Borisovich. Kuvadin looks at me. And I say, Mr. Kuvadin, why was that agreement not written down? And he says well, Mr. McGovern, I'll give you the two staple reasons. One is the Germans hadn't given full buy in yet. And of course, it had to do with Germany. Another one is this Warsaw Pact was still existing. But the real reason, Mr. McGovern, is he looked me right in the eye. He said, is that we trusted you. So that's where it started. 1990 February, I think, was February 10th. So, then you get you get down to it, let's take the next benchmark. That would be 2008 after NATO's had doubled in size, all new countries, quite more than one inch east of East Germany. So, 2008, it becomes known that NATO's considering incorporating Ukraine and Georgia in NATO as members. And again, you know, I was worried about this and people spoke out against it. But Bush and Condoleezza Rice, who was secretary of state and of course, Cheney, they wanted that to happen in the last year before going riding off into the sunset. So, what happened was the newly appointed foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, called our ambassador in. Now, our ambassador at the time was a

fellow named William Burns. He happens to be head of the CIA now. Long story short, he says “Mr. Burns do you know what ‘nyet’ means?” And Burns says “well, nyet means nyet. No incorporation of Ukraine and Georgia in NATO. That is a red line for us”. Now, to his credit, then Burns sent back a cable and we have the cable thanks to WikiLeaks. It's authentic. If I've seen one embassy, Moscow cable, I've seen about 5000 in my career. He says in the title nyet means nyet, red line, no membership for Ukraine and Georgia in NATO. Then he explains what happened to him and he says, “you know, the Russians are really worried about their near frontier and actually they have strategic reasons to be. Everybody's entitled to that”. Well, that was a gutsy thing for ambassador there, because Cheney didn't want to hear anything about legitimate interests or legitimate worries. So he sent that back. That was then. That was 2008. What is Bill Burns saying now as head of the CIA? “This unprovoked invasion of Ukraine”. Well, nobody knows better than Bill Burns that this was provoked for the reasons I just mentioned. So, Bill Burns has become a propagandist when we have a dire need for an intelligence officer who will tell it straight. Intelligence is worse than I've ever seen it. And that means something when you consider the cooked intelligence before Iraq, that most people, including apparently intelligence analysts in the employ now think that Ukraine can win? Think that Russia can be defeated in Ukraine? Think that Russia is running out of ammunition? Where are they getting this stuff from? The Ukrainian liaison service is a great source for all this stuff, anyhow. So that's what happened in 2008. The coup de grace happened in 2014, when we know from intercepted conversations that Victoria Nuland, who was assistant secretary of state for European affairs at the time, she was caught talking to our ambassador in Kiev. Geoffrey Pyatt was his name. And they were plotting the coup. They were picking the people who would take office at the end. Geoffrey Pyatt summons up the courage to say “but, Secretary Nuland, what about the EU? The EU's not going like this”. And she says, “F...”, you know the last three letters of F..., “F... the EU”. Now, if there's any dispute about the authenticity of this conversation, witness the fact that three days later she apologized. She said, oh, I'm sorry for my language. She didn't apologize for the coup which came two weeks later. The conversation was posted on YouTube on the 4th of February 2014. These poor guys were all groomed to take over Ukraine. I mean, it's not going to happen now. It's blown: term of the trade, it's blown okay? Now, apparently Putin thought the same thing because he stayed in Sochi at the Winter Olympics and he didn't get home until the day after the coup. And the day after the coup, he said, “well, if NATO thinks they're going to take over Ukraine, including Sevastopol in Crimea, where we have our only ice free all year round naval base, that we've got to do something about Crimea. And as I say, okay, well, that's that's clear. We can't let them think they're going to take over Crimea and the Crimeans certainly don't want that either. So, Putin says (I wasn't a fly on the wall but this is clearly what happened in my view), well, how in the hell did Crimea get to be part of Ukraine in the first place? Oh, well, Khrushchev, he was pretty much almost Ukrainian, who grew up right on the border there. He wanted to get Ukrainian support when he took over after Stalin died in 1953/54. And so he took out a piece of paper. He said, from now on, Crimea will be part of the Soviet Union. Well, Putin says, I don't know if that will wash these days, let's have a plebiscite. I mean, let's find out. I mean we know the answer. And sure enough, the answer was 90%. People in Crimea wanted to join Russia. And so it happened. It happened the same month. Now, Putin a month after the annexation of Crimea said something very significant that was just missed in all reporting. He said, you know, we had to

take over Crimea. We had to annex Crimea. And not only not only so that it would not be part of NATO with the rest of Ukraine, but even more important: we didn't want offensive strike missile bases on our periphery in Crimea. Even more important. Now, fast forward to December 21, 2021, and here is Putin before his assembled admirals and his generals and the defense minister. And he says, and I quote, “the Americans have put in missile bases capsules that can accommodate offensive strike missiles like Tomahawks or when they get them hypersonic missiles. Now, if they're Tomahawk cruise missiles which go sort of slow, I have 7 to 10 minutes to decide what to do like, should I blow up the rest of the world? I mean, he didn't say that but that's what it comes to, okay? Now, if there were hypersonic missiles: 5 minutes. That's not going to happen. And then he makes a mistake. Putin says this time we need a written agreement, a written down agreement to preclude this. And he looks at it as admirals and generals. Again, this is what I saw on their faces: “All right Vladimir Vladimirovich”. Was it the ABM Treaty written down? How about the Intermediate Nuclear Forces treaty that was written down? So what happens nine days later? The White House gets a call from the Kremlin. Mr. Putin would like to talk to Mr. Biden, like right away. The answer? They were flummoxed. They said, well, wait a second. All right. Negotiators are going to be meeting in Geneva on the ninth and 10th of January, why does Putin have to talk to Biden right away? Please, let them talk right away. So to his credit, Biden takes the call and what comes out of it? The readout says “Mr. Joseph Biden said that Washington has no intention of putting offensive strength missiles in Ukraine”, period. End quote. Wow. These negotiations are off to a great start. Ushakov one of Putin's major advisor on these issues is applauding this thing. New Year's Eve has never been so celebratory in Moscow with these fellows. They think, oh this is great, guess what happens? Biden wakes up the next morning in my interpretation: Jacob Sullivan and what's his name, Blinken say, “Joe I mean, Mr. President, you didn't even say that did you? You didn't promise that? “Well, yeah, I thought maybe”...forget about it”. So, they forgot about it. They wouldn't talk about it at Geneva. So this I see as one of the last straws. On February 12th, the last time Biden and Putin talk together, the readout of that made it clear that this undertaking that Washington had no intention of putting offensive strike missiles in Ukraine was off the table. No one would discuss it. Now, February 12th so what's that? 12 days before the invasion. It's not the only reason. It's one of several, one of which is, of course, the Russians realize that Ukrainian troops trained and equipped up to NATO's standards were about to pounce on the Donbass. And even more important, even more important, if I can use that phrase, was the fact that Putin had secured Xi Jinping's ‘nihil obstat’, his imprimatur. They were together in Beijing to open the Olympics on the 4th of February. Again, I was not a fly on the wall, but I think subsequent events check this out. Putin said, you know, the Americans are dissembling again they said they'd talk about no offensive strike missiles in Ukraine and they reneged. They still have those holes in Romania and Poland. It looks like they're going to attack the Donbass. The Nazis are still pro-Nazi, Nazis are still having great influence here. I think we have to invade Ukraine. Now, how did Xi react? Here's my rendition of how Xi reacted: “You mean after the Olympics are over, right?” “Oh, yeah yeah after the Olympics are over.” “Okay.” Now, this is big for China. I mean, China's fundamental bedrock policy is non-interference in internal affairs, no violation of sovereignty, no violation of borders. And yet in the event Ji, in effect, gave Putin a waiver, okay? Yeah, I understand these are core interests of yours. You're going to support our core interests in the East against Taiwan. So, yeah, we're in

this together. As a matter of fact, the Americans openly say it, I'm next, right after you, hello? So, yeah, we're in this together now. The US policymakers haven't gotten that. They haven't gotten the fact that Russia and China are joined at the hip now. What used to be a triangular relationship with Russia, China and the US about equilateral okay? Now it's isosceles with the US on the short end of the stick, okay? The fact that US policymakers don't realize that they've driven these two other giants together and think that they can take them both on at the same time, this is going to be underscored as Xi in Beijing, Xi is in Moscow today. They will underscore again their strategic relationship, which they say exceeds is the word, exceeds a normal treaty relationship has no upper end. But that's tectonic. In other words, in sum, the Ukraine war has created, you could say a multipolar world, but I say bipolar. Not only in the psychiatric sense, okay, but in the strategic sense. You had the lily white West. And then you have the rest of the world. People of color. 80% Russians? Yeah, and the rest of the world. Now that doesn't mean that the US has isolated Russia, does it? It's just the opposite. And what frightens me is that this is on the part of US policymakers. Crazy. And I have to say that I find confirmation of that in the words of Vladimir Putin, who said exactly that. He gave a big speech at Valdai, 27th of October. And in the Q&A, which lasted three and a half hours he was asked, "What do you make of the fact that the US is taking on China at the same time as it's just sending billions of dollars worth of arms and taking us on in Ukraine? And Putin said, I have this committed to memory, he says "it doesn't make any sense, there's no logic to it. I think they're crazy. You know, earlier I thought there might be some subtle plan here, but I no longer think so. I think it's just sheer arrogance and a feeling of impunity", end quote. Now, sheer arrogance, a feeling of impunity. Crazy. My God. Doesn't matter what I think. What Putin thinks matters. Okay? He knows, for example, that well, when people ask me about these little capsules in Romania and Poland already, they're ready to shoot, ostensibly, ABM missiles. Well, they're in the wrong place for ABM missiles. And they were justified originally to protect against Iran. Iran is still not working on a nuclear weapon. And we have the head of intelligence reinforcing that judgement first made in 2007 and still consistent. So it was a subterfuge and Putin has said that. So what are these capsules doing? I said to one of my military advisers, Ted Postol. I said, "Ted, I mean, how could they get cruise missiles? Or how could they get Tomahawks or hypersonic missiles into those holes without being observed? And he looked at me and he says: "I'm a physicist. Maybe you don't know this, but it gets dark at night, even in Rumania and in Poland and in Ukraine. And they could do it overnight". I said, oh come on there'd be a great big hook and ladder sort of thing. He said "no they don't need that. All they need is an electric line repair truck. That's all it takes". You know, these trucks that repair your electric lines when they go down in a storm, that's all it takes. Yeah, all they have to do is put one of those up there, put the missiles in the thing at night, it takes a couple of hours, and then they put a little diskette or change the program and you've got offensive strike missiles with 7 to 10, or later, 5 minutes warning time. Now, people don't realize, I thought that it was so important to realize this, to say that this is provocation enough that I mentioned it during that U.N. speech that I gave. I said, you know, unprovoked is just not true. It's got to be realized that this is provoked because you're never going to end it if you don't stop provoking. And I even misspoke. I said, you know, they're right around the periphery of the United States. Well, I meant, of course, all around the periphery of Russia. That's where Poland and Romania are. But I was thinking ahead because the analogy I draw is exactly when Russia tried to put these

things on the periphery of the United States, 1962. I was on active duty at that time. I almost got sent with the rest of my infantry buddies down to Key West to prepare to invade Cuba, okay? Now, that was a provoked action. So what did Kennedy do? He did all manner of illegal things. A blockade, or he called it a quarantine. But it was a blockade. He said no more ships come near Cuba: an act of war. He prepared an invasion force. Not supposed to do that, either. He threatened nuclear war - the U.N. says you're not supposed to do that either. Did anybody say, now, come on, John Kennedy, you're overreacting, for God's sake. This is unprovoked! No, they didn't say that because it was provoked. Now, just to say that, you know, the first catch words were the invasion was illegal and unprovoked. I think I've dealt with the unprovoked. The illegal? I'm not a lawyer, but there's a part of the U.N. charter, Article 51 self-defense that some lawyers say can be applied just as easy as other parts of the U.N. charter to justify this kind of thing. It's been used before by other countries. So I'm not a lawyer. I'm not going to contend with this illegal stuff. But what I will say is that it's not an open and shut case. People need to consult constitutional lawyers. But unprovoked? Let's face it, it was provoked. And therein lies the tale. That's why, in my view, Russian forces are going to go farther west in Ukraine but no farther than they have to. Lavrov said three months ago and Putin said just two weeks ago, "look, we wanted to take care of our people, our Russian speaking people in Donbass. Now we realized that we had to go further west. It's a matter of geography. You get big, long range missiles that can shoot 150 miles. We have to go 150 miles farther west. So, my concern is that it would be such a shock to the administration, who is being fed this line that Ukraine can win, and to the people who are fed this line in the media that when push comes to shove, about a month from now, I would guess, US policy makers are going to have to make real crucial decisions as we enter an election campaign year. What's Biden going to do? Well, he'll wake up and then Jacob Sullivan and Tony Blinken will tell them what to do. That scares me to hell. I imagine it scares Vladimir Putin as well.

ZR: Let me make some counterarguments to this that I usually voice in the mainstream media. And if you could address them briefly one by one. So, the first counter argument that is usually made is Ukraine is an independent state and has a right to cut military deals with anybody it pleases. And so becoming part of NATO, if it wishes to as a sovereign state, is within its own right. How do you counter this argument, Ray? Briefly.

RM: Well, that's a very legalistic argument that prescinds from any consideration of power politics 101, balance of power 101. Why is Ukraine wanting to be part of NATO? Are they fearing that the Russians were going to invade and take them over and invade the Baltics and Poland as well? If they are, they're crazy. They're reading the New York Times. There is not one iota of indication that that's the case. So, this business about Ukraine having the right to do this: when you live next to a giant superpower, as Cuba and the Soviet Union learned in 1962, you don't have the option of threatening their security. And so that's the realism school of interpretation. I happen to belong to that, and I am together with John Mearsheimer, who is much more educated and respected than I, to say that this is just happens to be the world. Is it

moral? I don't know if it's moral or not. It's factual. It's the lay of the land. It's maybe unfortunate for people, but you don't have carte blanche to make these kinds of decisions if they're interpreted as threatening your bigger neighbor.

ZR: So the second counter argument that is usually made is that NATO is also stationed in Poland, Latvia, Lithuania. They share borders with Russia. And it wasn't like NATO was going to invade Russia and was a so-called "imminent threat", that Russia's state was about to collapse. So how do you counter that argument with the fact that NATO was already present on Russian borders?

RM: Well, I'm sure you've been to Poland, you've been to the Baltic states. I mean, so have I. Why would Russia want to take over Poland and the Baltic States? I mean, no insult meant. But is there a scintilla of evidence that Russia wants to do that? Do people not realize that the Soviet Union fell apart? That they no longer try to take over the world, much less Europe? Ukraine is a special case. Ukraine lies on a very large border with Russia. Russians have been killed in Ukraine: 14,000 since 2014 when we overthrew that government and 4,000 in Donbass since. 18,000 people. That's a lot of people. So, we have just to sum up here, there was not a scintilla of evidence that Putin ever got it into his head to take over Crimea until the coup in 2014. So you get to, you know, which came first here, what caused what? You know, I can understand that the Poles, given their history in the Baltic states, given their history, they might remember all this. They might say, "oh my God, we live in Russia's shadow". But I think in my view that unless there was some evidence that Russia wants to invade or attack or take over these countries, that they're being very foolish in spending so much of their hard-earned currency on armaments and depending on the United States to defend them, when I dare say it's an open question as to whether the US would risk the bombing of Washington for defending Warsaw. I kind of doubt it. I don't know if the Poles really believe that, but there's a lot of money to be made in these armaments and so forth. And the people in power in these countries are a bunch of functionaries that have very, very little strategic depth. The likes of Willy Brandt and Egon Barr in Germany, well, where are they? I don't see anybody like that.

ZR: And the last argument that is made, especially when it comes to NATO expansion, this famous quote, that we are not going to move one inch to the east, that promises that were made is usually countered in the mainstream media by stating that these things were only verbal and there were no legally binding documents that were somehow attached to international law. So hence Russia cannot use them as a way to say, "see, the West broke its promises because there's nothing legally binding this". How do you counter that?

RM: Well, it's not about our countering. I think it's just trying to explain what the facts are. I explain how Jimmy Baker raised the thing and then, like any reasonable lawyer, forgot to get it written down. Give me a break. And it's the promises extant in all kinds of foreign ministry documents in Bonn, in Berlin, in Washington, and in Paris. I mean, the promise was made. Now, the fact that it wasn't written down well, when you make a promise, we have certain moral obligations, particularly when the stakes are so high, particularly when the other part of the promise was a reunited Germany, for God's sake. You know, I imagine that people of Gorbachev's age now are wondering, well, was this really a good idea at all? You know what

I mean? And not only did they move more than one inch, but a reunited Germany has turned out to be a pretty scary thing these days. And I say that advisedly having worked and served for five years in Germany, I, too, am a little afraid of what's going on there. One of my friends, Heiner Bücke, is faced with a prison sentence for simply saying, "Hey, why don't we try to put ourselves in Putin's shoes? And why don't we acknowledge that there are Nazis in Kiev?" My God, the last thing is true and the first thing is a good idea. He was convicted of that by a German judge. My God, that reminds me of 90 years ago. 90 years ago, 1933. When one young German lawyer, Sebastian Haffner, Raymond Fritzl was his real name, he recorded that when guts and courage were needed in Berlin after the Reichstag fire, that the Germans tend toward submissiveness. That they didn't speak out, they couldn't find their voice. The Social Democrats and the Catholic Party caved. Now, I would hope that there are enough people that know that history and there are enough people that know the history of the German people since 1945 when German people had to act like children before the allies, the US first and foremost, and then adolescents, okay? You give me a little trouble here or there. But now they have to act like adults, for God's sake, because their own economy, their own freedoms are at risk. And the people in power are people that seem to have "keine ahnung". But what's at stake, for God's sake you know? So, I get a little get upset at what I watch going on in Germany. But this is the key. If the Germans can ask Olaf Scholz: when you stood next to President Biden on the 7th of February last year and he said, yes, I promise you the Nord Stream pipeline will not go through. You said we do everything together. There's nothing important that we do that we don't do together. So did he tell you about the plan to blow up the pipeline? Did you do that? Did we allow (it), or were you "überrascht"? Or were you really surprised back in September, what happened?" Either way, Chancellor Scholz, either way, it's extremely embarrassing, is it not? So how do you explain all this? Now, I asked a German friend, "why don't they ask him that?" And he said, well people, submissive people are afraid to be accused of being in Putin's pocket, right? A Putin versteher. To 'verstehen' Putin is somehow unpatriotic? I mean, I thought we're supposed to understand people so that we could deal with them. Anyhow, the situation is getting out of hand, I think, will come to a head in just a month when Biden will have to decide: does he want to enlist German help in upping the ante once again to include a greater risk of nuclear weapons use in Ukraine? Or when it comes to Berlin hat in hand, will Scholz and maybe Baerbock be gone by then? Gott sei dank. Will Scholz say, "oh, okay, sure if you say so. We're in there and we'll do whatever you want"? I don't know. Well, I've been saying this for many years. I just hope the German people can be informed well enough so that they can for once in 90 years act like adults. Stand up for their own rights, stand up for their own freedoms, stand up for their own economy, for God sake.

ZR: Ray McGovern, former CIA officer, thank you so much for your time today.

RM: You're most welcome.

ZR: And thank you for tuning in today. Be sure to subscribe to our channel if you want to watch part two with Ray McGovern, which will focus on the latest developments surrounding the war in Ukraine, and also join our alternative channels on Rumble and Telegram as a precaution in case YouTube shadow bans us. And lastly, if you're watching this video, please

don't forget to donate: there's an entire team working behind the scenes from camera, audio, light, and in the case of our German videos, translation, voice over, video editing and correction. So, if you want us to continue providing you with independent and non-profit news and analysis, be sure to donate. I'm your host Zain Raza, see you guys next time.

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