



Jeffrey D. Sachs - JFK, Nord Stream, Ukraine War & China

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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, and today I'll be talking to Jeffrey Sachs about the politics of the war in Ukraine and the Cold War with China. Jeffrey Sachs is the director of the Center for Sustainable Development at Columbia University, where he holds the rank of university professor, the institution's highest academic rank. He's also a world renowned economist, bestselling author, innovative educator and a global leader in sustainable development. Jeffrey, welcome back to the show.

Jeffrey Sachs (JS): Great to be with you again. Thank you.

ZR: I would like to start this interview with a book you wrote in 2014 on John F Kennedy and the Cuban Missile Crisis called "To Move the World - JFK's Quest for Peace". For German viewers, can you briefly introduce and summarize this book and then talk about how the lessons from Kennedy's tenure could be applied today to deal with the war in Ukraine?

JS: That book was written to commemorate what was then the 50th anniversary of Kennedy's peace speech, which was given on June 10th, 1963. This was a most remarkable speech. It was part of Kennedy's effort to secure a kind of peace, and especially a treaty with the Soviet Union at the height of the Cold War, to ease tensions and to begin a process of nuclear safety. The Cuban Missile Crisis that occurred in October 1962, it had brought the world to the very brink of nuclear war. And Kennedy and his counterpart in the Soviet Union, Nikita Khrushchev, both felt that this was far too close for comfort, that the world could not live at the edge of disaster without actually falling right over the edge. And so in 1963, Kennedy made a concerted campaign for peace. And what's notable about that campaign is that he was directing his effort at the United States. He was helping to explain to Americans that peace was possible even with the Soviet Union, which was viewed as the dire enemy. And Kennedy, with incredible bravery, eloquence and insight, told the American people in this speech - now 60 years old this year - that the Soviet people are people with honor, just like

the American people, that they have the same desires for peace, and that even countries like the Soviet Union that the United States felt was an enemy, would follow through on treaties if they were in the Soviet interest, as well as the U.S. interest, so that it was possible to negotiate with the Soviet Union. Now, this speech was so eloquent and so powerful and so unusual in that it was addressed to the American people, not finger pointing or yelling at the Soviets, but rather explaining to the American people that peace is possible with the Soviet Union. Nikita Khrushchev, upon hearing the speech or receiving the speech, called for it to be widely published throughout the Soviet Union. He immediately summoned the special envoy of President Kennedy to Russia. That was Averell Harriman, a senior figure in American diplomacy and in the American Democratic Party, and told Harriman that this was the finest speech given by an American president since Franklin Roosevelt and that Khrushchev wanted to make peace with Kennedy. The speech did the job. Five weeks later, the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty was signed. Then Kennedy, in a stunning display of political skill, toured throughout the United States to help the American people understand the significance of the treaty. And Kennedy knew that he would face opposition even in the U.S. military, among the Joint Chiefs of Staff. So he wanted the American people to know this was a treaty in their interest. In the end, in September 1963, the treaty was ratified by an overwhelming majority of the Senate. Kennedy had succeeded in achieving an agreement with the Soviet Union, signing a crucial treaty and having it ratified by the U.S. Senate, an act of stunning statesmanship. In fact, in my view, 1963 was one of the finest years of an American presidency in our history. Kennedy achieved real greatness in 1963. Many people, and I am afraid that I am among them, believe that Kennedy was assassinated because of his peace initiatives, perhaps by rogue elements of the CIA. And this is all the more devastating and tragic. He was, in my view, the last great U.S. president. The rest have not lived up to that year of statesmanship. Even close. And this is where we are today. You know, imagine Biden giving a speech to the American people explaining, yes, we should negotiate with Russia. Russia is a country of great culture and achievement. Those are the words that Kennedy used with regard to the Soviet Union. Yes, Russia can be trusted to abide by a treaty that's also in Russia's interests. It seems it would be impossible for President Biden to do that. And I think when it comes to Biden, yes, I don't expect that, though I would hope for it. But this is what Kennedy achieved and he proved how crucial the mindset is. After all, the Partial Nuclear Test Ban Treaty succeeded. It played its historic role until today by stopping atmosphere tests of nuclear weapons. And it played an absolutely clear role in putting the U.S. and the world, I should say, on the path to the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty a few years later. Now to bring it to the immediate context, I personally strongly believe that the U.S. and Russia and Ukraine should and could negotiate a peace arrangement now and that such a peace arrangement could and would be honored if properly designed and properly negotiated. And so I do see powerful parallels. There is a mutual interest of peace, actually, across all three countries. Ukraine, in the absence of peace, is getting destroyed. It's so tragic. Ukraine is caught in a war between Russia and the United States. Its leaders allowed it to be caught. I told them - you hear the United States saying, we protect you. Well, I'm 68 years old. The United States did not protect Vietnam, Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, Libya, and every other

misadventure of the United States. But the Ukrainians weren't listening. Now, the country is getting destroyed. It's in their interest for a negotiated peace. It is in Russia's interest for a negotiated peace. It would solve these issues and present a security arrangement for Europe that would make sense. It is in America's interest to stop the destruction of Ukraine. It's not going to happen on the battlefield. This has been demonstrated. It's going to happen at the negotiating table. The United States can and should have said all along that NATO will not enlarge in a context in which Russia stops the war. That's the basis for peace. And the United States blew it. Biden refused to negotiate when this issue was put on the table repeatedly by Putin. And then finally, on December 17th, 2021, when Putin tabled a draft agreement between the U.S. and Russia for security arrangements, and the United States absolutely foolishly and recklessly said, no, we don't negotiate the issue of NATO with you. It's none of your business, the United States told Russia. That is a whopper. To say that it's none of Russia's business whether the U.S. expands its military to Ukraine. Of course it's Russia's business. Of course it should be negotiated. It should have been negotiated to avoid the war and it should be negotiated today.

ZR: I would like to sidetrack a bit before I return to Ukraine. On the 26th of September marked the one year anniversary of the bombing of the Nord Stream pipeline. The majority of the German media mostly covered a theory surfaced by established media outlets and rarely addressed the piece of Pulitzer Prize winning journalist Seymour Hersh, who in February of this year claimed the U.S. was responsible for the bombing of the Nord Stream pipeline. The prevailing theory in the mainstream media up until today came a few weeks after Sy Hersh released his article. It appeared in The New York Times, which quoted anonymous U.S. intelligence sources that claimed a rogue Ukrainian group conducted the bombing and used the Andromeda yacht to do so. This also prompted a German mainstream media network to investigate and with some grievances came with the same conclusion. Moving forward to June of this year, the Washington Post reported that attacks were conducted by the knowledge and order of the Ukrainian military and that U.S. and European intelligence had known about the plan. One year later, how do you dissect all of this contradicting information and which theory do you hold for most plausible?

JS: The U.S. did it and the Germans know it. Period. This is all ridiculous. Scholz was told. He knows. He should tell the German people. Full stop. Come on. And this is absolutely clear, because it was spelled out by Nuland. It was spelled out by Biden. It was explained by Hersh. And come on, German media, cover this story. It's crucial for the German economy. It's crucial for the European economy. It's crucial for understanding this war. Time for people to grow up. Scholz knows it, he should explain. He should say, okay, it made sense or it didn't make sense or we opposed it or we supported it. But of course, the United States did it. Even the pathetic explanation that they give right now: we didn't do it, the Ukrainians did it. But we knew about it. Well, even so. Come on. What the situation is, is really demonstrating our government lied to us in our face. Smirking, they tell us, by the way, in indirect ways the truth. They said it would end if Russia invaded. Nuland made this threat as clear as could be.

Biden repeated the threat with Scholz standing next to him. You don't need much more to understand this. So the German media really have let down the German people. But I should also say that the American media have completely let down the American people as well. The New York Times. Pathetic. Wouldn't even report Hersh's story. Like the German media. Well, how are we going to have functioning democracies in such a situation?

ZR: I would like to return to Ukraine and address some recent developments related to the war surrounding it. In what is being called an historic meeting, the foreign ministers of 27 member states of the European Union visited Ukraine beginning this week to discuss their continued military support, as well as assurances of Ukraine's EU membership. German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock at the meeting stated, and let me quote her here, quote: "Ukraine's future lies in the European Union. In this community of freedom. It will soon stretch from Lisbon to Luhansk", unquote. Luhansk, as you know, was annexed in 2022 by Russia. The meeting comes a few days after the U.S. Congress, led by Republican lawmakers, blocked new financial aid to Ukraine as part of a government spending deal. However, U.S. President Joe Biden assured Ukraine that it will continue to receive financial assistance despite Congress decision. How do you view these two developments? On one side, the EU showing solidarity for Ukraine, while on the other side of the Atlantic, U.S. lawmakers are increasingly becoming skeptical of supporting Ukraine.

JS: Let's be clear. Ukraine has had a devastating defeat this summer with a bloodbath with tens of thousands of Ukrainians killed, vast numbers wounded. A massive destruction of the military equipment given by the West. A complete failure of this counteroffensive. Russia is now poised and may well launch its own offensive after this terrible debacle. At the same time, support in Europe and the United States in the public is plummeting. Slovakia just elected a government that campaigned on the platform of stopping all support for Ukraine. Poland doesn't speak to Ukraine. The two governments are not even on speaking terms right now. In the United States, a majority of the United States citizens don't want more aid to Ukraine. And that majority is extremely large in the Republican Party. The \$6 billion, which was a stopgap - in a stopgap, legislation was stripped out in order to pass the rest of the legislation because the Republicans would not accept it. So all this talk by Baerbock and others doesn't mean anything right now. The public's against it. Every European political leader that is in support of this war has massive disapproval ratings that way exceed the approval ratings. And one can just track those weekly to see the fact that the European public knows this is a disaster. This is a disaster for Ukraine, first and foremost, because all that was said by NATO was wrong. This is, by the way, again, I'm 68 years old by product from U.S. generals for decades. I don't believe a word that they say. And I was clear this time around that they don't have an answer to this on the battlefield. The destruction is massive. This war was provoked by NATO enlargement. This war was provoked by the refusal of Ukraine. And Germany standing on the side and France standing on the side and the U.S. - to honor the Minsk II agreement. This war was provoked by the U.S. role in the overthrow of Viktor Yanukovich in February 2014. And this war is not going to end successfully on the

battlefield no matter what Baerbock or others say. What these foreign ministers say doesn't matter. And these governments that aren't even in Western Europe are going to face electorates that are profoundly unhappy. And the support of many governments, the approval rating of many leaders, is in the 20% or 30% with disapproval ratings in the 50% or 60%. We're democracies. Public opinion shows that this is on the wrong track. So we need to get to the negotiating table. We need diplomats that actually remember that they're diplomats, not cheerleaders for war. So this is really remarkable at this stage to hear this kind of continued rhetoric as if the hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian dead don't teach a lesson already that we need a different approach.

ZR: Usually antiwar sentiment comes from left parties. If we see the United States, usually we would hear it from people like Bernie Sanders, from the Progressive Caucuses and in Germany, it would come from Die Linke. However, now this whole dynamic has changed. Republicans have become a minority. Republicans have become antiwar. And in Germany, it's the AfD, Alternative für Deutschland, a right wing party. Why do you think this dynamic has changed and why are leftist voices, especially in the U.S. from the Progressive Caucuses, silent when it comes to the war in Ukraine?

JS: I don't know. I have been a lifelong Democrat, but I'm leaving the Democratic Party. It's become a war mongering party. There is no voice of peace in the Democratic Party. I'm becoming an Independent because I don't like the Republicans. I can't understand what happened to the party that I was a part of for decades. But I'm leaving it because the Democrats bought into this hegemonic line. It's a shame. It's not really understandable for me fully, because even in the old days, the party was divided. There would be voices for peace. Now I just hear the warmongers in the Democratic Party. I don't hear voices for peace, so I've decided to leave the party.

ZR: I want to switch gears and move towards China. Europe, in particular Germany, is increasingly becoming more confrontational towards China when it comes to human rights abuses and international law. For example, in September, German Foreign Minister Angela Baerbock went on Fox News, where she stated while talking about the war in Ukraine and let me quote her here, quote: "If Putin were to win this war, what sign would there be for other dictators in the world like, gee, the Chinese president", unquote. She then went on Tagesschau, Germany's primetime news channel, to justify her stance by stating that China is a one party communist system with massive human rights violations and a threat to other states such as the Philippines. Do you think Germany's concerns when it comes to the human rights situation in China is legitimate? And if not, what do you think is actually driving this confrontational rhetoric?

JS: I think Baerbock reads the lines given to her by the United States. I don't know why, but I think that's all that this is. These are exactly the tropes used by the United States. No different at all. She's reading the lines of the American government. Why is that? It's very surprising.

Is this in Germany's interest? Absolutely not. Is this helping German safety? Absolutely not. Is this helping the German economy? Quite the opposite. The German economy is the biggest loser other than Ukraine in this whole war. And now she is following the U.S. into confrontation with China, which would be devastating for the German economy. So my answer is that these are the lines handed to her by the U.S. government.

ZR: To end the interview with a positive note -

JS: Thank you!

ZR: Let us end this interview on a positive note. What would a world order look like? We're seeing the rise of BRICS coming. But there's a lot of criticism on them as well. And then we have NATO and the United States, which you say is pushing hegemony and imperialism. What kind of world order do we need today that would enshrine the human rights that we have according to international law and also ensure that we move forward with harmony, peace and security?

JS: We need a world that operates under the U.N. Charter, in which NATO stops its relentless enlargement. The United States has military bases in 80 countries and bases numbering more than 800. Stop. This is absolutely, completely wrong. We need a world in which the words "rule based order" mean the U.N., not the order of the United States. That rhetoric is obnoxious the way that it's used, because we have rules, they're called international rules and treaties. The United States should ratify them, by the way, because the United States has not ratified major U.N. treaties for decades. Rules mean living not according to what you do, but according to the international community. It's against the law to impose unilateral coercive economic measures. Has that mattered to the United States? It's against the WTO rules to impose unilateral trade restrictions. It's against international monetary rules to seize the foreign exchange reserves of other countries. But the United States does that repeatedly. The United States has been nearly in perpetual war. The United States has engaged in dozens and dozens of covert regime change operations. We need a world in which the covert regime change operations. And in which the United Nations is honored and strengthened, in which treaties are ratified and followed through, in which the U.S. stops threatening China, stops demanding NATO enlargement, starts talking with other countries, stops unilaterally leaving treaties like the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty and the Intermediate Nuclear Force Agreement - both of which the United States left, unilaterally. This is what a world of peace would mean. We made the United Nations for that purpose. We should honor it, live by it, respect the U.N. Charter, and strengthen a multipolar multilateral world operating under the U.N. Charter.

ZR: Jeffrey Sachs, world renowned economist and bestselling author, thank you so much for your time today.

JS: Great to be with you. Thanks so much.

ZR: And thank you for tuning in today. Please don't forget to join our alternative channels on Rumble, Telegram and a podcast called Podbean. YouTube, which is owned by Google, can shadow ban or censor us at any time. So as a precaution, we are asking all of our viewers to join these platforms. You will find the links to these platforms in the description below of this video. And if you're watching our videos regularly, make sure to donate a small amount because we are an independent and nonprofit organization that does not take any money from corporations, governments, and we don't even allow advertisements so we stay independent and provide you with information that is free from external influence. Even though we have 140,000 subscribers, only a few percent donate to us on a regular basis. So if you're watching our videos, make sure to donate today via PayPal, Patreon or bank account. Links to these donation platforms can also be found in the description of this video. I'm your host, Zain Raza, see you next time.

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