



## **INTERVIEW: John Mearsheimer on Israel-Gaza, U.S. Support for Ukraine, & the Role of “America First” Foreign Policy**

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**Glenn Greenwald (GG):** Good evening, it's Monday, October 30th. Welcome to a new episode of System Update, our live nightly show that airs every Monday through Friday at 7 p.m. Eastern, exclusively here on Rumble, the free speech alternative to YouTube. About a couple of months ago, we had on our program Professor John Mearsheimer, who is the Wendell Harrison Distinguished Service Professor of International Relations at the University of Chicago. He is widely heralded as one of the most influential foreign policy scholars in his field. He's also the co-author, along with Professor Stephen Walt, who we had on our show a few weeks ago of the 2006 book *The Israel Lobby And U.S. Foreign Policy*, which seeks to explain why pro-Israel steadfast support has been bipartisan policy in Washington for decades. And that show that we had him on in late June was one of our most watched programs, in part because he brings such a counterbalance to the predominant narrative about how we should think about foreign policy, about how we should fight one war after the next. We focused that program on the war in Ukraine and our relationship with China and the threat of multipolarity and whether it will replace U.S. hegemony. And this time we focussed a lot on the new war, the one in Gaza and Israel, the U.S. support for that war, as well as some recent updates about the war in Ukraine and how these two wars interact. And in general, I think Professor Mearsheimer in the show offered a particularly clear vision of how we ought to think about American foreign policy as we now are involved in two major wars with risk of escalation in each and the reasons why America seems instinctively, every time a new war is offered to involve itself in it. I found this discussion genuinely very illuminating, and I'm excited to show it to you because I think you will as well. Here is the interview with Professor Mearsheimer.

**GG:** Professor Mearsheimer, it's great to have you back on System Update. Thanks so much for taking the time to talk to us.

**John Mearsheimer (JM):** My pleasure, Glenn.

**GG:** So it has been a couple of months since we had you on. I think it was either late June or early July, and we had a long conversation. Needless to say, there has been a lot that has happened since then, starting with this horrific attack on Israeli civilians by Hamas on October 8th. And now we're about two and a half weeks or three weeks into that. And there has been a kind of non-stop bombardment by Israel of Gaza. And we're obviously going to get into a lot of the specifics of what this means geopolitically and for the U.S., but just what is your general view of these events thus far?

**JM:** Well, I think they're truly shocking. I think hardly anybody expected the Middle East to blow up. We were focusing on Ukraine and to a lesser extent on China, and all of a sudden you had this eruption in the Middle East. And it's quite amazing the extent to which the Ukraine issue has been pushed to the back pages. And the focus is almost exclusively on what's happening in the Middle East. And I think appropriately so, because it is an especially dangerous situation. The potential for escalation here, I think, is much greater than it is in Ukraine.

**GG:** And that's saying a lot because we've spent time, I know you have separately, and I have separately, and then when we were together, we did as well. Talking about the very real risk of escalation from this war in Eastern Europe, where you have all of NATO on one side and the largest nuclear power in Russia on the other. So when you say there's a greater risk of escalation in this situation than in that one that is saying quite a bit. How likely do you think escalation is in the sense that it might start involving other regional actors like Hezbollah or Iran or Syria or even now kind of a new conflict in the West Bank?

**JM:** I think that it's very hard to say with any degree of certainty whether or not you're going to get escalation in this case. But I think there is a nontrivial chance. To be a bit more specific, I think a lot depends on whether or not the Israelis actually do invade Gaza with ground forces. It seems like they're going to do that. That's what their rhetoric says. But who knows for sure? And I think if they invade Gaza and there are massive civilian casualties, which seems almost inevitable, then there'll be a very powerful temptation for Hezbollah to come in. And if Hezbollah comes in, then possibly Iran will come in. And this one could really spin out of control. I mean, one wants to remember that Hezbollah has a 150,000 plus rockets and missiles, many of which are quite accurate, and if they were to come in the war and unleash a good chunk of that missile force at Israel, the damage would be enormous. And of course, the Israelis would lash out at Lebanon and in particular Hezbollah. And then the question is, if Hezbollah was troubled, would the Iranians come to the rescue? So there is just, you know, a number of ways that this could spin out of control.

**GG:** One of the tactics the Israelis are using to try and deter those other actors, including Hezbollah, from entering the war is essentially by saying, You see what we're doing here to Gaza, you see what we're doing to Hamas, if you want that to be brought to your country and worse, then go ahead and get involved, but if you don't, then you shouldn't. And I think there

probably must be some caution on the part of these other actors, who know that a war with Israel can inflict a lot of damage on Israel, but will also result in a lot of damage on their country or their faction as well. The question I have, though, is to what extent do the populations in these other countries – not just Iran necessarily, but Yemen and Syria and Iraq and Iran, and then even the Gulf states, Saudi Arabia, Jordan and the like, those populations are already kind of agitated at what they're seeing, if this goes on for a lot longer with the ground invasion especially, they're going to get angrier and angrier – to what extent could that kind of force these governments to take reprisals or retaliatory steps against Israel in order to kind of keep their own domestic populations placated?

**JM:** Let me make the argument in two steps. The first step is to understand that for Hezbollah or Iran, the costs of getting into a war would be enormous. That's your point. The cost would be enormous. But sometimes states or organisations like Hezbollah are willing to pursue extremely costly strategies because the political incentives to do so are so great. In other words, if they saw something horrible happening to the Palestinian civilian population in Gaza, they may feel compelled for political reasons to absorb those enormous military costs. Second part of my answer gets at your question about the populations down below. It is possible that public opinion in these countries will encourage those elites to pursue these costly strategies, and the elites may have real doubts about whether it makes sense to do this because of the military costs you described. But they may feel that they have no choice because of public opinion from below. I would note that in 1948, when a series of Arab armies invaded Israel, which had declared its independence, it's important to understand that those Arab armies did not want to fight against Israel. They understood that they could not win the war against Israel. They were too weak. But popular opinion, public opinion, in effect, pushed them to attack Israel, and in the end they were defeated because they were inferior. So one doesn't want to underestimate the circumstances where public opinion in the Arab world might be strong enough to push the elites to start a war that will be very costly.

**GG:** Let me ask you about the U.S. role here, the Biden administration is saying what more of us every American administration has said every time Israel is involved in new conflict, which is: We are firmly on the side of Israel, we're here to give Israel everything that they need. The Biden administration did more than just say that, they deployed two aircraft carriers to the region. They said that they're there to deter involvement by these other regional actors. And then you have a lot of Republican politicians, some running for president and desperately needing attention and a boost to their campaign, but others, the kind of senators who are often calling for this sort of thing, explicitly saying that it's time for us to go and bomb Iran, to bomb their oil refineries, even without waiting for evidence or proof that they were actually involved in the attack, but certainly if they are then to go and do that. A) How likely do you think the United States would really be willing to get involved in this war in a direct military way, the way we haven't been willing to do in Ukraine? And then, B) What would be the consequences of doing something like bombing infrastructure in Iran?

**JM:** Well, I think the American foreign policy elites and certainly the Biden administration do not want to get involved in a war with Iran. I think they understand that that would be a huge mistake. And, in fact, I believe that we're deploying forces into the Gulf now. We're moving an aircraft carrier battle group and all sorts of air defence capabilities into the Gulf all for the purposes of deterring Iran. We don't want Iran to start a war because we don't want to get sucked into that war. And at the same time, we're certainly not going to initiate a war against Iran ourselves, at least given the present political situation. So I think that it is unlikely that we would initiate a war. But this is not to deny that there are some politicians who are calling for war, but thankfully they're not in the Biden administration.

**GG:** The question of motives is always very difficult to try and explore. People to this very day debate what was the motive for the United States to have gone and invaded Iraq? And one reason it's difficult is because usually different actors have different motives. There's not just one motive. If I can get you to focus for a second on the, let's call it the Israeli motives, for how they're responding, this idea that we're going to destroy Hamas, we're going to go bomb in a fairly unrestrained way, more unrestrained than I think they bombed Gaza certainly in the past. And we're only at the beginning and not the end. Naftali Bennett, in an essay in *The Economist*, said the Israeli motive is to finally put so much fear into the enemies of Israel that they will just mentally submit and surrender. They will just give up on the idea that they can ever challenge Israel, because they will know from now on as a result of this example that their destruction is essentially guaranteed. We had on [the show] a left wing member of the Israeli Knesset, who's a critic of the Netanyahu government, and he said he thinks part of the motive is to drive the Gazans out of Gaza, because the official position of a lot of the partners of Netanyahu is to annexe part of, if not all, of Gaza and the West Bank. And then there's the question of whether there's kind of an anger and thirst for vengeance motivating this as well. What do you think is the Israeli motive, either politically or geostrategically, in what they're doing?

**JM:** Yeah, well, I think that the Israelis, in a perfect world, would like to ethnically cleanse Gaza. They'd like to drive all the Palestinians out of Gaza. And in fact, I think they'd like to drive all the Palestinians out of the West Bank. And I think it makes – let me put it differently. I think it's understandable why they think that way. You want to understand, Glenn, the insight Greater Israel, which includes, of course, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, there are about 7.3 million Palestinians and 7.3 million Jews. There's rough equality between the two sides. And given that situation, the Israelis have to think about how to deal with that huge Palestinian population that, by the way, will end up in a few years, probably being larger than the Jewish population. So that state can't be a democratic state because if it was a democratic state, it would no longer be a Jewish state, given that the Palestinians outnumber the Jews. And you could go to a two state solution. This is what a lot of people in Israel and American policymakers have wanted to do. They wanted to sort of cut the country up, Greater Israel up and give the Palestinians a state and have a Jewish state side by side. But that's no longer possible. The Israelis have no interest in a two state solution. So, in

effect, what you have now is an apartheid state. This is what Human Rights Watch has said. This is what Amnesty International has said. This is what B'Tselem has said...

**GG:** The former head of the Mossad said just last month that the Israelis now arrived in this apartheid status.

**JM:** Right. Israel as an apartheid state, in my opinion, is not sustainable over the long term. And again, you're not going to go to a two state solution. You're not going to go to a pure democracy where Palestinians and Israelis, Israeli Jews have equal rights. So what can you do to solve this problem? And I believe lots of Israelis on the right especially think that ethnic cleansing is the way to go. And I think there are a number of people who are interested in slamming the Palestinians now and pushing them into Egypt. That would be an ideal solution. You get them out of Gaza and then you don't let them back in. So I think that is the best solution for lots of Israelis. The problem is the Palestinians are well aware that that's what the Israelis want to do. The Jordanians and the Egyptians are well aware that that's what the Israelis want to do. And the end result is they're not going to let that happen. Therefore, the Israelis are pushed back to a situation where they want to decisively defeat Hamas and install in the Gaza Strip a governing body that will live in peace with Israel. But this is not going to happen. I don't think they can destroy Hamas. And if they do destroy Hamas, another group will pop up to replace Hamas, that will be just as tough and just as committed to fighting against Israel. So if you look carefully at where the Israelis are today, they're in a no win situation. If they attack into Gaza, that's going to cause all sorts of problems and they're not going to end up ultimately solving the problem. And if they don't attack into Gaza, it's going to look like Hamas won and Israel was afraid to invade Gaza and deal with the problem. So they're in a damned if "they" do situation.

**GG:** It's one of the possibilities. And the ones that you listed is that the Israelis just keep killing so many people in Gaza. They keep destroying so much of Gaza that it will at least take a long time for the people of Gaza for Hamas to regroup, that if you just, I mean, really just bomb them into smithereens, people are talking about turning it into a parking lot. Ordinarily, the idea would be what the Israelis are going to be constrained by external forces from doing that, the people in the world who Israel needs are not just going to let Israel use the kind of force that violates every humanitarian norm, every law of war that has been in place since World War Two. I referenced earlier the fact that the Biden administration publicly is saying, We're going to give the Israelis everything we need, not one inch of difference between them in public. I'm wondering, though, and I don't know if you can know this for sure, but whether you have enough of a sense to be comfortable kind of speculating about the extent to which the Americans or maybe even the Europeans or somebody, are meaningfully encouraging or demanding Israel in private restrain the amount of force that they're using when it comes to the Gazans.

**JM:** I would bet a lot of money that the Americans are telling the Israelis that they have to be

extremely careful in terms of how many civilians that they kill. I mean, they've already killed a substantial number of civilians. I think the number is close to 6000 at this point. And approximately 2500 of those 6000 people that the Israelis have killed are children. So this is beginning to look very bad for Israel and for the United States, which, of course, is joined at the hip with Israel. And the Americans are well aware and I would imagine even some Israelis are well aware that this could lead to unending trouble in terms of Israel's standing in the world. So there are limits to how many civilians they can kill. And I think the Americans are telling them that they should be very careful in this regard moving forward. But see, this causes an enormous problem for the Israelis because then they really can't deal with Hamas. They can't eliminate Hamas. The only way they can possibly eliminate Hamas is to go in with massive force and kill huge numbers of civilians. And this is, I don't think, doable. I think once they start going down that road, world opinion and even Western opinion and even American opinion will put tremendous pressure on them to back off. And the end result is that they will back off or they will reduce the killing. And the end result is that Hamas will survive to fight another day. Again, the Israelis are damned if they do and damned if they don't.

**GG:** Well, prior to this outbreak of this war, there were some neoconservative outlets, journals in the United States, that essentially were arguing that it's time for the United States to cut off aid to Israel and more so it's time for the Israelis to get off of United States aid, precisely because they say it restrains the Israelis from doing what they know is in their national security or national interest to do. They should be bombing Iran, they should be using a lot more force against the Palestinians and its dependence on this U.S. aid; that is the thing that constrains them. And then you have at the same time that *The Economist* has said, I mentioned, by Naftali Bennett, the former Israeli prime minister, right before Netanyahu returned, part of what he was arguing was, Look, we're appreciative of American aid, but we are in a position now after this attack where we're not going to allow the Americans or world opinion any longer to stop us from doing what we know we need to do. And, you know, you wrote the definitive book, which I actually want to ask you about in a second, which was the *Israel Lobby* with Professor Wald, who we just had on the show a couple of weeks ago about the state of American public opinion as it pertains to Israel and the efficacy of a lobby that is in Washington. Like many other lobbies that are powerful, they have a powerful lobby as well to keep America on Israel's side when it comes to foreign policy. So heading into a 2024 election, I guess what I'm asking is, is there manoeuvrability for the Biden administration to put so much pressure on Israel to try and restrain it? Won't they be afraid that Netanyahu might say, Look, Joe Biden is kind of interfering with what we're trying to do? Just like Netanyahu, who kind of had open warfare with Obama during the Obama years. And the White House would be afraid that that could be politically harmful to it if that breaks out into public?

**JM:** I think there's no question that you can imagine a situation where the United States tries to put serious pressure on Israel to modulate the attack in Gaza, to limit the amount of force

that they use, and the Israelis resist. I mean, you can imagine that situation. The question then becomes, how much pressure is the United States willing to put on Israel? How desperate is the United States? And it's very hard to say, because there's no question that the lobby, Israel supporters, Israel's staunch supporters in the United States, will put pressure on the White House not to put pressure on Israel, the White House not to put pressure on Israel. That's likely to happen. But if the United States is desperate enough, if it feels that it just has to put an end to this conflict in Gaza or it has the limit with what the Israelis are doing, I believe the administration will do what they have to do. But am I 100% certain of that? No. But all of this shows you, Glenn, how much of a problem we face because we are joined at the hip with Israel. One of the points that Steve and I made in the book is that it would be much better for the United States and indeed much better for Israel if we treated it as a normal country. And if we treated Israel as a normal country, we would now have more distance between ourselves and Israel, and it would be easier for us to put pressure on the Israelis. But given the fact that the Biden administration has gone to enormous lengths to tie itself to Israel, it does not have a whole heck of a lot of flexibility at this point. And the interesting question is, as the crisis evolves over time, or maybe I should say, as the war evolves over time, you know, will the United States feel that it's in a position where it has to get some distance between itself and Israel and treat Israel more like a normal country?

**GG:** Can we just talk about that for a second? Because I think that something has gotten lost, that for a long time there was this acknowledgement within the national security community and a lot of times people who said it, ended up having to apologise, such as David Petraeus and there have been other kind of quote unquote "scandals", because people in the national security world, too, publicly or too bluntly, said, that our partnership with Israel, the perception that we're the ones who enable Israel to do what it does, that when the bombs drop on Gaza, those are bombs that come from the United States and that the United States pays for, that these things really hurt our national security. We just had an advisory warning issued by the State Department, a global advisory warning, warning Americans, even though we're not technically involved in this war, that Americans face a much heightened risk of terrorist attack or other violent attacks anywhere they go in the world because of this war. The Jordanians are saying, We're perceived as U.S. allies and therefore we're concerned that people are going to want to get at the United States. And Jordan is one of the places in the region most likely for them to attack. Talk about what those costs are. In what ways are Americans national security and by that, I don't just mean national security in this abstract sense that we talk about inside D.C. think tanks, but, I mean, the physical security of American citizens, in what way is that endangered by this refusal to treat Israel as any other country and this pressure on politicians to pledge unyielding support for it?

**JM:** Glenn, if I can just say a word about the taproot of the problem here before I answer this question directly? It's very important to understand that since at least President Jimmy Carter, every American president up to now has understood the importance of a two state solution. In other words, what we wanted to do was create a Palestinian state and an Israeli state living

side by side, hopefully in peace. And American leaders have long believed that that was the best way to head off a problem like the one we are now facing. Nevertheless, it was almost impossible for us to coerce Israel to accept the two state solution. We could never put real pressure on Israel to move towards a two state solution because the Israel lobby made it impossible to do that. The Israel lobby and the state of Israel was not interested in a two state solution, and the end result is we now have a Greater Israel, where you have 7.3 million Palestinians and 7.3 million Israeli Jews living in the same state. And what you have inside that state is a suffocating occupation; to quote the UN Secretary General, "a suffocating occupation". And what happens here is that the Palestinians occasionally resist in serious ways. You remember the first intifada. You remember the second intifada. You remember what happened on October 7th. This is the consequence of not having a two state solution. And again, I blame the Israel lobby in good part for making it impossible for the United States to push Israel to accept a two state solution. So it's just very important to understand that that's the basic background here. And we're now in a situation where it's almost impossible to imagine a two state solution. The occupation is so deeply entrenched at this point and time. There's so many settlements on the West Bank that it's almost impossible to see how you're going to get a two state solution. So what you're going to have for the foreseeable future is you're going to have a Greater Israel that is, in effect, an apartheid state, as we talked about before. And the end result is the Palestinians are going to continue to resist. You're going to have this problem pop up in three or four years, seven or eight years. It's not going to go away. So that's the basic framework for understanding where we are today.

**GG:** Let me just ask you about the, again, the part of this that is the U.S. role. You can go back in recent history, although you have to go back a fairly long way for an administration that did actually put a fair amount of pressure on Israel or at least tried, which was the Bush 41 administration, when you add foreign policy realists in power like James Baker and Brent Scowcroft in the Bush administration. The Bush 41 administration told the Israelis, We are not going to give you these loan guarantees that you need unless you cease expanding the settlements in the West Bank, because if you keep building these settlements in the West Bank, they presciently knew that we were going to be in a situation which is exactly the one that you just described, where a two state solution would be impossible and this problem would plague the United States for a long time. And they did what American leaders you would think would do, which is use its power, its financial leverage to demand that Israel stop doing things that harm the United States and U.S. national security. We just had a pretty momentous moment in American political history. We have a new speaker of the House, the 56th speaker. It's Mike Johnson of Louisiana. We had him on our show about a month ago or six weeks ago; seems like a pretty reasonable guy to me. He's an evangelical Christian. And one of the things in American political tradition is that when you have a new speaker, they go up to the tribune and they kind of give a speech about what their priorities are. It is a way of signalling to the American people, this is what we intend to do for you with this new speakership. And I don't know if you heard it, but for the audience as well, I just want to play



a part of what he said was the very first thing as speaker he was going to do. When you have all these major social pathologies facing Americans, suicide being the highest cause of death for people under 54, here's what he said was the very first thing he intended to do.

**Mike Johnson:** The country demands strong leadership of this body and we must not waiver. Our nation's greatest ally in the Middle East is under attack. The first bill that I'm going to bring to this floor in just a little while will be in support of our dear friend Israel. And we're overdue in getting that done.

**GG:** Okay, so there you had it. The very first bill, the very first one as speaker, is going to benefit our dear friend Israel in the middle of this war. What happened to this notion that we found in the Bush 41 administration that at the very least, even if we're supporting Israel, that support should be tied to an expectation that they will refrain from doing things that harm our national security?

**JM:** Well, the fact is that George H.W. Bush did try to press the Israelis to move towards a two state solution, but he failed and he backed off. And other presidents since then, including Bill Clinton, worked hard to get a two state solution, but he failed and he was never willing to put any serious pressure on Israel. We are now at a point in time where no politician is willing to lower the boom on Israel if it doesn't do what the Americans want. There's no way any president of the United States is going to put serious pressure on Israel to move to a two state solution. It's just not going to happen. George H.W. Bush was probably the high watermark here. And this is why I say when you look at the present situation, there's no way we're going to get a two state solution. And the end result is you're going to have the Palestinians living under this suffocating occupation. And the end result is they're going to resist from time to time in a really serious way, as they did on October 7th. And then the United States is going to find itself in a real mess, as is Israel. You know, Glenn, I want to point out that when Steve and I wrote the book, we emphasised that the lobby is not good for the United States, that the lobby's actions, which are completely legitimate, are not good for the United States. We also said they're not good for Israel. And I believe that if we had been able to put pressure on the Israelis and they had moved to a two state solution, they'd be in much better shape today than they are. But of course, that didn't happen.

**GG:** Let me ask you about the book. I have interviewed your co-author and I asked him this question, but I'm interested in your view. And for those who aren't familiar with the book, I strongly encourage you to read it. It is relevant as ever. In fact, more relevant now, given where we are. And for those who don't know, the argument of the book is that there are many lobbies in Washington, many powerful lobbies in Washington. They're perfectly legitimate and they're acting legally. And it's not a conspiracy. They do it out in the open. There's the NRA and Planned Parenthood and Wall Street lobbies and Big Tech lobbies and Pharmaceutical lobbies. And then there's the Israel lobby, which has been remarkably successful in ensuring that support for Israel is a bipartisan policy. And you go through the

mechanisms that the Israeli lobby uses and the consequences of it. It's shocking. I hate to acknowledge this because I remember defending the book and the attacks that you got at the time. But it's all the way back in 2006 now, 17 years ago. I'm wondering what has changed in those last 17 years in terms of the views of the lobby that this book advanced? Has it gotten weaker or has it gotten stronger? Has it changed how it operates? What's your overall view of the power of the lobby as compared to when you published the book?

**JM:** Well, I think that there's no question that Steve and I had an influence, a great influence on the discourse about the lobby. Before we wrote the book, it was almost impossible to talk publicly about the lobby and the lobby's influence and to raise questions about whether its influence was good for the United States or good for Israel. I think that at this point in time, lots of people talk about the lobby. Look at this program here. We're talking about the lobby. And so I think there's no question we had a big influence on the discourse. In terms of policy, I think we had zero influence. I think the lobby is as powerful today and one could even make an argument that's slightly more powerful today than it was when we wrote the book. I ran into a gentleman about two or three years after we wrote the book, and he was obviously deeply ensconced in the lobby. And he came up to me and he said, I want to thank you for writing the book. And I said, Why is that giving your views? He said, Because you forced us to redouble our efforts to make sure that we were not losing influence in Congress and with the executive branch. So we're working hard to make sure that the lobby remains as powerful as ever. So I think the bottom line here is they redoubled their efforts after the book came out because they feared that it might have some effect on the policymaking process. And today, I mean, all you have to do is watch Joe Biden, Antony Blinken, Jake Sullivan, and all these members of Congress in action to recognise that in no way, shape or form are they going to challenge Israel unless they absolutely have to.

**GG:** I have a few more questions just out of respect for your time, and I try and just limit that, but there are a couple of things I just have to ask you about. First of all, one of the things that happened when you two kind of broke the taboo and wrote this book was they tried to destroy your reputations. You were widely accused of being anti-Semite for having written this book, the standard tactics used against anybody who speaks critically of Israel. But it was a tsunami of that against you, too, precisely because they knew that you were kind of breaking open this ability to speak about Israel and the lobby in a way that hadn't been previously permitted, let's say. Ever since the attack by Hamas, there have been all sorts of efforts, including aimed, I would say, overwhelmingly at college campuses, to not just stigmatise people who are criticising Israel and even some people who went, I would say too far at least, certainly for my taste, in doing things like praising Hamas, which I thought was, what Hamas did, was repellent. But there's been a real effort not just to stigmatise people, but to create formal blacklists led by billionaires, of saying these students who signed these petitions can never be hired. And now even formal censorship proposals from people like Ron DeSantis and Nikki Haley say we need to rein in the ability of free speech, that it shouldn't include antisemitism, which means criticism of Israel and the like. As somebody

who spent a lot of your adult life in academia, on college campuses, what kind of effect is this having on academic freedom, on the ability for students to speak freely and to have these kind of free debates and just the general seeming rejuvenation of censorship advocacy on the right concern you independent of college campuses?

**JM:** Well, it certainly concerns me. That's an open and shut case. I think you and I are on the same page with regard to freedom of speech. And the suppression of free speech is something I find antithetical. But let's just go to college campuses and the lobby. Well, the lobby has a rich history of policing, academia. The lobby really cares about the discourse regarding Israel. They worry that critics of Israel and critics of the lobby will get a prominent voice in the discourse, and that will not be in the interests of Israel or the lobby. So they police academia and they've been doing this for a long time. The problem is that it's very hard to police academia. First of all, you have lots of professors who have tenure. Secondly, you do have a rich tradition of free speech on college campuses. And furthermore, you now have on college campuses lots of foreign students, professors who come from foreign countries and you have lots of students who are willing to criticise Israel. And by the way, this includes a large slice of American Jews on college campuses. I mean, you want to be clear here, or we want to be clear here, it's not just, you know, non-Jews. And in some cases, I think Jews are leading the charge in terms of criticising the occupation and criticising Israel's behaviour more generally. So anyway, what you now have on college campuses is a rather large [inaudible] who are willing to criticise Israel and who are in good part protected. And this causes enormous problems for the lobby. And you can see the frustration that individuals in that lobby now feel towards dealing with this problem on college campuses. And I would guess, Glenn, I hate to say this, but I would guess as we move forward, more and more efforts will be made to get legislative bodies and, you know, executives, be they governors or the president, to put strictures on free speech, especially when it comes to Israel. And this is not all for the good.

**GG:** For sure. Now, just to finish up, the last time you were on, we talked about this other war that actually is still going on. I know it's hard to remember, but there is still actually a war in Ukraine in which the United States is heavily involved on the side of Ukraine. The attempt on the Biden administration and Joe Biden is to try and tie these two wars together. Rhetorically for sure, but also sort of like with this axis of evil concept that George Bush used to try and suggest that multiple countries had to be on our radar because they were kind of working together in this axis, tying Russia together with Hamas, but also legislatively to try and force when the Congress votes to give more money to Israel, which of course, they will, to also force them to vote to give more money to Ukraine. Does this new war, the one that we are now also involved in very heavily on the side of Israel, jeopardise, do you think, the ability and the willingness of the United States and the West more broadly to continue to fund and support Ukraine in its war?

**JM:** Well, actually it looks like the war in the Middle East will make it possible for us to fund

Ukraine. What, as you pointed out, the Biden administration is trying to do is tie funding for Israel to funding for Ukraine and push that funding through in one giant package. Before the war broke out in the Middle East on October 7th, it was looking like the administration, the Biden administration, was going to have great difficulty getting approval in Congress for giving Ukraine another huge slug of money. But if the administration is successful at tying the money that we're going to give to Ukraine, to the money that we're going to give to Israel, and we can push that through or the administration can push that through Congress, then one could argue that the war in the Middle East has helped us to continue supporting Ukraine in a serious way. My view, Glenn, which I think is consistent with what I said on the show the last time I was on, is that it doesn't really matter because the Ukrainian military is doomed. I believe the Russians are going to win this war, and giving Ukraine more money is not going to fix the problem. But I think the administration disagrees with that and thinks that the Ukrainians can hang in there if we continue to support them. But that's not my view.

**GG:** Last question. I think we talked about before, when you're on and maybe it happened after, but there was a speech by Fiona Hill, who is a long-time hawk when it comes to both Russia and China. She's kind of an ally of John Bolton and the Trump administration and elsewhere. But she gave a speech to Western European foreign policy elites and other policy makers warning that what we used to call the rest of the world has been uniting in a confederation against the United States, more on the side of China in BRICS, and that the way they see the war in Ukraine is as a continuation of the American exploitation of its superior military force to control the world using bombs and weapons. And there's a lot of resentment that the Chinese are successfully exploiting to bring a lot of the world on their side and against the United States. Do you think that in terms of how the quote unquote, "rest of the world" sees this new conflict where the Israelis are, the obviously stronger force and doing things in Gaza, that a lot of people are aghast that and will likely get more horrified as the violence increases, that that will now accelerate that trend and continue to make the world and the resentment they have to the United States increase in a way that will bring them even further behind China?

**JM:** Look, I think there's no question that that's the case. Before October 7th, it was very clear that the Global South, as we like to call it, was not aligned with the West against Russia. That Russia was finding that it had a great deal of sympathy in the Global South. Then the war broke out in the Middle East and there was a piece in the Financial Times that quoted all sorts of high level policymakers in Europe who deal with the Ukraine issue, who were saying, in effect, that now we are really screwed in terms of Ukraine because the Global South is going to end up turning almost completely against us and we're not going to have any sympathy for the Ukraine portfolio inside the Global South. I think that our position in the Global South – our position, I'm talking about America's position– the West's position in the Global South is already in terrible shape as a result of October 7th, the events of October 7th. And it's only going to get worse with the passage of time because this conflict is going to drag on. And if we look like the bad guys now, we're going to look even worse as the Israelis

unleashed the dogs in Gaza and end up killing even more people than they've already killed. So for us, this is a terrible situation in terms of our relations with the Global South and what that means for Ukraine, but also what it means for dealing with the Middle East and what it means for Russia and China. You don't want to underestimate the extent to which this crisis in the Middle East is a bonanza for Russia and China. They are taking advantage of the trouble that we're in, and they're going to great lengths to position themselves as sophisticated diplomats who are interested in a cease fire and are interested in ultimately solving this problem by moving to a two state solution. And they're doing a very good job of making the case that America has failed to protect the Palestinians because America has failed to get a two state solution. And if only people had listened to the Russians and now the Chinese, we could deal with this problem and live happily ever after in the Middle East. So if you look at what's happening right as a result of the events of October 7th, it's quite clear that our position, our diplomatic position in the Global South has deteriorated even more than it had deteriorated as a result of the Ukraine war.

**GG:** Yeah, I think there's so many kinds of complex and moving parts to what we're doing in Israel. And unfortunately, there's not a lot of sober debate about it because the level of emotion is still so high. And I kind of was expecting a return to some reason. And yet every day that goes by at some level, I think because it's being fed and cultivated on purpose, the emotions seem to get actually more intense, not less so. And that's one of the reasons why I think your perspective and your voice are so crucial, because you always bring a kind of counterbalance too, when American discourse gets a little unhinged when it comes to foreign policy. So I really appreciate you coming back on the show. It's always a pleasure to speak to you. Thanks so much for taking the time to do it.

**JM:** My pleasure, Glenn.

**GG:** All right. Great talking to you all.

**END**