



## **Nord Stream Update, Ukraine's invasion of Russia & Report from South Lebanon**

*This transcript may not be 100% accurate due to audio quality or other factors.*

**Zain Raza (ZR):** Thank you for tuning in today, and welcome back to another episode of The Source. I'm your host, Zain Raza. We're back from a summer break and would like to thank those people that donated to our cause. This summer, we reached millions of people with our videos. For example, every video that we publish reaches thousands, if not tens of thousands of views. We have 150,000 subscribers now, and despite that fact, only 533 people donate to us via a standing order, which means only 0.003% donate to us on a regular basis. If you like to strengthen as well as protect independent journalism, journalism that is free from corporate and state interest and is free from any external influence, then please visit the links in the description of this video and find out how you can donate to our cause. We thank you for your generosity. Today I'll be talking to human rights lawyer, independent journalist Dimitri Lascaris. As a lawyer, he specializes in class actions, human rights and international law. In 2020, he ran for the Green Party leadership in Canada, finishing second. Dimitri, welcome back.

**Dimitri Lascaris (DL):** Thank you for having me, Zain. Always a pleasure.

**ZR:** Let us begin with your current trip to South Lebanon. As far as I know, the situation there is quite tense, not only because of the ongoing daily exchanges of rockets between Hezbollah and Israel, but also due to rising tensions between Iran and Israel following the extrajudicial assassination of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh by Israel on July 21st in Tehran. One day earlier, Israel also assassinated a top commander of Hezbollah Fuad Shukr in Beirut. Germany's leading prime time news outlet The Tagesschau reported on a daily basis on US efforts to achieve a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip, which, according to some experts, they claim, would also prevent Iran from retaliating if successfully achieved. After Blinken's visit to Israel, he declared that his visit had been positive and that Israel was open to a bridging proposal for a ceasefire and that it is now in Hamas's hands. Hamas, in turn responded with the following statement, quote, "The new proposal fulfils Netanyahu's conditions. He rejects a permanent ceasefire and a comprehensive withdrawal of soldiers from the Gaza Strip. Netanyahu is responsible for the fact that there is no agreement", unquote. The main point of

contention between Israel and Hamas is the extent of Israeli withdrawal and its presence in the Gaza Strip. For example, Israel wants to retain control of the Philadelphi Corridor, which connects the Gaza Strip with Egypt and which Israel claims is used to smuggle weapons and ammunition. Could you first talk about your observations, what you've seen in Lebanon since you've been there, and then comment on the efforts made by the US to reach a ceasefire and why Hamas continues to unilaterally reject it?

**DL:** Oh, well, the combat here is fairly – I wouldn't say fairly. It's extremely intense at the moment. It could seriously escalate, to be sure. But, there was an assassination of the leader of the Palestinian movement in Saida yesterday, by a drone strike. There were six Hezbollah soldiers who were killed in the last 48 hours, I believe. Perhaps seven or eight. There have been casualties on the Israeli side. Although the Israelis are opaque about – Hezbollah announces with detailed information every one of its soldiers who was killed, Israel tends to be more secretive about these sorts of things. But in any event, I've heard dozens of explosions in the time that I've been here in the South. I've been here now for 24 hours. I mean, over lunch today, we were seated on a terrace, we could see two Israeli military bases in the distance Metula and Al-Manara and we heard at least ten explosions, possibly 15 explosions, and they seemed to be coming from northern Israel. And we saw videos later on of Hezbollah rockets being fired in the area of Arnoun, which is bordering on Israel. So, there's constant combat going on. Again, it could be seriously escalated at any moment. And in fact, the Chinese government, five hours ago, after the assassination of this Fatha leader in Saida urged all of its citizens to leave Lebanon immediately. And the Chinese government is not prone to do these sorts of things for political reasons. So, we're kind of playing it by ear. We don't know how much longer we can stay down here. This escalation that has been promised by Iran and by Hezbollah for the two assassinations you mentioned could start at any moment. And once that happens, sort of all bets are off of where this war is going to go. In terms of the negotiations, the so-called negotiations, between Hamas and Israel. Let me say, first of all, that everybody I speak to down here in Lebanon is, whether or not their supporters of the Islamic resistance, are very cynical about these negotiations. I don't think anybody actually believes in this country, as far as I can tell, that these negotiations are seriously designed to result in a deal. They believe that they are theater. And you mentioned the sticking points in the negotiations. Let's be very clear and we need only look as far as the recent decision of the International Court of Justice about the occupation. The ICJ has recognized that Gaza is occupied territory, it's Palestinian occupied territory, and that the occupation is illegal. It is illegal, meaning that Israel has no right whatsoever to have its forces stationed any longer on any part of the Gaza Strip, whether it be the Philadelphi border and then the Netzarim corridor, which they've set up to divide the Gaza concentration camp in two parts. They have to withdraw. That's their obligation. So they're basically demanding things that are illegal. And Hamas is perfectly within its rights. Any Palestinian representative is perfectly within its rights to say you must vacate your forces entirely from the Gaza Strip. And unless Israel is doing that, it cannot be deemed to be a serious negotiating partner.

**ZR:** But wasn't the ruling more focused on the West Bank? Or was it centered around the land of Palestine? Because I could just imagine that the argument would be that that ruling does not apply to Gaza because there are terrorists present there and Hamas, and that they pose an existential threat to the existence of Israel. How would you counter that?

**DL:** Well, the ICJ has clearly said that Gaza is occupied territory. It's not just the West Bank. The decision was not limited to the West Bank. It looked at, broadly, the occupation, and Gaza as part of an occupation. You know, and if you're going to call Hamas a terrorist organization, how can you not call Israel a terrorist entity? Which has killed over 16,000 Palestinian children in the last eleven months? And it could be in excess of 20 or 30,000 children, according to The Lancet, perhaps even over 50 or 60,000 children. Israel alleges that Hamas, Palestinian militants killed 36 children on October 7th, a minor infraction – of course, every child's life is precious, but the number of child casualties and civilian casualties on the Israeli side are a fraction of those on the Palestinian side. This has always been true, Zain, year after year, for the entirety of the 55 year plus occupation. So to say that Hamas is a terrorist organization and that Israel is defending itself, is to stand reality on its head and to make a mockery of the facts. Let's be serious here. And let's also recognize that the ultimate cause of violence on the Palestinian side is their oppression and their dispossession. That's what's causing this violence. The way to end it all, the violence on both sides, is to give the Palestinian people their right of self-determination.

**ZR:** You're in south Lebanon right now and Hezbollah is present in that place. I would like to find out how the perception of Hezbollah is there in Lebanon, because the mainstream media here in Germany says they are an organization that is hell bent on destroying the state of Israel, that they're anti-Semitic, they want to annihilate all the Jews. Rarely, if at all, do Western journalists travel there, speak with Hezbollah commanders or high officials. But you have made that effort. So can you talk about what Hezbollah actually is and what they are after?

**DL:** I actually interviewed the international relations director of Hezbollah several months ago in Beirut. And I asked him this very question, and he said to me that Hezbollah welcomes the presence of the Jewish people in the region, and has absolutely nothing against the Jewish people and has tremendous respect for the Jewish faith and the history of the Jewish people. Their complaint is not with the Jewish people. Their complaint is with Zionism, and in particular with the oppression of Palestinians and the aggressions against Lebanon. And there have been enormous aggressions against Lebanon. Israel occupied Lebanon for well over a decade. And then it invaded Lebanon again in 2006. In this current round of conflict, according to Western media sources, the civilian casualties on the Lebanese side are far higher than they are on the Israeli side as a result of Hezbollah attacks. So again, who is the aggressor? Who is the terrorist? Who is the oppressor? The evidence leads inexorably to one conclusion, and it is Israel. Hezbollah said very clearly that if the cease fire is enacted in Gaza and on terms that the Palestinian representatives can accept, it will stop attacking Israel. It's been very clear about that. The simple solution here is for the Biden administration to stop

funneling these weapons to what is a genocidal regime, and the war with Hezbollah would come to a swift end.

**ZR:** I would like to ask you a personal question. You're from Canada, you're a family man, and yet you continue to visit dangerous places like the south of Lebanon, where a war can break out at any second. And it's a time where Western countries are asking their citizens to evacuate and return home, because the threat of an all out war looms. And you could get essentially stuck there. So what are your underlying motivations to report from these places? Are you not afraid of your life and well-being?

**DL:** Well, first of all, let me be very clear, because people who don't like the perspective that I have consistently expressed on this conflict will often say things like, Well, he's being paid by somebody. I'm not being paid by anybody, okay? I'm not even having my travel expenses reimbursed to me in whole or in parts. And I do journalism as a public service. I have been fortunate to make a good living from the practice of law, which was my main career for over 30 years. I do this now because I have been very fortunate, I'm in a position to come to a country like this. Of course, I don't want to die. I'm well cognizant on the risks. I would like to have a very long, healthy and happy life. But I can say in good conscience that if something should take my life at this stage, I would feel as though I had sacrificed my whatever years are remaining to me, for reasons of conscience. If other people are in a position to do what I am and most people aren't, I think it's incumbent upon them to contribute in any way that they can. And, ultimately, I'm fortified in my strong conviction that this is the right thing to do.

**ZR:** I would like to shift gears here and focus on the latest developments surrounding the Nord Stream pipeline bombing, which took place in September 2022. On August 14th, major headlines made the rounds in Germany that had issued arrest warrants in connection with the Nord Stream pipeline bombing. A Ukraine diving instructor named Volodymyr Z and two accomplices are accused of blowing up the pipelines. Both the German media and the state public prosecutor's office are sticking to the Andromeda theory, claiming that there's clear evidence from former intelligence services as well as photographic evidence. According to the reports, this included a photo of a white van believed to have been used to transport diving materials taken by traffic cameras on the island of Rügen in September 2022, with a passenger who, quote, "strongly resembled Z", unquote. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has vehemently denied that the state played any role. While some German media have even spread the narrative, that just because these men were from Ukraine does not necessarily mean they were hired by the Ukrainian government. This theory, of course, refutes Seymour Hersh's claim that the US, under the orders of President Biden, carried out a secret CIA operation to destroy the pipelines. Can you provide your assessment in light of these developments?

**DL:** Well, let's, first of all, start with the reality that, in the non-Western world, this theory is being met with howls of laughter, and rightly so. First of all, it's a very convenient story. It basically exonerates anybody who's in a position of authority in a Western government of any responsibility whatsoever. And the Ukrainian government as well. How convenient that is.

The people who are alleged to be the perpetrators, nobody knows who they are. How convenient that is. It said that Zelensky didn't have any knowledge of this. Well, what a wonderful outcome that is for the project of US hegemony. And these people are alleged to have had the ability to do something which was, from a technical perspective, extraordinarily difficult, even though there's no reason to believe that they had either the equipment or the expertise to pull it off. And the last thing I want to say about this preposterous theory, Zain, is that, if in fact, these people, whether or not it's true, let's assume for the sake of argument is true, why would the German government continue to hand over weapons to the Ukrainian government if they are not prepared to hand over the criminals, the alleged criminals? It sounds to me that based on this story, these people are in the jurisdiction of Ukraine. So they should be arrested and they should be extradited to Germany. It's the least that the Ukrainian government can do. And there was also some indication that they were in Poland. Well, again, the same issue arises. Poland is an ally of Germany. They're both in NATO. They're both on the same side in this war in Ukraine. Why won't the Polish hand over the accused persons to stand trial in Germany? I assure you – I mean, look, I can't say this with 100% certainty, but I'm highly confident that these people will never stand trial in Germany. And that will tell you a lot. If they never are brought to justice and all this remains as unproven and untested allegations, no court of law is ever given the opportunity to address them, then we should, ultimately, take the much more credible account offered by Seymour Hersh, a legendary journalist with inside sources, about what really happened here. And what really happened here, in all likelihood, is the US government committed an act of terrorism against its ally Germany.

**ZR:** Let us now focus on the war in Ukraine. I would like to first recap some of the major developments of this year for our viewers. In spring of this year, the United States approved a \$61 billion military aid package for Ukraine that also included, for the first time, the 300 kilometer range Army tactical missile systems, also known as ATACMS. The Russian military then began its summer offensive in East Ukraine, making notable territorial gains. In its response the West gave Ukraine not only for their arms, but also gave it permission to deploy Western made weapons to strike targets within Russian territory that Russia may be using to support its offensive. In June, peace proposals were put forward both by Russia and Ukraine. However, they failed to make any headway. In a surprising turn of events, Ukraine launched an incursion into Russia's Kursk Oblast region beginning August and according to the German media it has made notable progress by taking hold of 1250km<sup>2</sup> of territory that includes 90 localities. In addition, Ukraine has also captured thousands of Russian soldiers, which it states will give it leverage over the Kremlin should negotiations take place. According to President Zelensky, Ukraine's primary goal of this incursion was to weaken Russian defense lines in eastern Ukraine by forcing them to retreat and refocus their position on defending Russian territory. It has also been reported that German tanks and vehicles were spotted in this incursion, which, according to the German government as well as experts opinioning the German media claim it's permissible under international law. Previously, Germany was quite hesitant for its weapons to be used in any offensive means in order to avoid a continental war with Russia. How do you assess the surprise incursion in Russia? Has Ukraine now gained the upper hand in this war?

**DL:** Well, I think we can only answer that question by looking at the whole battlefield. And what is happening in the Donbas is incredibly important and vastly more important than what has happened in Kursk, for the simple reason that Kursk is of no real strategic value. There are a bunch of little villages there, a lot of forest. It's very bucolic. The only thing that potentially has strategic value is a nuclear power plant, which is beyond the reach of the Ukrainian forces at this time and is very unlikely to be conquered by them. So what they basically have acquired, if you believe the accounts that are coming from the Western media and one should take those with a substantial grain of salt, is sparsely populated land containing no infrastructure of strategic value. Meanwhile, what's happening in the Donbas is that the Russian forces have been advancing in ever increasing increments. Now it's kilometers a day, towards the outer edge of the Donetsk region. They are now on the verge of taking a strategically important town or city by the name of Pokrovsk. And, that is a linchpin in the defense system in the Donbas. They haven't already taken Avdiivka. They've taken the outlying communities beyond Avdiivka, which is a suburb of the Donetsk city, one of the largest cities in Ukraine. And if they take Pokrovsk, very likely there is going to be a collapse of the defense system. At that stage, all that's going to really remain, that would pose any kind of a challenge are the towns of Kramatorsk and Sloviansk, the last foothold that Ukraine would have in the Donetsk region. In addition, you have advances being made in the Kupiansk direction where the Russian forces are moving steadily towards the Oskil river. And in all of this, the Ukrainians are suffering gigantic casualties. And, you know, in the Kherson region alone, you can see video after video after video of this vaunted NATO equipment burning, in the fields, on the roads, in the forests. There's video evidence that the Russians have destroyed the most advanced air defense systems in the position of the Ukrainian military. Dozens and dozens of armored vehicles, including these much ballyhooed Western tanks. They have destroyed HIMARS systems. They have taken out thousands and thousands of soldiers, killed and wounded. This idea that the Ukrainians have captured thousands of soldiers, which I think is that phrase that you used, Zain, I've seen absolutely no evidence to back that up. I've seen videos of a few dozen Russian soldiers, and if they captured thousands, how many more were actually in that theater of battles? That would have meant that the Russians had quite a large force in that theater of battle. Would the Ukrainians have been able to advance that quickly, kilometers into the territory of Russia, if there were many thousands of soldiers manning that border? The reason why the Russians, I think it's fair to say, did not have a very large contingent of soldiers on that particular border is because they really didn't see a reason why Ukraine would want to commit large forces to attacking that area, because there are no assets of strategic value beyond, as I mentioned, the nuclear power plant, which is realistically beyond the reach of Ukrainian forces. This could ultimately as people in the Western media and some commentators have noted, expedite Ukraine's defeat, because Ukraine has had to cobble together these brigades from already depleted brigades which were defending the positions of the Ukrainian military in the Donetsk region, in Zaporizhzhia region, and Kupiansk. If this does not succeed, if the Ukrainians do not hold this territory, and that's really going to be the acid test, you know, temporarily occupying a position for a period of a few weeks or months is counterproductive if you end up losing the territory and sacrificing thousands of soldiers in the process. So before people begin celebrating on the Ukrainian side, let's see how long they hold this

territory and let's see whether they're able to hold the defenses in the Donbas. I think the answer to that, sadly for the Ukrainian people, is going to be a resounding no.

**ZR:** I would like to look at the broader geopolitical picture before ending this interview. For the first time since the end of the Cold War, the US will deploy long range Tomahawk missiles in Germany by 2026. The Tomahawk cruise missile is not only hard to detect on radar, but also has a range of 2500 km. Moscow, for example, is around 1600 km away from Berlin, and this deployment will give NATO the capability to strike Moscow. Even though there wasn't a major political debate in Germany on this issue, most of the establishment parties such as the Greens, Social Democrats, Conservative Christian Democrats all voiced their support for this deployment. German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock defended the deployment by stating that Russia has been continuously violating international arms agreements by expanding its nuclear capabilities. She went on and let me quote her here, "We must protect ourselves and our Baltic partners against this. Including through increased deterrence and additional stand off weapons. Anything else would not only be irresponsible, but also naive in the face of an ice cold Kremlin", unquote. Can you provide your assessment on these long range missiles, and whether you think the deployment in Germany, as our foreign minister stated, will protect Europe and provide deterrence against the ice cold Kremlin?

**DL:** I think Petra Kelly is turning over in her grave, Zain. Petra Kelly, the founder of the German Green Party, which emerged from the anti-nuclear movement, which was adamantly opposed in its very genetic makeup to the stationing of nuclear capable American missiles on German soil. This is an utter betrayal of that legacy. And I say this not only as an activist, a peace activist, a journalist, a person who aspires to be a person of conscience, but also as somebody who ran to be the leader of the Green Party of Canada. You know, and I came very close to winning that contest in 2020. So I'm intimately familiar with the core values of the Green Party and the history of the party. And I think the greatest favor that Annalena Baerbock and Robert Habeck can do for the global green movement, is to change the name of their party, and they should call it the party of war and the party of reckless endangerment. Here's the deal. If the Russians were actually concerned or inclined to use nuclear weapons against the West, they would have used them by now. There are now German tanks and British tanks on Russian soil in areas where Germans under the Third Reich used tanks to kill massive numbers of Russians in the Second World War. And yet they haven't struck Germany even with conventional weapons, let alone with nuclear weapons. So this notion that Putin's government or any Russian government is hellbent on waging nuclear war against the West is complete fantasy. It's delusional. And, frankly, they better come to their senses, before we are all consumed in the conflagration of fire. And I just want to remind people, I'm sure people in Germany are better aware of this than I am, but I learned the other day that, I'm going to mispronounce her name, although I have great respect for her, Sahra Wagenknecht – I probably mispronounced that – the leader of a new left leaning anti-imperialist party in Germany gave a speech to the Bundestag – I discovered this just a couple of days ago – in March of this year, in which she denounced the insane policies of the German government, the coalition government in the Ukraine war, and concluded her impassioned statement with

the words: "Have you all lost your minds?" I repeat those compelling words. And the question she asked on that day six months ago, it's even more compelling today.

**ZR:** Dimitri Lascaris, journalists and lawyers for international law. Thank you so much for your time today.

**DL:** Thank you. Zain, always a pleasure.

**ZR:** And thank you for tuning in today. Please don't forget to join our alternative media channels to YouTube, which is owned by Google. Our alternative channels include Telegram, Rumble, and our podcast called Podbean. You will find the links to all of these platforms in the description of this video. YouTube, which is owned by Google, can shadowban and censor us at any time, especially in times of crisis when we are reporting on a perspective that is missing in the mainstream media. I thank you for tuning in today. I'm your host, Zain Raza, and see you next time.

**END**

---

**Thank you for reading this transcript. Please don't forget to donate to support our independent and non-profit journalism:**

<b>BANKKONTO:</b> Kontoinhaber: acTVism München e.V. Bank: GLS Bank IBAN: DE89430609678224073600 BIC: GENODEM1GLS	<b>PAYPAL:</b> E-Mail: <a href="mailto:PayPal@acTVism.org">PayPal@acTVism.org</a>	<b>PATREON:</b> <a href="https://www.patreon.com/acTVism">https://www.patreon.com/acTVism</a>	<b>BETTERPLACE:</b> Link: <a href="#">Click here</a>
---	--	--	---

The acTVism Munich e.V. association is a non-profit organization with legal capacity. The association pursues exclusively and directly non-profit and charitable purposes. Donations from Germany are tax-deductible. If you require a donation receipt, please send us an e-mail to: [info@acTVism.org](mailto:info@acTVism.org)