



Trump DISMANTLES DC Foreign Policy Dogma?

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Glenn Greenwald (GG): Donald Trump landed in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, early this morning to begin a trip that we've been talking about on this show that's notable. In part because he's visiting three different countries, three different tyrannies in the Gulf region and even though he's very close to Israel, he doesn't have any plan to go visit Israel or Netanyahu, but he also announced beforehand that he's going to do deals with these countries even though Biden had put a prerequisite that they have to first go and normalise relations with Israel. And the position of these countries was we're not going to normalise relations with Israel, we can't, until they give the Palestinians a state. And obviously not only are they not going to be a Palestinian as a state, they are ethnically cleansing Gaza and killing huge numbers of people in the process to achieve that goal. So obviously, they can't normalise relations with Israel. So, Trump said: All right, I'm going to put America's interests first, rather than Israel's. And he didn't just make the trip, he also announced with the White House in a release earlier today called: *Historic \$600 Billion Investment Commitment in Saudi Arabia. Donald J. Trump Secures Historic \$600 Billion Investment Commitment.*

Now the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia, who's effectively the de facto leader of that country, Mohammed bin Salman went and met Trump at the airport. Just to kind of underscore the importance of this trip. And then after those two signed agreements between Saudi Arabia and the United States, they entered this massive gigantic ornate auditorium where, it looked like, a couple thousand, maybe several thousand people were speaking. And Trump received a massive standing ovation from the Saudis. But also a bunch of corporate interests and financiers who are very interested in opening up the doors to do business in Saudi Arabia because of how much money they have. And here's how Donald Trump was received.

There's Mohammed bin Salman clapping, holding his heart. There you see this massive auditorium. There's Elon Musk right behind Mohammed bin Salman. And they're just clapping, clapping, and clapping. And then Mohammed bin Salman stands up so of course the entire auditorium instantly does to give Trump a standing ovation. And there's Marco Rubio as well. So you see how Trump is viewing Saudi Arabia as just from a transactional

economic lens, that there's huge amounts of benefits for American companies, and for the United States, and for the Trump family to pursue in Saudi Arabia, which is drowning in all kinds of petrodollars and is seeking to diversify their investments, and to create a more positive image of themselves in the world, even if they're not necessarily loosening up any part of the tyranny of their country.

Here is an excerpt of something Donald Trump said in that speech. In this speech, he kind of laid out a vision. He first talked about all the great things happening in the United States under his presidency. The normal things, closing the border, the tariffs, and the stock market, and all that. But then he got to foreign policy and specifically talked about the region. Now there's a lot in this speech that is kind of a continuation of the way things are seen by the United States in terms of foreign policy. He spent a lot of time bashing Iran as the source of all evil in the Middle East, but that's in large part because Saudi Arabia and Iran are very virulent enemies. It's kind of the arch-rivalry of the Middle East. Part of it is religious, part of it is just geostrategic. So, of course, Trump did bash Iran a lot, claiming that they were one of the major problems of the Middle East, but he also said we hope to sign an agreement with Iran so that they can thrive, just not with a nuclear weapon. But he also attacked bipartisan foreign policy dogma that has prevailed in the United States for a long time, and specifically neocons and interventionists. Here's part of what he said.

Donald Trump (DT): And it's crucial for the wider world to know this great transformation has not come from Western interventionists or flying people in beautiful planes, giving you lectures on how to live and how to govern your own affairs. No, the gleaming marvels of Riyadh and Abu Dhabi were not created by the so-called nation builders, neocons, or liberal nonprofits like those who spent trillions and trillions of dollars failing to develop Kabul, Baghdad, and so many other cities. Instead, the birth of a modern Middle East has been brought by the people of the region themselves, the people that are right here, the people that have lived here all their lives, developing your own sovereign countries, pursuing your own unique visions and charting your own destinies and your own ways. It's really incredible what you've done. In the end, the so-called nation builders wrecked far more nations than they built than the interventionists. We're intervening in complex societies. That they did not even understand themselves. They told you how to do it, but they had no idea how to do it themselves. Peace, prosperity, and progress ultimately came not from a radical rejection of your heritage, but rather from embracing your national traditions and embracing that same heritage that you love so dear.

GG: He's essentially saying, we've been trying for decades to interfere in your countries. We come and give you lectures about what you should and shouldn't do, meaning like, hey, you probably should loosen up the tyranny a bit. But mostly, he's saying this whole hubris of the United States and its neocons and interventionists that we have the right to go around the world remaking other countries in our image when we don't even know the slightest things about these complex countries and it's all been a failure as he said these nation builders have destroyed more countries than they've built, and that from now on you have to figure out your own national identity, it's not for us to decide. And you're going to thrive, not because we tell

you what to do or change your country but because you are figuring out what you want your country to be and that's why we see all these buildings popping up. So basically, I think it's important to realise that Trump is not jettisoning all of the vision of foreign policy that the US bipartisan class has had for decades about the Middle East. He said, basically, Iran is the main problem, they're the source of the terrorists. And that basically the whole Middle East can become like Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates. He left out Qatar because there's some conflict, but he's going to say the same thing in Qatar. Doha is very similar. You know, you have all these glitzy buildings and all these like – I mean, they look, those cities do, certainly Doha, Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Riyadh, look far more futuristic and far more developed than most cities in the United States.

And so he's saying: The Middle East should be like this. Who cares if there's no democracy. And that's kind of a side point. This is the model of the Middle East, basically Israel, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar and the United Arab Emirates joining together in order to live peacefully side by side and do business with one another. And then all you have to do is just get rid of in his mind the people who are primitive war mongers who want to keep the region in instability and fighting, namely Hamas and Hezbollah and the Houthis and Iran. So it's not a very encouraging picture in the sense that he's certainly not coming and saying: We gotta get out of here completely. He's saying: We still need to wipe out these factions. Obviously doesn't include any sense of a Palestinian state. Remember, Trump basically talked about Gaza and said: Yeah, we gotta get all the people out there, and then we're gonna basically build it to be like Dubai. There's gonna be casinos and resorts. That's his vision. Now, anyone who's been to these places – I've been to Dubai and Doha several times, Abu Dhabi. It is true, there's enormous amounts of wealth there, and it's kind of like a playground for the world's rich. And if you have a lot of money, there's a lot of things to do there that are enjoyable. There is everything just kind of ornate and ostentatious. I always felt to have this kind of very uncomfortable feeling there because that glitz is for a tiny amount of the elites. And then the rest of these places are like slave labour with no rights. Very few labour protections. So many people died when Doha had the World Cup. Because of how they're treated, most of them are imported from other places to do the work. You have all these rigid rules, social rules about, say homosexuality is punishable by prison. And that is true for the ordinary people who live there. But the elite of Dubai, trust me, it's like being in Greenwich Village in the 1970s, or West Hollywood now. There's tons of homosexuality because that's how this country is set up. You have this tiny little class of extreme wealth here, and the rest of the country there, and this is Trump's model for the Middle East, he's saying we want you to export technology, not terrorism. Here's part of what he said about Gaza.

DT: The people of Gaza deserve a much better future...

GG: So they heard that as a pro-Palestinian statement, like, Gaza deserves much better. And obviously they're thinking, yeah, meaning like Israel needs to stop destroying all their society and engaging in genocide, but that's not what Trump means.

DT: But that will or can not occur as long as their leaders choose to kidnap, torture and target innocent men, women and children for political ends. The way those people are treated in Gaza, there's not a place in the world where people are treated so badly it's horrible.

GG: Which is true of what he just said, but notice how he places all the blame on Hamas; saying everything is going to be fine once we destroy Hamas which he thinks is what Israel is doing. Here is Trump making an interesting passage on how he sees Iran. And he offers some generalised observations about having enemies in the world. Here's what he said.

DT: Yet I'm here today not merely to condemn the past chaos of Iran's leaders, but to offer them a new path and a much better path toward a far better and more hopeful future. As I've shown repeatedly, I am willing to end past conflicts and forge new partnerships for a better and more stable world. Even if our differences may be very profound, which obviously they are in the case of Iran. I have never believed in having permanent enemies, I am different than a lot of people think.

GG: That's a really interesting concept because Both George Washington and Thomas Jefferson warned about that exactly. Washington in his farewell address, Thomas Jefferson in his second inaugural address, said the United States has to avoid entangling alliances, such as tying ourselves to Israel and being constrained by this alliance with this other country that just goes on forever. But also, they warned about enduring enmities, enduring conflict with another country. There was a very non-interventionist, both of those, by Washington and Jefferson, were very non-interventionist views of what the role of the United States should be in the world. We're not an empire, we're a republic. We don't go around looking for enemies or looking for allies, trying to dominate the world. We'll defend ourselves, obviously, we have to, like we just did when we gained our independence. But the vision they laid out was not one where you have US bases all over the world, where you're acting as empire, where you are constantly at war, and Trump is taking that language. I don't know, I assume whoever wrote this speech is very well aware of that. And he's saying, yeah, people don't understand that about me. I don't want to have enemies, I don't want enduring enemies. I want to avoid war.

DT: Permanent enemies. I am different than a lot of people think. I don't like permanent enemies, but sometimes you need enemies to do the job and you have to do it right. Enemies get you motivated, in fact. Some of the closest friends of the United States of America are nations we fought wars against in generations past and now they're our friends and our allies. I want to make a deal with Iran. If I can make a deal with Iran, I'll be very happy if we're going to make your region and the world a safer place, but if Iran's leadership rejects this olive branch and continues to attack their neighbours then we will have no choice but to inflict massive maximum pressure. Drive Iranian oil exports to zero like I did before. If you know that, they were a virtually bankrupt country, because of what I did. They had no money for terror, they had no money for Hamas or Hezbollah. And take all action required to stop the regime from ever having a nuclear weapon. Iran will never have a nuclear weapon.

GG: So this is what he's been emphasising. Even with Iran, we want to get a deal done with Iran. We don't want to be in a war with Iran. And Trump is doing everything possible to get a deal with them. Here is one more clip from Trump, I just want to show you, where he lays out a foreign policy vision.

DT: Five thousand people, young people for the most part...

GG: He's talking here about his attempts to end the war in Ukraine and to facilitate peace between Russia and Ukraine.

DT: 5,000 people, young people for the most part, soldiers from Ukraine, soldiers from Russia, they're not from here and they're not from the United States, but they're souls, their souls, I think usually, mostly their young, beautiful souls that left their parents waving goodbye, left their brothers and sisters, goodbye, I'll see you soon, and they got blown to pieces. 5,000 on average a week are dying. And people are dying elsewhere in the region. Tremendous numbers like we haven't seen since World War II are dying. And I want to stop it. I want to stop it. It's a horrible war who would have never...

GG: ...would never happen if I was... All right, so, I always want to give this word of caution when we talk about Trump's vision of foreign policy and the rejection of neoconservatism and the idea of using war as a constant tool, including for nation building, that there's not going to be any complete adherence to that vision. I mean, the bombing of the Houthis is a perfect example. Where Trump just decided to bomb the Houthis, which Biden was doing throughout 2024. And there's a lengthy New York Times article detailing this, which I would recommend. The reason why Trump decided to stop it was because he was getting reports from the military that it was basically failing. Here's the New York Times article. It's entitled: *Why Trump Suddenly Declared Victory Over the Houthi Militia*; which is from yesterday. And it basically describes how he was getting reports from the military that they hadn't even gained air superiority; that in the last week American fighter jets, the most sophisticated in the world, came very close to being blown out of the sky by Houthi missiles. And there were F-16s that fell into the water, two of them at least, from the Harry S. Truman, a naval ship that is like the centrepiece of the US navy. And at the same time, they were using so many precision missiles, one after the next after the next, that the military was warning that we were depleting our own stockpiles. Such that we wouldn't even be able to defend Taiwan, for example, that we're just depleting it so much. And Trump realised that all the things he was told about the US military's ability to destroy Yemen wasn't happening. That instead this was just going to be another endless Middle East bombing campaign that ultimately produced very little benefit. The Houthis were putting their stuff underground, as they always do, they got more resilient. And so he just found a way to declare victory and stopped it. So that is an action that reflects this new vision. And at the same time, you know, Trump is obviously, in favour of and still funding and arming the Israelis as they destroy Gaza, hasn't really said a word about that, although he is trying to demand that the Israelis negotiate with Hamas in Qatar. And he's obviously trying to stop the war in Ukraine with Russia. And he's trying to get a deal with Iran.

So, sometimes when you say this, the minute Trump drops a bomb or if they get into any kind of bombing campaign with Iran, people are going to say: Oh look, you were fooled, you were deceived, you fell for this scam. So I'm not saying that this is some fundamentally different vision of foreign policy, but it is significantly different directionally. In the sense that Trump is repeatedly emphasising. He wants to have the biggest military, but he doesn't want to use it. And the purpose of it is to deter wars to make sure wars don't happen. And he's saying that's what he wants his legacy to be. He ran as a peacemaker. That's why I was so disappointed when he started bombing Yemen. Because this is exactly what we were promised he wouldn't do. In fact, he criticised Biden, for having done it in 2024, bombing Yemen, and he was like, you don't have to bomb Yemen, you just pick up the phone and solve it diplomatically, we showed you that many times. And then suddenly Trump is back to a new bombing campaign in the Middle East, but he also ended it after a month. Because he started realising this isn't producing anything. So, hopefully all this pressure that we've brought to bear on him, that is being brought to bear on them to enter new wars, including with Iran, as well as to continue funding Ukraine by blaming Russia, saying, Russia proved they don't want to stop the war. There's a lot of pressure on him from all these sides to do it. And whether he'll resist it fully is not something I'm ready to proclaim or believe in.

But again, even the words themselves, even saying, like, we're the ones who have destroyed so many nations, not in the name of rebuilding them and we need to stop flying over the world, telling everybody how to behave – there's this famous story of a president of, I think it might be Kenya, but it's a country, I think, in East Africa, and they said, because obviously China is developing lots of ties, growing ties with these countries that are moving more to Russia and China, and he said, when asked about that, he said when the Chinese come you end up with a hospital, when the Americans come, you end up with a lecture. And that's how we're perceived in the world. We just go around saying: You're doing this wrong, and you're doing this wrong. And how dare you do this in your country? And you need to change this. And then often using military force against them if they don't. And this is what Trump's saying needs to end. And this is not something he just invented. He's been ranting about neoconservative for a long time. Now he has neoconservatives in his cabinet, in The White House and the Pentagon, all over the place, and I think re-bombing Yemen was a very kind of typical bipartisan warmongering thing to do, but again, he ended it quickly. And according to the New York Times, for the right reasons, that he realised that the only option other than stopping it, was to end in another protracted, pointless, but destructive and expensive war.

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