



Trump's Ukraine Reversal, Israel Bombs Syria & Netanyahu's Collapse

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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. Before we begin this interview, I would like to remind you to join our alternative channels on Rumble and Telegram. YouTube, owned by Google, can shadowban and censor us at any time and if that day ever comes, we won't be able to reach you even with an announcement. Hence, as a precautionary measure, we are asking all of our viewers to join these alternative channels today. And if you're watching our videos regularly, make sure to support our channel with a donation. We are a non-profit independent organization that does not take any money from corporations or governments. Hence, we only depend on you. And even though our channel is growing over the summer with subscriptions and views, the donations haven't followed suit. To find out how you can join our alternative channels, as well as how you support our independent journalism, please click on the description of this video below. Today, I'll be talking to independent journalist and lawyer, Dimitri Lascaris. As a lawyer, he specializes in class actions, human rights, and international law. He's also the founder of the channel Reason2Resist. Dimitri, welcome back to the show.

Dimitri Lascaris (DL): Thank you, Zain, always a pleasure to be with you.

ZR: Let's begin with Israel's recent airstrikes on Syria amid escalating sectarian violence. In mid-July, southern Syria's Sweida province was rocked by brutal clashes between Druze militias and Sunni Bedouin tribes, resulting in at least 516 deaths, including Druze civilians and fighters, over just four days. The conflict began when Bedouin assaults on Druze civilians triggered retaliatory attacks by Druze militias. Syrian government forces deployed to restore order reportedly sided with the Bedouins conducting arrests and, according to some accounts, executing Druze civilians before eventually withdrawing following a shaky ceasefire. Reacting to the violence, Israel launched air strikes on July 16th targeting the Syrian Defense Ministry in Damascus as well as military positions in Sweida and Daraa, claiming it was acting to protect the Druze minority, including Israeli Druze with close relatives across the Golan border. Syrian state media reported at least three civilians killed in the massacres due to the strikes.

Since the fall of Bashar al-Assad in December 2024, Syria has been governed by a caretaker government led by President Ahmed al-Sharaa, also known as Mohammed al-Julani, under a temporary constitution. This provisional administration has faced challenges in Sweida and is accused of aligning with Bedouin [Sunni] forces during this conflict. We last interviewed you in December on this topic after the fall of Bashar Al-Assad and at the time you warned that a sectarian conflict was likely to follow. How do you assess the current situation in Syria today, particularly the role and actions of the interim government? And secondly, how do you view Israel's justification for bombing Syrian military targets under the pretext of protecting the Druze community amid the escalating crisis?

DL: Well, as you indicated, Zain, this is not at all surprising. In fact, it has been a long-term goal of Israel, backed by the United States, to partition Syria. And the best way to partition Syria is to stoke and exacerbate tensions between ethnic minorities in the country. The forces led by al-Julani, who until recently had a \$10 million bounty on his head from the CIA, have already committed multiple atrocities in other parts of the country, particularly in the area near or on the Mediterranean coast against primarily, but not exclusively, Alawites. There have also been attacks on Christians; so this is part of a broader pattern of provoking the dismemberment of the country, if it can be done through stoking ethnic violence. So, I'm not at all surprised. Having said that, the Druze or any other ethnic minority don't want to live under the rule of Al-Jolani, who has rebranded himself as al-Sharaa. Al-Jolani is known and has been reported for years by Western intelligence agencies to have committed heinous atrocities against groups that do not ascribe to his own narrow view of Sunni Islam. And they've included brutal, grisly murders of women and children in other parts of the country. So that's not surprising.

But what is very difficult to believe, Zain, is the official Israeli explanation for intervening. Netanyahu, who's in the process of carrying out a genocide in Gaza, referred to the Druze as brothers in the course of justifying these attacks. I think that we can assume that he has ulterior motives based upon his long and sorted record of total disregard for the well-being of civilians, especially those of Arabic origin. So I don't know, however, exactly what is going on here. I think many of us believed, although we expected that there would be sectarian violence, that Israel was more or less happy to see al-Jolani in power, because by all appearances, he's a puppet of the West. He's made no significant effort to recover the territory that Israel has illegally annexed the Golan Heights. Nor has he made any significant effort to impede Israel's advance into southern Syria since the fall of Bashar al-Assad. He's made noises about getting along with the Israelis. He seems to be more concerned about the Iranians than the Israelis, even though the Iranians are not bombing Syria, have not bombed Syria in any type of a campaign in memory. So one wonders why would Israel not only strike the Ministry of Defense, but apparently it also struck the presidential palace in Damascus.

So clearly Israel is not entirely content to see al-Julani consolidate his rule around the country. The only guess that I can make, and it's no more than an educated guess, is that there were reports, multiple reports coming out of Israel and the West that there were efforts being made for normalization between Syria and Israel. And apparently the Syrian, although he

denied it, al-Julani purportedly offered to normalize if amongst other things, Israel returned one third of the Golan Heights – not all of them, not most of them but just one third. I don't know whether those reports are true or not, but if they are true, perhaps this was a message to al-Julani that Israel is not going to cede a single inch, not one inch of the territory it has grabbed and he'd better back off. But other than that, it's very difficult to understand what is motivating Israel here. I certainly don't believe the official excuse.

ZR: Let us now turn to the recent war between Israel, the United States, and Iran. On June 13th, Israel launched a 12-day aerial assault targeting over 100 sites across Iran, including nuclear facilities, missile bases, and the homes of military and scientific personnel. Israeli authorities claim to have destroyed approximately 120 surface-to-surface missile launchers, as well as military and prison sites. However, the campaign also struck civilian infrastructure, including hospitals, resulting in the death of nearly 1,000 Iranian civilians. Iran retaliated with a massive missile and drone barrage, targeting Israeli military installations and civilian locations in Israel, including the Soroka Hospital. In total, 28 Israeli civilians were killed and over 3,200 injured.

On June 22, the United States joined the offensive with Operation Midnight Hammer, deploying B-2 stealth bombers and Tomahawk missiles to strike Iran's underground nuclear sites. While US officials claim that the operation sent Iran's nuclear program back by one or two years, independent assessment shows that only the Fordow nuclear site was heavily hit. Iran responded by targeting US military bases in Syria, Iran and Qatar. However, no US personnel were killed. A ceasefire was then broken on June 24th, but diplomacy has since stalled. Iran suspended cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency, IAEA, and European powers have warned of renewed UN sanctions if progress isn't made. Meanwhile, on July 16th, Iran's supreme leader Ali Khamenei warned that the country is prepared to respond with even larger strikes, claiming enhanced precision capabilities against Israeli and U.S. targets. Despite a widely circulated narrative, particularly within the independent and alternative media circles, that U.S. President Trump is reluctant to launch new wars, especially in the Middle East, you on the other hand warned early on that both the U.S. and Israel were actively preparing for a military confrontation. In fact, you traveled to Iran just weeks before the Israeli attacks, meeting with Iranian military officials and nuclear scientists to better understand and share the perspectives with Western audiences. How do you assess the war launched by Israel and the United States against Iran? Were any of their stated objectives actually achieved?

DL: By the way, I also, when I was in Tehran in early May, I actually gave a speech at the university in central Tehran dedicated to broadcasting studies in which I told the audience that they should prepare for an attack from the United States and Israel. It was inevitable. And I think all the signs were there. It's not because I have some inside information, but if one was looking objectively at the record of Trump during the first administration, for example, his ordering of the assassination of the top Iranian general, Qasem Soleimani, his occupation of Syrian lands, theft of Syrian oil, bombing of Syria, recognition of Israel's

illegal annexation of the Golan Heights, there was ample evidence that this was going to happen and there's every reason to believe Zain that it's not over.

Whether or not, uh, Israel and the United States succeeded in destroying Iran's nuclear program, I would still be of the view that this war will continue. However, it appears that they did not destroy the nuclear program, which only increases the possibility that they're going to strike again. Reports are now coming out from Western intelligence agencies and Israeli intelligence that the program has not been destroyed; the capacity of Tehran to enrich uranium. There are very credible reports that the stockpile of relatively highly enriched uranium to the level of 60% was actually salvaged from the Fordow facility before it was bombed. And there's also serious doubt that even the Fordow facility itself and the centrifuges it contains have been damaged beyond functioning. I recently saw a presentation by Theodor Postol, a professor emeritus from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology who specializes in these sorts of things, in which he came to the conclusion not only that the enrichment capability of the Islamic Republic hasn't been destroyed, but that with the enriched uranium it presumably has now, it could produce ten atomic bombs – ten atomic bombs within the space of a few weeks. That was his expert assessment and he laid it out very, very carefully on the deep dive with the retired U.S. Army, Lieutenant Colonel Daniel Davis. So I, I, and I highly commend that presentation to you, because of his expertise.

So, at the end of the day, again, I remain of the view that this war isn't over. What is notable, however, Zain, is that when this ceasefire was entered into with Iran, the Israelis said very publicly that they viewed this as being a ceasefire along the Lebanon model, as they put it. What do they mean by that? What they meant by that was that once the ceasefire went into effect, they would retain the right to attack Iran, repeatedly and at will, which is what they've done to Lebanon immediately following the ceasefire in Lebanon. But on the other side, the adversary would be obliged to refrain from retaliation. And what is most notable to me is that several weeks have now gone by since the ceasefire went into effect and there have been no attacks whatsoever by Israel or the United States on the Islamic Republic. I think the simple explanation for that is they are trapped between hubris and fear. On the one hand they have the supreme confidence in their own military capabilities and their ability to destroy Iran's military. On the other hand, they took such a beating in the retaliatory strikes, which included the stock exchange in Israel, the largest refinery in Israel – and there are only two – the Weizmann Institute, which is the technological backbone of the Israeli military, Massad headquarters, and later it emerged they struck five or six military bases as a result of satellite imagery provided to the telegraph by the University of Oregon, that was confirmed. There is also satellite imagery that has come out of the strike on the Al Udeid massive U.S. Military base in Qatar which shows that a very very precise strike by an Iranian missile took out a highly sophisticated and expensive radar unit right in the heart of the facility So, whereas trump claimed that there was no damage done at all, it appears that there were significant damage done, and it was done with an impressive degree of precision. So I think that the Israelis will come back. They will attack again, but are they going to do it in an overt manner, or will they do it in a way that enables them to engage in plausible deniability? I think

probably the latter, because they're going to try to avoid provoking full-scale missile strikes by Iran. But some provocation will come and it could come very soon.

ZR: Talking about Iran's nuclear program, I want to switch to the International Atomic Energy Agency, IAEA. On June 12th, 2025, the IAEA's Board of Governors found that Iran was in breach of its obligations under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, NPT, for the first time in nearly 20 years. The agency cited Iran's failure to explain undeclared nuclear materials and activities at several sites. Some of the independent experts as yourself argue that its findings gave Israel and the United States a much-needed pretext to launch these strikes against Iranian nuclear facilities just a few days later. Then on June 23rd, the Iranian parliament passed a resolution, later signed by President Masoud Pezeshkian on July 2nd, to suspend all cooperation with the IAEA, including inspections and monitoring. Tehran cited concerns about the safety of its nuclear scientists and facilities. In response, the IAEA's Director Rafael Grossi, warned that without access the agency could no longer verify Iran's nuclear material or ensure safety standards at arrangement sites. What I find particularly striking is this: While the IAEA maintains intense scrutiny over Iran, it refuses to investigate or even acknowledge Israel's undeclared nuclear arsenal, which most experts believe include dozens if not hundreds of nuclear warheads. How do you view the IAEA's findings on June 12th? And secondly, why in your view does the agency pursue Iran with such intensity while ignoring Israel's nuclear stockpile entirely?

DL: Well, the resolution, people need to understand this resolution at the IAEA board adopted and it was supported by a narrow majority of the board members, almost all of whom are Western governments. The others, the vast majority of non-Western members of the board, either abstained or voted against it. This related to allegations that Iran had undisclosed enrichment sites many years ago, some 15, 20 years ago, I believe it was, it was certainly more than a decade ago, and apparently the information about the location of these sites came from the Israelis who have been cooperating for years with the IAEA, despite the fact that they refuse to enter the nuclear nonproliferation treaty and are the only state in the entire region of West Asia that has not done so.

And what happened when these allegations were conveyed to the IAEA? It sent inspectors to these sites and they apparently found traces of enriched uranium. Now the Iranians at the time, again this is many years ago, the Iranian at the times said, we didn't put the enriched uranium there, we believe that opponents of the government left material there, traces there, so that they could lend credence to their claim that we had undisclosed enrichment sites. Now, whoever is telling the truth about that, I don't know. I'm in no position to say where this enriched uranium that was detected by the IAEA came from. But the key thing here is, Zain, that this was years ago. And so the question immediately arises, why was the IAEA putting forward this resolution, which was, as I say, only supported essentially by the West and its proxies, at this very moment, when Israel was preparing for an attack. Is this a coincidence? No, this was not a coincidence. The IAEA leadership was coordinating with Israel and the United States to provide a pretext for the attack on the Islamic Republic. So it was an entirely predictable consequence of this. Whatever the truth may be about these alleged secret

enrichment sites in Iran from years ago, it was an entirely predictable consequence that this would cause a massive loss of trust in the IAEA among the Islamic Republic's leadership, and that they would, at a bare minimum, suspend cooperation with the IAAEA, if not withdraw from the NNPT, the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, altogether.

So now, and this was something that Professor Postol talked about at great length, we are now, we in the West, the world in general – I mean, because any sane person doesn't want to see the proliferation of nuclear weapons are worse off than we were before the attack. Because before the attacks, there were inspectors on the ground who were providing a high degree of visibility into Iran's nuclear program. But now we don't have any idea what Iran is doing. And this is a very dangerous situation. One considers that as Theodor Postol opined, Iran could develop multiple atomic bombs in a matter of weeks. And that we wouldn't even know what happened. They could have atomic bombs even now, he said. It is theoretically possible if they had enough surviving enrichment sites for them to have developed a nuclear bomb, an atomic weapon, not within a matter of five or six weeks, but within even a matter of a couple of weeks. So this is a catastrophic outcome for the cause of non-proliferation. The IAEA's credibility has been destroyed. I don't think there's any realistic prospect of you know, there being inspections of Iran's nuclear facilities by the IAEA in the foreseeable future if ever. And we have now made the world a more dangerous place, we, as in the West, by supporting Israel's criminal war of aggression on Iran.

ZR: And why do you think the IAEA avoids any accountability or calls for transparency and even the media doesn't make a big hoopala when it comes to Israel's nuclear arsenal?

DL: Well, clearly there is a double standard here, quite apart from the fact that Israel is the only state in the West Asia region that is not a member of the NNPT, it is by far the most aggressive state in this region and it is in the process of carrying out a damn genocide. It's committing genocide and you could hardly imagine a government that is less qualified, that we have less reason to trust with a nuclear arsenal than Israel. Israel's behavior should cause anybody, any sane, rational person, to be extremely alarmed at the prospect of them using nuclear weapons. And in fact, during the genocide, the heritage minister of Israel actually called for one point for the Israeli military to nuke Gaza, you know, 2.1 million civilians. So I think it's absolutely appalling that the IAEA has not focused with laser-like concentration on Israel's nuclear arsenal. And it simply adds to the mountain of evidence that somehow, some way the leadership of the IAEA has been corrupted or co-opted by the West. Exactly how that's happened, I don't know, but, you know, looking at it from the outside, no one can argue credibly that the IAEA is impartially fulfilling its mandate in the region of West Asia. There's a clear double standard. And when you look at the totality of its conduct, somehow someway it's been co-opted by the West.

ZR: I mean, the argument that is made is that Iran is a signatory to the non-proliferation treaty and thus legally bound to allow inspections, whereas Israel is not and never claimed to be. Could that explain the IAEA's different approach, even if it appears politically biased?

DL: Well, look, it is true that as long as Iran remains a member of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, it is obliged to undergo inspections, but the agency also has an obligation to be honest and fair in its dealings with all members of the NNPT. If it has become corrupted or co-opted and is behaving partially and in fact providing uh, ideological or theoretical justifications for Israel and the United States to attack Iran, in my view, Iran would have every justification, both moral and legal, from suspending cooperation with the IAEA. And whatever one may think about the suspension, Iran could just withdraw altogether from the NNPT; that's permissible. In which case there would be no argument whatsoever that inspections were required to be done. And the way we're going, frankly, that's quite possibly what's going to happen. It will completely pull the plug on its participation in the NNPT. And then there will be absolutely no prospect of inspections taking place in the future. So I can't stress enough Zain that the implications of this go far beyond the region of West Asia. If the IAEA is not a trusted, impartial inspection agency and surveillance agency under the auspices of the NNPT, that is going to have implications for nuclear proliferation in other parts of the world.

ZR: The other point that critics argue is that in 2002 it was revealed that Iran had secretly built a uranium enrichment facility in Natanz without informing the IAEA, something it was obliged to do under the NNPT, which you talked about; perhaps it was an opposition group that found these traces or perhaps the Iranian government just didn't know and leaked it. Then in 2009, Western intelligence exposed another underground enrichment site near the City of Qom known as Fordow. Which was undeclared and designed to be deeply fortified, raising fears of a covert weapons-related program. These revelations were considered deeply alarming by the international community. Given this background, is it not understandable that the international community, including the IAEA, might treat Iran's nuclear program with greater scrutiny, especially since it did not disclose any of these sites, which it is obliged to do, and were discovered by intelligence sources?

DL: Well, let's suppose that that's correct. And by the way, you know, we have to take into account that there's another version of events here. The version of the events of the Iranian side is that these were not enrichment sites and there was no enrichment going on there. But let's suppose that that's not true and they were engaging in enrichment, it still nonetheless remains the case that the United States and Israel had no lawful justification for bombing Iran. The proper way to proceed under these circumstances, to seek a remedy from the IAEA and failing that from the United Nations Security Council. And there is activity going on at the level of the UN Security Council. There was absolutely no justification for bombing Iran, especially its nuclear facilities, Zain, quite apart from the attack itself being a violation, a frontal assault of the United Nation's charter, nuclear facilities are protected facilities so that even if Iran, even if Israel and the United States had a justification for attacking Iran, it still would have been illegal for them to bomb the nuclear facilities.

None of this justifies in any way, shape or form what the U.S. and Israel have done. And let's be clear, pretty much every Western government tacitly or explicitly supported this illegal war of aggression on Iran. Even If I accept you know that these were secret facilities and that

they there was enrichment taking place there would not hesitate to condemn if this was happening in violation of Iran's obligations under the NNPT still it is beyond the pale that this war of aggression was launched and that it will continue and that it was carried out by people who have nuclear weapons. And by the way as I mentioned Israel is not a signatory to the NNPT, but the United States is, and nobody talks about the fact that the United State itself is violating the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, because a core obligation of nuclear armed states under that treaty is that they disarm. They have to engage in negotiations in good faith with a view to the complete dismantlement of nuclear arsenals around the world.

The United States, in fact, is going in the opposite direction. The Bush administration withdrew the United States from the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, an important part of the nuclear disarmament regime, and then the Trump administration, the first Trump administration withdrew the United States from the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty, an even more provocative step, and it looks like I think the last remaining nuclear disarming treaty START is going to expire soon and will not be renewed because of the hostilities between the United States and the Russian Federation. And Obama announced something in the range of a \$1 trillion modernization of America's nuclear arsenal before he left office. So this is a frontal assault on the U.S. obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Why isn't the IAEA talking about the U.S.'s disregard for its own obligations? And here we're talking about something much more serious because the United States actually has nukes. And the last thing I want to say is that the Director of National Intelligence of the United States government, Tulsi Gabbard, weeks before this attack offered an assessment which was based upon the input of all the intelligence agencies in the United States that Iran was not trying to develop a nuclear weapon. So whether or not Iran's hands are clean, no one can argue credibly that Israel is clean, that the hands of the U.S. government are clean or that the IAEA is impartially fulfilling its mandate.

ZR: Let us now switch to Ukraine, where the war continues to escalate. In July 2025 alone, Russia launched over 728 drones and missiles towards Ukraine in what has been described as the largest aerial assault since the war began. This comes as Russian forces seize new villages in Donetsk and Kharkiv regions and increase the use of drones and ballistic missiles. In response, Ukraine drones have struck infrastructure and ammunition depots deep within Russian territory. Politically, Ukraine saw a major government reshuffle on July 17th. President Zelensky appointed Yulia Svyrydenko as Prime Minister and moved former Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal to lead the defense ministry and also announced plans to raise domestic weapons production to cover 50% of the army's needs.

Meanwhile, independent commentators such as Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist Glenn Greenwald have noted what they describe as a U-turn in U.S. policy under President Trump when it comes to Ukraine. Earlier this year it seemed that the US was pursuing a withdrawal from supporting Ukraine and Trump even warned Zelensky in the White House that if they continued this conflict it could trigger World War III. However, Trump has now resumed and expanded military support and it includes Patriot missile systems delivered through European allies and a 50-day ultimatum to Moscow, threatening 100% secondary sanctions if peace

progress is not made. The Financial Times also reported that Trump asked Zelensky whether Ukraine could target Moscow and St Petersburg directly to which Trump later clarified that he was merely asking a question and not encouraging the killing. Trump recently openly criticized Russian President Vladimir Putin stating, quote, "I speak to him a lot about getting things done and I always hang up and say, well that was a nice phone call. And then missiles are launched into Kiev. After that happens three or four times, you say the talk doesn't mean anything", unquote. How do you evaluate Trump's statement and reversal of policy? Do you think this is a U-turn?

DL: No. Because I always believed that Trump was lying about wanting to end the Ukraine war. I think the evidence has been there from the very beginning. So let me just quickly summarize the first Trump administration's attitude towards Ukraine. Whereas the Obama administration refused to provide lethal weaponry to Ukraine because in Obama's words, Russia had escalatory dominance in that part of the world, which is clearly true, has been proven beyond a shadow of a doubt over the last three and a half years of war, Trump provided lethal weaponry to Ukraine repeatedly. Trump, under his command, the U.S. military engaged in highly provocative military exercises with the Ukrainian military, very close to the borders and the coastline of Russia. Trump, as I mentioned, withdrew the United States from the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty. Trump, in addition, oversaw, presided over a very considerable increase in U.S. military spending. So the attitude of the Trump administration, the first time around, was one of, uh, unremitting belligerence towards the Russian Federation.

Also Trump supported, even though he criticized NATO, he never objected to the notion that Ukraine would enter NATO one day, which was obviously a very provocative step to the Russian federation, as many U.S. foreign policy figures noted over a period of decades. So that was the background? Then they come into office. And what does Trump do? He sends his new defense secretary, Pete Hegseth, to the Ukraine Contact Group Summit in Brussels in February. Trump had only been in office for a matter of days. And Hegseth gives a speech in which he says to the Europeans, you have to raise your defense spending to 5% of GDP annually. And you need to take all of these new shiny weapons and toys that you buy with all of this massive amount of money, and you need to assume the burden of arming Ukraine. You have to take on that and what we're going to do is we're going to focus on West Asia and China. And he referred to this as the division of labor between the Europeans and the Americans.

Does that sound to you like a president who wants to bring an end to the war in Ukraine? Come on. Now, this is a president, who simply wants the bill for the war in Ukraine to be borne by Europeans rather than the United States. And then to put the icing on the cake, the Putin government, whatever you may think about its concerns or its justification for invading Ukraine, it has had a consistent position since at least the latest June of last year when Vladimir Putin gave an important speech, laying out essentially four core conditions for bringing an end to the war. And they were a recognition of the four oblasts, Russia's annexation of the four Oblasts in southeastern Ukraine plus Crimea, what he called

denazification, Ukraine remaining out of NATO, and the constitutional protections, adequate protections for Russian speakers living in areas controlled by the Ukrainian government. And Volodymyr Zelensky said repeatedly he's not going to accept any of these demands. So the Russian Federation has been saying from the beginning, if you want us to stop fighting, you have to address what we regard as the core causes of this conflict. And both, the Ukrainian president and Trump, gave no indication they were prepared to to any of these demands. So again, whatever you may think of the demands, it was entirely predictable that if Trump continuously demanded a ceasefire without any of these demands being satisfied, that the Russians would simply continue fighting.

So he accuses Vladimir Putin of being deceptive. I really don't see the deception here. They've been saying since June of last year what their conditions are and that they won't stop fighting. And by the way, this has often happened, that negotiations take place while the war continues. This has happened repeatedly in history. So this idea that you can't have a negotiation while the war is going on, which is one that the United States and the Ukrainian government were peddling, is simply not consistent with historical experience. So we now are finding out who the real Donald Trump is. The real Donald Trump has no intention of bringing this war to an end. He simply wants the Europeans to foot the bill. He wants to be able to concentrate on his proxy war and his genocide in West Asia, and ultimately on China. And this was entirely predictable. I'm sad to say, in closing on my answer here, that there were a lot of gullible people in the independent media who bought this idea that Trump wanted to be a peacemaker. I mean, and still to this very day, you see people reluctantly clinging to the idea that Trump, he really wants to do it, he really want to bring it into this war, but the Russians aren't cooperating or the neocons in his cabinet are ,stopping him from doing it or people behind the scenes. No, this is Donald Trump folks, this is who he is.

ZR: Let me take you up on those points made by the Russians, two of those points, which is territorial concessions for Ukraine to abandon NATO aspirations. The argument that is made from the European leadership, political leadership, let me be very specific about that, especially in Germany, is that, wouldn't that set a dangerous precedent that a nuclear-armed state like Russia can simply redraw borders. What's to stop Russia, or any other authoritarian power, from using the same strategy again in the future?! Isn't accepting these demands just for spawning the next war rather than preventing it?

DL: I mean, you know, people should fall over in hysterical laughter when they hear these things coming out of the mouths of Europeans, because at this very moment with the support of Europe and with massive amounts of weaponry from Germany, where you're situated, Israel is doing exactly that. Israel is stealing land. A nuclear armed state is pummeling civilian areas, sending in its forces and conquering and annexing land in violation of international law and has been doing this with the support of the German government and other Western governments since at least 1967. And what have they done? You know, just recently the European Union had to consider, based upon human rights analysis of what is going on in occupied Palestine, whether or not to suspend the association agreement between the European Union and the Israelis. And they did nothing. This was announced, what a day

or two ago by Kaja Kallas. Absolutely nothing, not a single sanction. They put 17 rounds of sanctions on Russia.

And of course I could go on. There are other violations of the territorial integrity of sovereign nations being committed by the United States itself, including in Syria where they illegally have troops occupying a third of the country stealing its oil as I mentioned. So there's absolutely no reason to believe that the Europeans are serious when they talk about respect for territorial integrity. This is the ultimate hypocrisy that doesn't justify what Russia did, but no one should expect Russia to take these justifications or this moralization seriously. I mean, come on, seriously, folks.

Now, let's nonetheless acknowledge, or let's proceed on the basis that Russia had no lawful justification for sending in its forces. Let's ignore the fact that there were referenda held in these areas, which according to the official results showed large majority support for these oblasts, the four oblasts that I mentioned in Crimea joining with the Russian Federation –, okay?! Ignore all of that. Here's the military reality. The military really is: the longer this war goes on the more territory Ukraine is going to lose. It's that simple. You can complain to the heavens until the cows come home it isn't going to alter the military with it reality on the ground, so if you are actually concerned about preserving as much as possible of a sovereign Ukraine and saving Ukrainian lives the sensible thing to do as bitter a pill as it may be is to sit down and make concessions to the Russians before Ukraine has no country left at all. Every single day Russia is taking villages, every single day, sometimes two, three, four at a time. And this has been going on since the disastrous Ukrainian offensive in the summer of last year, or I think it might have been even the prior year, 2023. So it is now clear who's going to prevail in this war. And it's just a question of how much land the Russians are ultimately going to take. So I think that this demonstrates beyond a shadow of a doubt that the European leadership never actually cared about the Ukrainian people. They mow these platitudes which they themselves violate every day, and they're pursuing a policy in Ukraine which is going to result in Russians taking even more land.

ZR: The other argument that it's made is for why to keep this war going is that we have to think long term because we're talking about freedom and democracy and that it is possible that over time in the long term Russia's political and economic cost will become so much that it will outweigh its short-term military gains and lead to an internal collapse. What do you make of this argument?

DL: Well, first of all, there's no evidence to support it at all. The Russian Federation's economy has grown more robustly during the period that these sanctions have been imposed than European economies. There's absolutely no indication that the Russian people are about to overthrow their president, that there is widespread discontent. I mean, you have the Levada Center, which is hostile – this is a polling firm in the Russian Federation – which is ideologically hostile to the Russian Federation, showing very high levels of support for the government of Vladimir Putin consistently throughout this military operation. Even the West acknowledges that the size of Russia's military is expanding rapidly because so many people are signing up. And the Russians are also offering relatively high compensation to people

who enroll, who enlist in the military. So that's certainly a factor, but there's no indication that people are unwilling to serve in the Russian Federation.

So where is the evidence that this is heading to some kind of a collapse of the government of Vladimir Putin? Even if there's a small chance of that happening, Zain, and again, looking at the evidence, it certainly is unlikely to happen if not certain that this strategy will fail. What is the cost to the Ukrainian people of pursuing this strategy? The cost is the loss of hundreds of thousands of lives, the destruction of whatever infrastructure remains in the country, the introduction of even more contaminants and unexploded munitions into the environment, the complete evisceration of the Ukrainian economy, what's left of it. This is going to result in a broken, destroyed country that will not ever recover in our lifetimes and will probably be a festering wound in the heart of Europe for decades to come. The strategy of hoping, hoping that the Russian people are going to overthrow the Russian president, the much more rational strategy here is to bring this war to an end, engage in negotiations with the Russians, and through dialog and education, try to make Russia a more, shall we say, neighborly country, to the extent people believe that it hasn't been neighborly. That's the rational strategy based upon the evidence, I fear.

ZR: Let us now end the interview with Gaza and Israel's growing internal political crisis. Let me recap some of the developments that have happened recently. Since October 7th, 2023, Gaza has endured unprecedented devastation. According to the United Nations and Gaza's Health Ministry, more than 58,500 Palestinians have been killed, with over 140,000 wounded. The humane catastrophe is deepening. Nearly one in ten children under five is now acutely malnourished. And more than two million people face food insecurity as fuel, water and sanitation systems collapse and border access remains heavily restricted. Amid this crisis, U.S., Egyptian and Qatari mediators have presented a revised ceasefire proposal in Doha. It includes a 60-day truce, phased prison exchanges, improved humanitarian corridor access and limited Israeli troop withdrawals. President Trump even met with Qatar's Prime Minister to discuss the offer. Yet violence continues. On July 17, Israeli airstrikes hit the Holy Family Catholic Church, killing three people, alongside other attacks that left at least 22 more civilians dead.

At the same time, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government is unraveling. Within the past week, the United Torah Judaism and Sha's parties exited coalition in protest over the military draft law, reducing its parliamentary support to just 50 of 120 Knesset parliamentary seats, triggering fears of paralysis or a new election. Israel, as we've discussed in this interview and in the past, is now entangled in multiple active conflicts in Lebanon, Gaza, Iran and Yemen. With the added pressure of a domestic political crisis, do you believe Israel can sustain itself military and politically? And do you see any possibility that an internal collapse or early election could finally shift public policy towards Gaza? Or will the status quo persist in your view?

DL: Well, there's some other factors here. I think that this government is hurtling towards a collapse, I think the state of Israel is hurtling towards a collapse. And that's not to say that it won't continue to kill people in large numbers, tragically it will, and the West seems

determined to enable it to do so. But this is completely unsustainable. A couple of facts I would add to your resume of recent events is that in June, the Israeli military suffered more killed soldiers in Gaza than at any time since June of 2024. And, every single month since Israel tore up the ceasefire, I believe in March, there has been an increase in the number of casualties Israel sustains in Gaza. And furthermore, in this month, July, uh Israel is on a pace to suffer more casualties in Gaza than it did in June. So the upward trend in casualties continues.

The Israeli media reported that within the past two weeks four Israeli soldiers committed suicide. A fifth Israeli soldier was seriously wounded in what was apparently a suicide attempt. So the Israeli military is exhausted. The Israeli military is in open revolt in some sections. Reservists, in large numbers, are refusing to show up when they're called to duty. So there's the military aspect. The Israeli economy has sustained enormous damage. Its debt has been downgraded twice. As I mentioned, its largest refinery, and it only has two, is put out of action for an indefinite period. Thousands of people have been displaced by the 12-day war with Iran. There's a cost of having to put them up in accommodation temporarily and rebuild these areas that have been devastated by Iranian missile strikes. And then, as you mentioned, there are all of these political squabbles internally, and the whole question of forcing the ultra-orthodox to serve in the Israeli military. So I think that this is, as I mentioned, radically unsustainable when exactly the collapse will come, uh no one can say with certainty of course, but I think the days of the Netanyahu regime are numbered. I do not believe that they will consummate this genocide, but that doesn't mean that we don't have a profound obligation to stop the killing immediately. We do. And our governments are flouting that obligation every single day to their utter disgrace.

ZR: Dimitri Lascaris, independent journalist and lawyer for human rights and international law. Thank you so much for your time today.

DL: Thank you for having me Zain, take care.

ZR: And thank you for tuning in today. If you watched this video until the very end, please take a few more moments to subscribe to our channel. Click on the subscribe button below it costs you nothing and takes just a few seconds. In addition, if you are watching our videos regularly, make sure to support us with a donation today. We are an independent and non-profit media outlet that does not take any money from corporations all with the goal of providing you with information that is free from any external influence. I thank you for your support and for tuning in. I'm your host Zain Raza, see you next time.

END

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