



Vijay Prashad – Trump’s Gaza Peace Plan & Tomahawks to Ukraine

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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. We are not asking you to leave YouTube and join these channels permanently. All we are asking you to do is to join them as a precautionary measure, as YouTube is owned by Google, and Google is an American corporation that can censor or shadowban us at any time. And if that day ever comes, we won't be able to reach you with an announcement, let alone with our information. How to join the channels, you'll find out in the description of this video. Today I'll be talking to author and historian Vijay Prashad. Vijay has written more than 30 books, the latest being *The Withdrawal: Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan and the Fragility of US Power*. Vijay, welcome back to the show.

Vijay Prashad (VP): Thanks a lot. Great to be here, as usual, Zain. Great to be with you, yeah.

ZR: Thank you. Let us begin with the latest developments in Israel and Gaza. Starting October, Donald Trump announced a 20-point Gaza peace plan to end the war there. Phase one of the plan included a cessation of hostilities. Israel was to halt its bombardment of Gaza, withdraw its forces through predetermined lines, and allow unhindered humanitarian aid in the Strip. In return, Hamas was to release the remaining living Israeli hostages, while Israel will freeze some 2,000 Palestinian detainees, many of them who had been held without due process. According to Al Jazeera, Israel has continued air and drone strikes inside Gaza, killing fifteen civilians even after the truce nominally began. Hamas on the other hand has fulfilled its part of the first phase by releasing the last twenty living Israeli hostages, where Israel held its end of the bargain by simultaneously releasing two thousand Palestinian detainees. Some of the Western media have also claimed that in Gaza, Hamas has cracked down and executed rival Palestinian factions – which it claims collaborated with Israel and in effect has consolidated power in the Strip. Trump himself, while speaking to reporters aboard

Air Force One on October 13th, stated that Hamas had been given, quote, "approval to act as a Palestinian police force in Gaza for a period of time", unquote – effectively a green light to maintain internal order in the Strip. Before we get into Trump's 20-point peace plan and the issues surrounding phase two and three of this plan, which I would like to dive into with you in the next question, can you briefly comment on the first phase, especially the Western media's portrayal of what it calls "hostage-prisoner exchange"?

VP: Yeah, look, firstly, I think it's really important, Zain, to recognize that there is no Palestinian political voice in all of this. This whole thing is being shaped outside the Palestinian political landscape. There are 14 political factions in Palestine. There has been no opening to discuss them. Why? Number one, Israel and the United States and the European Union designate most of them as terrorists and therefore don't see them as political actors. There's no Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Its leader, Ahmad Sa'adat, is in prison. There's no Fatah. One of its most important leaders, Marwan Barghouti, has been in prison for 23 years, by the way, both of them, Sa'adat and Barghouti, 23 years. So the principal leaders of the let's call them secular front of the Palestinian factions are in prison. Then Hamas – the Israelis tried to bomb the Hamas negotiating team in Qatar. The United States considers Hamas a terrorist organisation. So do the Europeans. By the way, none of these factions are on the sanctions list of the United Nations. These are not universally terrorist organizations, okay? Most countries in the world engage these groups as if they are political organizations, which they are. They are national liberation organizations.

So everything in this plan, phase one, phase two, etc., is imposed on the Palestinians. They have not built it. This is not built with the Palestinians. The Egyptian offer, phase one, is we'll have Palestinian professionals, yeah? That means they'll choose some engineers, maybe a few doctors who are there outside Palestine from the diaspora and put them on a committee. That's ridiculous. Where is the Palestinian political voice in this? Where are the people's parties? They should be there. Where's the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine? They should be there. Where is Hamas? Where is Palestinian Islamic Jihad? All the factions need to be there. They were there in China in 2024 to sign the 14-party agreement. Well, why not bring them together for a discussion of phase two? You can't have phase one and phase two without Palestinian political voices.

Now, of course, the prisoner exchange is taking place. This is the long-standing thing that both Israel and Hamas with Islamic Jihad, they have perfected this, this prisoner exchange business. Grab one Israeli, get two- three hundred Palestinians out of prison. They mastered this – the problem here is that the Israelis are playing games. Because they are saying, "well, why aren't you giving us the remains?" How are they supposed to give them the remains when there are tens of million, maybe 200 million tons of rubble. And the Israelis are using the difficulty of getting prisoners of the remaining people out of the rubble to slow down on the aid entering Gaza, which is why I believe there may be a ceasefire, but the genocide hasn't ended. The famine conditions remain and so on. So, yes, there's the first phase and so on. It's being undertaken. But there's no Palestinian political voice on the horizon, Zain. This is an issue no media is talking about. Why? Because even the media considers these groups to

be terrorist groups. They are not terrorist groups. They are national liberation organizations, whether you like them or not.

ZR: President Donald Trump presented his 20-point peace plan at the Sharm el-Sheikh summit in Egypt on October 13th, 2025. The meeting brought together over 20 heads of state from across the Arab world, including Egypt, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and the United Emirates, as well as from Europe, notably France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom. Neither Israel nor any Palestinian representatives, including Hamas, were present at the event. Trump called it, quote, "a turning point that's going to hold up", unquote. And Western media widely portrayed it as receiving strong international support, highlighting the Muslim-majority world. Under the plan, phase two focuses on Hamas' demilitarization and the establishment of an international stabilization force composed of contingents from Muslim-majority and neutral countries to oversee security inside Gaza. And during transition to phase three, it proposes a technocratic transitional authority under supervision involving Tony Blair and Donald Trump and also talks about reconstruction preparation. I know you've already talked about the fundamental problems that this has, but nevertheless, what do you make of this narrative that Muslim-majority countries broadly support Trump's peace plan and therefore it's time for Hamas to fully comply with it?

VP: Firstly, the Palestinians are not some Muslim sub-state that should follow the dictates of the so-called Muslim-majority. I mean, this is ridiculous. You know, the Palestinian struggle is a national liberation struggle. There are Armenians involved, there are Christians involved, there are all kinds of people. The Palestinian struggle is not a Muslim struggle. I just want to put that down on the table. Just because Hamas has been so central to the resistance in Gaza doesn't make the Muslim Brotherhood have a greater say in Palestinian politics. There are other groups that are secular groups that are involved here. So that's important. No Muslim-majority country should have the right to dictate from outside what the Palestinians want or don't want. So it is a shame that there was a meeting in Egypt without the Palestinians at the table. I want to really push this hard, Zain, because this is becoming like an unsaid feature of the discussion, which is, well, "there was Egypt there, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and they made a decision on behalf of the Palestinians". On what basis? Was there a mandate given to Qatar to act on behalf of the Palestinians? I've not seen this mandate. Was there a mandate given to Egypt? I've not seen that mandate. I mean, you can't just act on behalf of a country without a mandate. You can't on the one hand say "we recognize the state of Palestine", which a number of European states have done, and then say, "well, other countries can speak for them". Is that so? Is it now the case that the Netherlands can speak for Germany when it wants to? There's a big dispute going on over Nexperia, the chip-maker based in the Netherlands. BMW is caught in this. Should the Netherlands, because Nexperia is based in the Netherlands, should the Netherlands speak for German industry on behalf of BMW without a mandate? Is that acceptable now? Obviously not. I just don't understand how countries can cavalierly allow others to speak for Palestine without a mandate from the Palestinian people. I think that to me is the essence of the problem, Zain. The details can be discussed. Yeah, I've read the plan, you've read the plan, we can go over the details, but for God's sake, what details? What mandate? How?

ZR: So how do you think this would proceed? I mean, would Hamas even disarm? And the broader question is, why did they even agree to this? It sounds to me that this plan was built to fail in a way where Trump could say, look, I tried everything possible, and Israel also says that, alongside the Arab states, can go to their population and say basically, look, we tried everything possible, but in the end Hamas carries all the blame. So how do you think this would proceed? And the second question would be what would a viable peace plan actually look like concretely that takes into account the aspirations of the Palestinian people as well as ensures the security of the Israeli state?

VP: So, firstly, we need to put this in the regional context. Israel bombed seven countries, sovereign states – Lebanon, Yemen, Syria. They've been bombing everywhere. There's a list of seven countries they bombed in this period – Qatar, etc. Okay. In Lebanon, Israel's extraordinarily harsh illegal bombardment killed thousands of Hezbollah fighters. Maybe up to 5,000 fighters were killed in the bombardments, which continue, by the way. They have not ceased. And Israel continues to violate Lebanese airspace. There's no sovereignty. Lebanon is not a sovereign state. Lebanon does not have a real army, does not have an air force. It does not have air defense, it cannot defend its airspace at all. And the debate in Lebanon is that Hezbollah should disarm. I mean, what is going on? This is a country without an army. Hezbollah has played the role of the army of Lebanon, and has actually fought to defeat the Israeli incursions into Lebanese territory. Sayyid Hassan Nasrallah must be commended. He was the only leader who was able to defeat Israel. They forced an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. That's a commendable act. And yet the Lebanese parliament, under pressure from the United States and France, Israel standing in the wings, wants Hezbollah to be disarmed as a condition of the rebuilding of the south. It's a ludicrous proposition. Okay, first build your army. Let's have an air force. Let's have air defense systems. Let's actually have sovereignty over your territory. At Metula in the south of Lebanon, there is now an expansion of Israeli territory. No comment from anybody. Israel is seizing more Lebanese land. No comment! You're not telling Israel to go back to the lines of that which had been agreed, the ceasefire line, because there's no real border between Lebanon and Israel. There's no peace agreement between Lebanon and Israel. They still are at war, technically. But nobody's telling Israel to go back to the previously recognized lines of control. Nobody! I haven't heard it from anybody. Okay, so one is that.

Secondly, Israel continues to pummel Syria in a kind of strange alliance with the government of Syria now. The government of Syria seems to indicate that Israel can keep all its incursions. It can keep the Golan Heights taken in '67, '73. It can keep the expansion that Israel did in 2024. It can keep the UN buffer zone. That seems to be on the table. Nobody's commenting on that totally illegal incursion. Nobody's commenting on that. And now we come to Gaza, where again this question of disarmament is on the table. I mean, if Gaza is part of Palestine, which countries now in Europe as well are saying we are going to recognize the Palestinian state. The Palestinian state, technically, is all of the West Bank – no Israeli settlements, no apartheid wall, all of East Jerusalem, now mostly absorbed into Israel and all of Gaza. Some of it, maybe up to 50% Israelis are still occupying, yeah, along the perimeter

and so on, very large swaths of land. Technically, they should withdraw from all of that. And then these three parts should be able to unite and have communications and the ability of free movement of people – which they don't have – to go from one end to the other. Without that, there's no conversation about disarmament. Like, why should Hamas disarm in their own territory? If this is indeed Palestine, they have a right to bear arms in their territory. They have a right to defend the sovereignty of their territory. But in fact, it's an occupied Palestinian territory. It's not really a Palestinian state. It's still under occupation. And by UN rules, the Palestinians have a right to defend themselves against an occupation. So Hamas under no conditions has a legal obligation to disarm. I don't get that. And why should Hamas disarm after Israel has killed perhaps 80,000 Palestinian civilians in cold blood? Hamas was able to prevent Israel from occupying all of Gaza. They played a very important role, but they couldn't stop the bombardment. They don't have air defense systems. They couldn't stop the bombardment.

So, in that case, putting this on the negotiators is, again, ridiculous. But I'll tell you something. Phase one is important. The prisoner exchange, the illegal detention of Palestinians in Israel, the torture that was inflicted upon them, this is all a welcomed sign. The cessation of most of the aerial bombardment is an important sign. But I don't know if you've looked recently at an aerial photo of Gaza. People are living in tents. They don't have housing. About half a million houses were destroyed. 190,000 of them leveled, 330,000 of them unlivable. So put it together, it's about a little over half a million. This is the situation for the Palestinians. So phase one, Zain, is a welcome phase. Phase two is impossible. Nobody's getting there. It's never going to be on the table. And it doesn't matter what the Israelis say. They always say that they don't have a partner of peace. If you want a partner of peace, immediately release Marwan Barghouti and immediately release Ahmad Sa'adat. Immediately release all the illegal prisoners who are there on political grounds, so-called "administrative detention". Immediately release them. They will then form a political party for the Palestinian state, and then there can be a discussion. That was not even on the table in the US-led conversation. Why? Because the Palestinians weren't there to put it on the table.

ZR: To the point that you made that on Hamas's disarmament, there's a general consensus in the German media that they should disarm, and it's based on the fact that they're basically do not have the right enshrined in the UN Charter, which says you can use all means necessary, including military, against an occupying force, once it has decided to kill many civilians on October 7th, 2023. Could you address that argument that appears here in the German media?

VP: Well, I mean, look, Germany is an interesting state. Germany hasn't really recognized Palestine. I mean it's totally confusing because they talk about the two state solution. Yeah, they do, but they don't recognize Palestine. To me that's a very strange situation. How can you say that? I mean, I'm hesitating and I'm not speaking for a bit because I'm trying to register the confusion. How can you have an adherence to the two-state solution policy, but don't recognize one of the two states? I mean, that makes no sense to me. So if Germany actually followed through on its political views, which is a two-state solution, recognizing Palestine, then Palestine has a right to define how it wants to defend itself. I don't see how

Germany should interfere in Palestinian affairs. Because if you are in favor of a two-state solution and Palestine therefore is a state, why are you interfering in their internal affairs? Nobody's coming into Germany and talking about how many tanks you should have, or whether Germany should – Germany should have some sympathy here, I would like to say. Because Germany has twice been told to disarm. Once after World War I and second, after World War II, under occupation conditions. And in fact, the argument for disarmament after World War I, after the Great War, in a way led to World War II, led to the rise of Nazism. So Germany should have some understanding about the history of the demand from outside powers to disarm. It creates resentments and difficulties and so on. So I don't understand Germany's own self awareness of its own history and the way it now is talking to the Palestinians. I mean, check yourself, I would say to the German authorities, to the Green Party in particular. Go read some books about German history before you start lecturing people in Palestine. Check yourself. They talk about feminist foreign policy. Really read what that's all about. Is it a feminist illogical policy or is it a feminist logical policy? If it's a logical policy and you believe the two-state solution is the way forward, then you should immediately support the existence of the Palestinian state. If you support the existence of the Palestinian state, ipso facto, by the fact of it, you should then allow the Palestinians to decide how they want to defend themselves. Then the occupation must end. Israel must stop occupying the Palestinian territories. Germany has an illogical foreign policy when it comes to Palestine. It's really not a feminist foreign policy as Madam Baerbock would like to believe. It's not a feminist one, it's an illogical policy. And that's the way it must be understood – that Germany has an illogical foreign policy on Palestine.

ZR: Let us now switch to the war in Ukraine, which in my view has slipped somewhat in the background amidst recent events in the Middle East. The conflict continues with both sides striking each other's energy and military infrastructure through September and October, and Russia carrying out one large-scale aerial soil after another as winter approaches. Let me recap some of the developments of the last months for our viewers as well. In July, President Donald Trump authorized major increases in arms deliveries to European allies and threatened secondary sanctions on Russia if a ceasefire was not reached. However, come August, he held a summit with President Putin in Alaska, along with separate talks with Ukrainian and European leaders. No formal agreement was reached. In September, Washington approved a \$1.1 billion aid package for Ukraine, while European countries such as Sweden and the UK pledged billions in support for Ukraine. The European Union also introduced its 19th sanctions package targeting Russia's shadow oil fleet and LNG imports, which still awaits full ratification in the parliament. At the UN General Assembly, Trump met Zelensky and later wrote on Truth Social, quote: "Ukraine, with the support of the European Union, is in a position to fight and win all of Ukraine back in its original form", unquote. Politico now reports that Trump is considering supplying Tomahawk long ridge cruise missiles to Ukraine, which have a range of around 2,400 to 2,500 kilometers. That is enough to place Moscow within Ukraine's reach. Do you believe the Tomahawk cruise missiles could turn the tide in Ukraine's favor? And secondly, how do you assess the Trump administration's seemingly contradictory approach, pursuing diplomacy one day while escalating the conflict on the next?

VP: Well, firstly, Russia previously hadn't been hitting civilian infrastructure as much as it has now. It has really upped its attack, particularly on Ukraine's train and road systems. This is an interesting strategy. And Ukraine simply doesn't have – despite the fact that it's increased its drone production. I mean, there was a period almost a year when it was a drone war, when the Ukrainians and the Russians were effectively fighting a drone war around the areas where each of them controlled, around the battle lines. Then, I think, after the promise of a deal fell through – remember when Zelensky went to the White House and Vance, the US vice president, and Trump belittled Zelensky and then he left and then he came back and so on. During that period it looked like perhaps a deal could be secured. The Russians could come to the table. Lavrov also suggested that a deal would be possible and so on. When that deal fell through, the Russians began to really push hard to attack civilian infrastructure. Now there's something called "the war of the trains". That's been going on. The Ukrainians have been desperate for better air defense systems. I mean, basically, what's called the HIMARS system, it's an artillery air defense system and the Tomahawk. The Tomahawk debate is interesting because this is a debate effectively to put pressure on Russia to come back to the table and solve the conflict. This is really a pressure tactic. I'm not sure if the United States is actually going to deliver Tomahawks to the Ukrainians.

In other words, to allow Ukraine to make battlefield decisions with the Tomahawks. If they do provide Tomahawks, and the US has done this before to its allies, it will come in with US troops and they will be under US command. And they will then decide what the Tomahawks can be used for. In other words, air defense and not to put up a nuclear warhead and fire it at Moscow – the Tomahawks can carry nuclear warheads and can hit Moscow with them. This is why I believe it's a bargaining chip and not a battlefield decision. They are putting pressure on Putin and want Putin to come to the table and make him make some concessions. He may have to surrender some of the land that Russia has seized. That I think is what the Ukrainians see as unmovable. They need some territorial concessions. And I think Trump is flummoxed by that. He's like, "listen, you know, you're not going to get the Donbass region back. That's done. You're not going to get Crimea. Done." I mean, you're talking now about the land bridge between the Donbass and Crimea or something. And maybe it's like 20 kilometers, square kilometers, the Russians have to withdraw or something. I don't really know exactly the details because they weren't published. What are the details of the negotiation? But certainly, I am not sure that the United States is just going to hand over Tomahawk systems to the Ukrainians to learn and to use. Because, I mean, that is going to put the Russians in a position to really pummel before the Tomahawks come online, they're just going to destroy Kiev. And there's going to be a real upping of missile strikes on Kiev, which haven't been there as of late. Kiev hasn't been struck the way it could be. And before the Tomahawks come in, I think they are going to just flatten Kiev. And that's terrible. The Ukrainians should really worry about that because the day the US says, yes, we are going to give them Tomahawks, and the day the Tomahawks come live, there's going to be some delay. Unless they've already said yes and are already training people secretly in Germany or somewhere, and are just going to bring the Tomahawks and they're online. But if there's a delay, that is dangerous. And I would say the Ukrainians need to worry about this, the Poles need to worry about this,

the Germans – I mean, if they are being trained on German soil, then the Russians are going to say, well, we're going to strike Germany. I don't know where this is going to go, but it's ugly, Zain. It's very ugly. And I know that there are less dangerous things on the table, HIMARS systems and so on. I mean, that that's just one. There's the ATACMS missiles, which are modified missiles which could take out some of the Russian things which don't reach Moscow. And some of these can be modified, no nuclear hardware on them. But in my opinion, the debate is really a pressure tactic on Moscow and less a battlefield delivery question. I think. I feel. I'm not sure. And this is from reading Ukrainian voices on this, how the Ukrainians are seeing it. Most Ukrainians are seeing this as to how to defend and how to come back to the table. The ones who are weapons experts. They are not sure the United States is going to provide them with the Tomahawk system.

ZR: On October 13th, 2025, during a public hearing of the German Parliament Bundestag's parliamentary control panel, Germany's intelligence service, the Bundesnachrichtendienst (BND) issued a clear warning about Russia's intentions towards Europe. BND President Martin Jäger stated, quote, "we must not sit back and assume that a possible Russian attack would come in 2029 at the earliest. We are already under fire today", unquote. He described Europe's current state as "ice-cold peace" that could easily turn into "hot confrontation", warning that Russia is employing hybrid tactics to weaken NATO and destabilize European democracies. In addition, in recent weeks, several drone incursions have been detected across NATO's airspace, particularly over Poland, Lithuania and Romania. While investigations are still ongoing, Polish and Lithuanian defense officials have stated that flight paths and technology use are consistent with Russian military drones, suggesting deliberate reconnaissance or testing of NATO's radar systems. Separately, manned Russian aircraft have also violated NATO airspace in Estonia, Finland, Norway and Latvia. And NATO military officials describe these incursions as part of a broader pattern of "pressure and probing" designed to test NATO's readiness and decision-making speed. Given these developments, if Russia was to prevail in Ukraine, don't you see a credible risk that European states could become the next target? And is European militarization therefore the right step to counter this risk?

VP: I mean, firstly, I thought that the presentation was a little over the top in my opinion. What are we talking about? We're worrying about incursions. But okay, like for instance, Estonia – I don't know if you caught this, the little green men. Mr. Kahl said that they don't have to send the military into Estonia, they can send "little green men" in and say we're protecting Russian minorities. That this is going to be their tactic. Look, obviously this is something that's possible. A couple of years ago in the Duma, one of Mr. Putin's allies talked about the problems of Russian minorities in Central Asia, but he was sort of quieting down. Because they don't want problems in Central Asia. There's already been some murmurings there. I've told you before in a previous conversation that I was a little surprised when the Soviet Union collapsed that there was no border debate and disputes. Because in fact, the Soviet Union collapse comes at a time of a major border dispute which continues between Azerbaijan and Armenia. That started when the Soviet Union was in place, that dispute over Nagorno-Karabakh. This is an old dispute. But it took time. In 1991 the Soviet Union

collapsed. It took a little over 10, 12, 15 years for the dispute to break out with Georgia and then Ukraine. These are all lingering disputes of old borders.

Now, the question of Russian minority populations being mistreated elsewhere – that had been there when Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania were created, there were small Russian pockets. What is this going to mean? There's a part of Russia that sits in Poland. In fact, that's a part of Russia, which doesn't have a contiguous border but it's a port city, Russian port city. What does this mean? There are Russian pockets all over the place. Are the Russians going to say, well, we want to unite the Russian Empire? Is this going to be Adolf Hitler saying, you know, we need a "Anschluss" with Austria and we need space for the Germans? I think when I was listening to the reports of the intelligence chief to the Bundestag, listening to the reports and I was thinking, well, they are now projecting onto Russia something that Germany did in the 1930s. The "Anschluss" and so on is part of protecting German populations, right? That was Hitler's thing, and then expanding the living space for Germans. I mean, they are projecting that onto Mr. Putin.

But we also have evidence of Putin being aware that great Russian chauvinism is not great. Yeah, we have him aware of that. That's what happened with Central Asia. I don't know. The intelligence chiefs sometimes talk out of the hat. They are also looking at most of what you and I look at. It's not the case that they have huge amounts of clandestine information. So much of it is in public. The drones flying over the Baltic Sea, the question of escalation of drone warfare up in the Arctic Circle – all of that is open information. You and I both see that. The real question is does Russia want to land-invade the rest of Europe? Of course it's trying to play around with what's happening. Of course that's happening. Europe is interfering in Russia. They need to come to an understanding. Unless there's a political understanding, this is going to continue, this kind of tit-for-tat and so on is going to continue. You can't tell me that Russia doesn't know what it means to be interfered with. Russian elections after the fall of the Soviet Union were interfered with by the United States all the time. Yeltsin would not have been re-elected. At the time the Communist Party actually had a majority in what was then the polls. It looked like the communists were going to prevail. The United States could not tolerate that. They ensured that Yeltsin won again. This is now public domain information. We don't need to speculate about it. It's not some rant of a lunatic. It's pretty well-established information.

So Russia knows what interference is like. Germany should know what interference is like. The United States interfered in the first German election, West German election, to make sure the Christian Democrats would prevail. In fact, even now there's interference in the election. The Bund of Sahra Wagenknecht has complained about interference, not permitting them to get into the Bundestag. You go and talk to them about that. Don't ask me. Who interfered there? Was it the Russians to prevent them entering the parliament? I doubt it. Somebody, they say, interfered. Maybe not. But that's again an internal matter for Germany to investigate. I'm just telling you what they are saying. So interference is a familiar issue. Now, okay, well, interfering in the internet and web world and so on. Everybody's interfering there. The big corporations are interfering. The real question to the head of German intelligence, I

believe his name, Mr. Kahl or something, the real question to him is: what was German intelligence doing when the United States was listening in on Angela Merkel's phone calls?

ZR: That's a very good question. Let's move to another topic that I feel has been largely underreported in the German media, including in the independent media scene as well, namely the growing geopolitical tensions between the United States and China. I'd like to briefly recap some recent developments here as well. In August, more than 500 Taiwanese troops participated for the first time in a US-led Northern Strike military exercise in Michigan, signaling deeper operational integration between the two militaries. In September, President Donald Trump, after pausing a 400 million dollar military aid package to Taiwan, urged Taipei to purchase US weapons directly and asked them to further increase its defense spending. Meanwhile, long delayed US armed deliveries, including drones and armored vehicles worth several billion dollars, are now slated to begin arriving in the coming year. On October 8th, Taiwan's defense ministry announced new anti-drone measures after reporting repeated airspace incursions by Chinese drones. A week later, Taiwan reported detecting 16 Chinese aircraft and 30 naval vessels near its territory, with many crossing the median line of the Taiwanese trade. Economically, on October 10th, President Trump threatened to impose an additional 100 % tariffs on Chinese imports, citing Beijing's newly announced export controls on rare earth minerals set to take effect in November and December. Given these developments, how do you assess the Trump administration's overall approach to China? Do you believe we are heading towards another military, if not economic confrontation with China during Trump's tenure?

VP: Yeah, well, this is a fascinating discussion. It's almost a mirror of Ukraine. I mean, the West in a way used Ukraine to provoke and poke at Russia. As the former defense chief said in Kiev, the US defense chief, "we must weaken Russia". I've often thought it would be interesting to talk to people in the Bundestag in Germany, talk to elected representatives – what is their policy? Is it also to weaken Russia? And how do they feel that they'll be able to – you know, it's a nuclear country. How are you going to weaken Russia? Do you think it's going to be easy for Germany to interfere in Russian elections and get rid of Mr. Putin? Is Mr. Putin the problem? These are questions I would like to ask members at the Bundestag because in a way the United States is using Taiwan in the same way as a kind of wedge. Using the Taiwan Relations Act of 1978 to say, "well, we may give them 400 million dollars of weapons" and then turn to Beijing and say, "let's do a deal", and Beijing says, well, what about that? And then the United States pulls the weapons deal with Taiwan, talks with Beijing, it doesn't work out and goes back to the weapons deal.

I mean, what the Taiwanese people need to understand, as the Ukrainians should, is that the United States doesn't care about Taiwan. It really doesn't care about Taiwan because they use Taiwan as a pawn. It's a little pawn. I wish I had a pawn here with me. I should keep a pawn on my desk from a chess game to say it's a pawn! It's not something that they care about. The Europeans don't care about the Ukrainians. Plainly, they're not interested. The bombardment of civilian infrastructure has increased. People are just not interested. Where are the mass demonstrations in German streets on behalf of the Ukrainian people? People care about the

Palestinians. It's interesting. There are mass demonstrations of people saying we care about the Palestinians. There's no mass content to this pro-Ukraine thing, partly because I don't think people sincerely are worried about the Ukrainians. They worry about themselves. Look at the presentation that the intelligence chief made to the German parliament. It's about what Russia could do to Germany. But you're not really interested in the Ukrainians. The same way the United States doesn't care about the Taiwanese people. They're using them as a pawn. They want something from China. They want an economic deal. They want China to slow down on some developments. Having got into this big tangle with China, they're impacted, as you can see.

I just mentioned that there's a major problem that BMW is facing because the Netherlands producer of chips, Nexperia, is just not able to do its job. They have impacted the supply chain for BMW. Likely, now BMW might move all its production to China. But then there'll be sanctions. They can't sell in the US market. The United States has created a real problem not only for Chinese or US companies, but for global companies. The Germans should be very concerned because their major corporations are deeply impacted. The Nexperia situation is a real blow to German manufacturing. And I don't know how it's being reported in the German media, but this game that the United States is playing, using Taiwan, using trade deals, using tariffs and sanctions, etc., on China, is in fact impacting European corporations. This is not something that has to do with Taiwan and the United States. This is impacting everybody around the world. And I really hope people reflect on this. The United States is not going to be able to attack China. China has a defense capability that is very, very sophisticated. It's up there, five-generation air capacity. The Indonesians have just put in an enormous arms order from China, not from France. They are buying aircraft from China. So it's not like bombing Iraq. Even the United States in Venezuela, their B52 bombers are swimming around in the Caribbean, but they are not going to easily attack Venezuela because the Venezuelans have maybe 200,000 people under arms. That's a big armed force. They have some capacity. They have a Chinese surveillance ship sitting in the Caribbean. Russian warships are prepared to come into this conflict. So the United States is actually, in a sense, a paper tiger. A lot of roaring but there's not much that the tiger can do.

ZR: Vijay Prashad, journalist, historian and best selling author, thank you so much for your time today.

VP: It's a pleasure. Thanks a lot.

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. It costs you nothing and only takes you a few seconds. And please don't forget to donate to our channel if you like the journalism that we undertook in this video. We are an independent and non-profit media organization that does not take any money from corporations or governments. Hence, we only depend on you, our viewers, to continue with our work. We thank you for tuning in today and for your support. I'm your host Zain Raza. See you next time.

END

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