



Has MAGA Gone Full NEOCON?

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Glenn Greenwald (GG): Alright, next question from Guineapigs: "Is there any sign of the America First wing of the party rebelling against Lindsey Graham and Marco Rubio for pushing Trump into the usual role of a US president in Venezuela and Ukraine? All the reasons I wanted Trump to win are disappearing fast." I think we have to be a little bit careful not to exonerate Trump by always formulating this as Marco Rubio is pushing him, or the Israel lobby is pushing him, or Trump is a big boy. And this is his second term as president. Trump is not dumb. He's not an intellect. He is not the most eloquent speaker, but he is definitely not dumb. I do think he was ignorant of the ways of Washington when he first got there, which makes sense. He hadn't ever been there. I think Obama was as well. And Obama had at least been there for four years as senator. Really, two years of senator, two years running as a candidate, which is nothing, and he got run over by the permanent power of action in Washington. Trump did as well in that first term. But now Trump is in his second term. They had four years of an interval between the two to understand it better. I think Trump understands these issues. I think he's very much in control. I do think he's influenced for sure by the advisors he chooses to trust. At the end of the day, we have to, though, give Trump either the credit or the criticism for the decisions he makes. So I just say that as an aside.

Now, I am amazed. There was an article yesterday with the headline: Republicans cheered Trump's policy saying we, quote, "have to liberate the people of Venezuela", which is exactly the language we used for Vietnam and Iraq. We have to liberate the Vietnamese, we have to liberate the Iraqis, we have to liberate the Afghan women, we have to liberate the Libyans; as though we go around the world trying to liberate people. How I mean, I understand we're all subjected to nationalistic propaganda, everybody in the world is. I was in Malaysia a few weeks ago and I talked about it at one point, but one of the things that amazed me, that I had never seen before was in Kuala Lumpur, is that every building in the city is covered on the exterior with countless, massive Malaysian flags. I don't just mean one, I mean like 20. And I don't know if it's nationalistic pride or if it's kind of this pressured coercive political climate, but we're all subjected to various forms of nationalistic propaganda. I was impressed by Malaysia in a lot of ways too. I'm gonna talk about it at some point. It's a Muslim majority

country, but defies a lot of the stereotypes and expectations that a lot of people like to spread about Muslim majority countries, including Lebanon is another good example that defies these expectations. But anyway, I'll get to that at another point; Turkey too.

But even though I know that we're all subjected to this jingleism, this nationalist propaganda, we kind of have to be to have a cohesive society, it shocks me that anybody actually believes the United States goes around the world and its foreign policy is to liberate people and bring freedom and democracy to them and to banish and consign to the trash heap of history, tyranny and authoritarianism and autocracy. How can anyone believe that? The United States has gone around the world overthrowing democracies, imposing tyrannies. We've always supported and continue to support many of the world's most savage dictatorial regimes. We only care about one thing: Is the government of the country a government that serves our interests? And if it is, we like them regardless of whether they're tyrannies or democracies. And if they don't, we hate them regardless of their tyrannies or democracies. And you can say, yeah, that's how it should be. There are a lot of people who have a realist view of the world, that that's how it should be, but then don't go around pretending or trying to mislead others into believing that the relevant metric is whether the government has a democracy and is free or a tyranny and isn't. That could not be less relevant to the American government under either party. That's the pretext. When we want to go to war and we get to go to war against the government, we can depict it as repressive, that becomes the pretext. Oh, we're going to liberate the people. Did we go to Iraq to liberate the people of Iraq? Does anyone actually believe that, even though that became a major theme of the reason? And I've talked about before, you know, I grew up in South Florida. There was a big Cuban community, even when I was growing up, you know, in the 70s and 80s, and that has now morphed into a big Venezuelan community. And it's kind of metastasized throughout the state, but it's not quite as concentrated in Miami as it once was, but still is. Marco Rubio is a politician from Florida, from South Florida in particular. His family are Cubans. They came and immigrated to the United States from Cuba. And he was born shortly thereafter. And like huge numbers of people, I would say definitely the majority, people who emigrate to the United States from the Caribbean or Latin America remain focused on the region. Just like people who are [inaudible] from birth to love Israel, remain focused on Israel. It's a common attribute of human beings. And they don't just remain focused on it for themselves. They want the United States government, in their view, to fix whatever's wrong with those countries that they still love and have loyalty to. Marco Rubio has been obsessed with having the US change the regimes of Cuba and Venezuela for decades. Do you think it's a coincidence that Marco Rubio wants the US government to change the government of Cuba and that he happens to have his family who came from Cuba? The Cuban community in Miami, when I was growing up, huge numbers of them didn't speak English because even though some of them were citizens of the United States, they always saw themselves as temporarily here. They saw themselves as Cuban, wanting to go back to Cuba as soon as the US got rid of Castro for them. That's why they didn't learn English. Also it was because it was a very large insulated community, so they didn't really need to learn English. Their kids mostly learned English and assimilated, but they didn't, and that mindset persists to today.

It is just such a bizarre movement that calls itself America first, and yet there's so many people in it who continue to say we have to go fix these countries, liberate these countries. On top of that, the pretext is so laughable: Oh, there's fentanyl coming from Venezuela. There is no fentanyl coming from Venezuela. Even the drugs that pass through Venezuela, it's a small percentage of the drugs that enter the United States. This is not why we're going to fix the government of Venezuela. The United States had a very close ally in Colombia for decades, right-wing allies. And it never stopped the flow of drugs from Colombia to the United States. You cannot defeat militarily the flow of drugs, the demand for drugs, the supply of drugs, it's too profitable. It's too easy. We've been waging this war on drugs, like the war on terror for many decades. It's destroyed civil liberties. It's led to massive increases in law enforcement, federal law enforcement, and there is no interruption in the flow of drugs. The way you defeat drugs is on the supply end. By creating a society where people don't need drugs, by giving counselling and resources to people who are suffering from addiction. I think the bigger question is not where drugs come from, but why are there so many people in the United States who need drugs, who depend on drugs, who want drugs, who have become addicts? Why are there so many overdose deaths? Yes, part of it is fentanyl, but that has nothing to do with Venezuela. That is the bullshit pretext. That's the WMD of Venezuela.

The real reason is because it has a leader that doesn't do our bidding and because they have a lot of oil and they're geographically important; we want to control the country by overthrowing the leader and putting a puppet regime. We've tried that forever in so many countries. It doesn't work. And it's not just that it doesn't work, it's that in many ways is what is the story of the United States. It's why all our resources go to our military. It's why we constantly fight endless wars. And I will just end it on this note, which is that polls keep showing that people believe they want to stop these wars. They want to stop these regime change wars. That was a major plank of Donald Trump's campaign was to stop regime change wars, was to stop endless wars. And now we're right back in them. In 10 months, Trump bombed Yemen, he bombed Iran, he's funding and fueling the war in Israel. Hopefully that has stopped, but he's of course still gonna fund and arm Israel. He's funding still the war in Ukraine, drawing down on the congressional authorisation from last year with billions of dollars in arms to Ukraine, trying to end the war, but no one's forcing him to continue to arm Ukraine. And now he just has a new war that nobody asks for, other than you know, Venezuelans and Cubans and the immigrants from those regions like Marco Rubio. Nobody in the MAGA movement was saying we want a regime change war in Europe and Venezuela. In fact, the idea was we're gonna go bomb the drug cartels in Mexico. We're not bombing the drug cartels in Mexico. Instead, Trump's like, yeah, we're gonna go bomb Venezuela, and everyone's like, yeah, the commies, Maduro, drugs. I mean, it is remarkably alarming how easy it is to sell a new war to people who spent so long claiming they didn't want it anymore. And I think that's what we're seeing in Venezuela, and I think. The fact that people like Marco Rubio are from the region is definitely a factor, just one factor, but a factor in why that's all happening.

END

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