



## Ukraine Peace Deal & Israel's Genocide — What the Media Isn't Telling You

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**Zain Raza (ZR):** Thank you for tuning in. I'm your host Zain Raza. Before we begin this video, I would like to share with you an important development regarding the future of our organization. We just launched our crowdfunding campaign with the goal of continuing our independent and nonprofit journalism in 2026. In last year's campaign, we managed to raise 62,000 euros thanks to 2,200 donors. And in this year's campaign, due to significantly increased costs, we are aiming for 80,000 euros until January 9th.

The situation is quite challenging and we find ourselves at a crossroads faced with difficult questions. Will we have to scale back on our capacities or even completely shut down? Or will our viewers support us so that we can continue with our critical and uncompromising journalism? Journalism that produces information that you just won't hear in the corporate media. If just 5-10% of our 166,000 subscribers donate just 5-10 euros today, we will be able to reach our crowdfunding target with ease. You will now see a PayPal barcode appear on the screen. If you just click on pause and take your cell phone and scan it, you will be able to donate to us immediately.

For detailed information about our crowdfunding campaign, our past work, the challenges and costs that we face this year, and how you can support us, you will find out in the description of this video below. I thank you for your love and generosity. 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 also has a YouTube channel called Reason2Resist. Dimitri, welcome back.

**Dimitri Lascaris (DL):** Good day, Zain. How are you doing?

**ZR:** I'm doing good. Let us begin with Ukraine. And to give our viewers clear context, I want to briefly recap some of the most notable developments. Throughout November, Europe continued to expand its military support: the UK delivered another batch of long-range Storm

Shadow missiles, the Netherlands committed an additional 250 million euros in military aid, and Sweden moved forward with its pledge to provide JAS-39 Gripen fighter jets. Germany also significantly increased its commitments. Its newly approved 2026 federal budget allocates 11.5 billion euros for Ukraine – the highest annual amount since the start of the invasion – and also announced at least 150 million euros in extra funding for the Prioritized Ukraine Requirements List, the joint US-NATO mechanism through which European allies finance the purchase of US-made weapons and ammunition for Ukraine. And just this week, in Paris, President Zelensky reiterated Ukraine's red lines to President Macron and other European leaders: no externally imposed territorial concessions, credible security guarantees, and no decision about Ukraine will be made without Ukraine at the table.

However, at the diplomatic front, the picture changed significantly in late November and early December. After a controversial 28-point US peace proposal, widely criticized by Ukraine and its European allies for being too favorable to Russia, Ukraine and American negotiators met in Geneva and agreed to draft an "updated and refined peace framework". While details remain undisclosed, the rework reportedly drops or softens some of the most contentious elements. Despite this, Russia has received a copy of the revised text and signaled that it sees this as a starting point, while simultaneously reinstating demands for territorial concessions and withdrawal of Ukraine forces. Meanwhile, US special envoys, including Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner, are preparing to meet President Putin in Moscow as we speak. Firstly, how do you assess the latest US peace proposal? And secondly, how do you explain this growing contradiction within NATO, with its European members intensifying military support, while the alliance's dominant power is now prioritizing diplomacy and peace?

**DL:** We have been treated since November 19th – which I believe is the day on which this 28-point peace proposal was leaked to the press by anonymous sources, the US press – to a grand kabuki theater. This is all a spectacle. It means absolutely nothing. And I'll start by pointing out that the peace proposal was the 28-point thing, and I think there's been several versions of this thing floating around since then, including a 19-point plan, apparently. First of all, it didn't actually meet Russia's core demands or even come close to meeting Russia's core demands. It, for example, did not recognize or propose the recognition of Russian control and sovereignty over the oblasts of Kherson and Zaporizhia. It was focused on the Donbass, but Russia's been very clear that it won't accept anything less than all of those four oblasts plus Crimea. It envisioned that the Ukrainian army would be the largest army in Europe, west of the Russian border. I believe the number was 600,000 men. By the standards of any European country, that's a huge army. Russia would never accept that. And when they were talking about reducing the size of Ukraine's military in 2022, when they were on the verge of a deal that didn't require Ukraine to cede any territory to Russia – I think the number that they were talking about was less than 100,000 men.

And there was discussion in this 28-point peace plan about hundreds of billions of dollars of Russian money being used to rebuild Ukraine. Russia has consistently taken the position that that money was stolen. And it was. It was stolen. I mean, just think about this: the number of

civilians that Israel has killed in Gaza is vastly in excess of the number of civilians killed in the Ukraine war. And not only that, but Israel has killed those civilians in much less time because the Ukraine war started 19 months before the genocide in Gaza began. And has anybody moved to seize the money of Israel? Has anybody moved to seize the money of the United States government, without which the genocide in Gaza is impossible?

So the Russians, whatever you may think about their invasion of Ukraine, they're looking at this and they're saying: if you people actually had a principle of seizing the funds of somebody who violates international law, you would have done that to the United States and Israel long ago. Israel has been practicing apartheid for years prior to the invasion of Ukraine. So this is a theft of Russian money. They're never going to accept that. Never. And I'm not being exhaustive here.

So the plan that was put forward was never going to be accepted by Russia. Even though the Western media's narrative is: oh my God, this is like a capitulation to Russia. It actually doesn't go nearly as far as Russia has been consistently demanding. And again, whatever you may think of its demands, those are its demands, and there's no way for Ukraine to avoid a worse outcome by continuing the war. If it doesn't accept those demands, the outcome will be worse for Ukraine. They will lose even more territory than Russia has demanded. Russia already, for example, controls territory in the Kharkov region and in the Sumy region and in the Dnieper region. Those are three regions that it isn't requiring as part of a peace deal. So it's just going to keep going. This is just the rational thing to do, Zain. It's the rational thing to accept Russia's demands because it's just going to get worse.

And so they've put out a proposal which is not even close to Russia's demands, and then they whittled it down. They whittled it down after meeting with Zelensky, as if Zelensky has the authority to say no, practically speaking to the Americans. He has no ability to say no to the Americans. The United States is in complete control of Ukraine. Let's be clear here. Without America's economic support, without all that weaponry, which now the Europeans are paying for, but the weaponry is coming primarily from the United States, without the intelligence – the United States has the most sophisticated military satellite network in the world. And it uses that network, its ISR capabilities, which are number one in the world, to provide Ukraine with critical battlefield intelligence every day. If they withdrew that, it would be over for Ukraine.

And I want to mention one other thing. As you mentioned, there are reports coming out of this meeting that just took place in Florida, that Ukraine is saying, we are not going to give up on NATO, which is really the core, it's absolutely the core of this conflict. So they're not prepared to give up on NATO. And the Americans apparently are acting like, well, we tried, but Ukraine will not accept this. They insist upon being on NATO. Anyone who's read the NATO treaty understands that if the United States vetoes, any country that's a current member of NATO, vetoes Ukraine's admission, it's over. Ukraine can't enter. So the United States, all it has to do to stop Ukraine from entering NATO, is enter into an agreement with Russia – a binding agreement – that it will not allow Ukraine to enter NATO. And the United States

won't do that. It's pretending that Ukraine gets to decide whether it enters NATO. In fact, every single member of NATO has the right to veto Ukraine's admission.

So this is all kabuki theater. Why are we being treated to this kabuki theater? Why is Trump pretending that he wants to bring an end to the Ukraine war? It's very simple. And as far as I can tell, Zain, nobody in the alternative media is acknowledging this. They're all pretending that Trump wants peace in Ukraine. It's absurd. The reason why is because there are a lot of people in the United States who want to see the war brought to an end. And Trump, in order to win their votes last year, lied. He lied. This has been going on for decades, centuries.

Politicians lie to win votes. It's as simple as that. That's exactly what Donald Trump did. And rather than the alternative media, these people who are, I think, genuinely anti-imperialist and they critique American foreign policy, accepting the obvious reality that Trump never told the truth, he has no interest in bringing this war to an end – they're still buying into this nonsense. I guess I'm absolutely flabbergasted that it's not obvious to everybody right now that this man who is a pathological liar – he lies every single day – they can't accept that he's not serious about peace in Ukraine.

Now, the last thing I'll say is: he might actually want to see a ceasefire. That's possible. Why? Because they need to rearm Ukraine. They need time to do that. Ukraine needs to mobilize more men. Ukraine needs to train those men. Ukraine needs to rebuild its fortifications because Russia has captured so many of them. It needs to build new defense lines. So, in order to enable Ukraine to defend itself from the Russian onslaught more effectively, it may well be that Trump wants to temporarily freeze the conflict, stop the shooting, and continue the arming of Ukraine. But Russia's not going to accept that. I mean it's obvious. And that's not going to result in peace. It's just going to prolong the war, prolong the killing on both sides. So this is all kabuki theater. And frankly you should all just just filter it out. Just stop paying attention to all this nonsense about this Trump initiative and "they're having a meeting and they're flying off to Kiev" and blah, blah, blah. It's all a lie.

**ZR:** Let me just push back from the European position. And this is not only just coming from politicians and the media, but a lot of people that I talk to are saying Russia has to pay some sort of price. I mean they just invaded a country, putting aside international law, it's a major country that invaded a smaller country, and it has to pay for its reconstruction or somebody has to be held into account, hundreds of thousands of people died, and if we don't stop Russia, then we will just empower many other authoritarian states like China. How would you address this argument?

**DL:** Two answers. It's very simple. And by the way, just looking at the argument in isolation, it's a compelling argument. I don't deny that. But there are two responses to this. Number one, if you're a European government – I'm going to bring back the case of the genocide in Gaza – you're talking about a far worse series of crimes in Gaza than we have seen in Ukraine. The Europeans are arming Israel. Germany is the second largest supplier of weaponry to Israel. Okay? And there was never an arms embargo on Israel. Merz lied through his teeth. What he did was he said, "we're not going to send weapons that can be used in Gaza". He never

explained what that meant. But there is also genocide happening in the West Bank. He never took off the table Israel using German-made weapons in the West Bank, even though the genocide is also happening there.

Also, the European Union, at the very end of this period leading up to the ceasefire, they suspended the association agreement with Israel, parts of it, and then immediately lifted the suspension. I don't even know if it ever even came into effect for a day, but it might have been in effect for a few weeks. They immediately lifted it because of this fake ceasefire in Gaza. Every single day since October 11th, when this thing went into effect, Israel has killed on average somewhere between eight and ten civilians in Gaza. Plus, it continues to starve them. It continues to occupy the land. It's destroyed over 1,500 buildings in Gaza since then. And Europe is arming Israel, allowing trade benefits to Israel. It allows its football clubs to play in European championships. So the Russians are looking at this and they're saying, you people are just liars. You don't actually care about international law. You don't care about democracy. You don't care about human rights. It's obvious to the whole world. So why are you imposing a different standard on us? That's number one. If the Europeans want Russia to take it seriously, or any other country, at a bare minimum, they have to be consistent in applying international law and human humanitarian law.

And the second answer, and the I think even the more compelling answer, Zain, to people who say this – and I hear this every day, what you just said, it's important that we talk about this argument – is that whether or not it's correct as a moral matter, as a legal matter, as a political matter, the fact is that Europe and the United States do not have the ability to stop Russia's advances. That's just reality. It's just reality. Unless they're prepared to use nuclear weapons, in which case we're all going to die. I don't think they're that crazy. So if they can't stop it, and if the alternative to accepting Russia's terms is worse, which is more death, more territory lost, more infrastructure destroyed, then even if it's morally the correct position to demand this of Russia, it is insane to continue this war. Because the people you claim to be protecting, the Ukrainians, will be worse off if you continue the conflict. That's just reality.

And to go back again to Israel and Palestine – I believe that Palestinians should have all of historic Palestine. It's their land. And if Jewish people want to live there with them as equals, fine. But they should be free in that entire land and should be citizens with equal rights in that entire land. The whole international community has been saying to the Palestinians since 1967: "accept a state on the 1967 borders". This would require Palestinians to accept approximately 20% of historic Palestine, even though they constitute a majority of the population. I've consistently said that if the Palestinian people think that's better for them than continuing the occupation, I would support them in that, even though it is a huge territorial concession, and Israel has no right to take Palestinian land. Israel has been an illegitimate illegal enterprise from the very beginning because it was built on top of the land by force that belonged to other people, indigenous peoples, who had been there for centuries. Okay?

We do this in international politics all the time. We accept these compromises in order to bring an end to war and suffering. And the Europeans have been saying this to the

Palestinians. You should accept a state on the 1967 borders, which would be a huge territorial concession. And Israel won't even give them that. They won't even give them that tiny little rump state. And so they're going to look at the Russians and say, oh God, no, we're not going to make any territorial concessions. That would be awarding an aggressor. This is just – let's call this out for what it is, okay? It's all kabuki theater. The European governments do not care about international law and human rights. This is all about weakening Russia. That's all it's about. And the people who are paying the greatest price for this nefarious proxy war are the Ukrainian people themselves.

**ZR:** I want to take a look at Ukraine's energy sector and the corruption scandal shaking it. Throughout November and into early December, Russian forces significantly intensified their strikes on Ukraine's critical infrastructure, leaving hundreds of thousands of Ukrainians without electricity, heating and water at various points as winter has approached. But the energy sector has not only been hit externally. Internally, it has been shaken by a major corruption scandal. Anti-corruption agencies NABU and SAPO uncovered an alleged hundred million dollar kickback and embezzlement scheme centered on Energoatom, Ukraine's state nuclear energy operator.

In response to the scale of the allegations, Ukraine dismissed both its justice minister and its energy minister. Several suspects have been charged, and the alleged architect of this network is businessman Timur Mindich, a longtime associate and former media partner of President Zelensky. And he has reportedly fled the country to Israel before investigators could detain him. In recent days, the scandal expanded even further. Anti-corruption investigators searched the home of Andriy Yermak, Zelensky's former chief of staff, and one of his closest political allies, prompting his resignation. Meanwhile, the heads of NABU and SAPO have publicly stated that since this summer they have faced sustained political pressure, attempts to influence the investigation, and efforts to obstruct their work.

What I find striking is how little attention Western media is giving to two central angles that I want to discuss with you. First, only a few months ago, Zelensky himself attempted to bring the anti-corruption agencies under his direct authority, a move that would have stripped them of their independence, and he reversed course only after significant domestic and international backlash. Most major German media outlet corporations are not even asking whether the president may have been aware of this corruption network and whether his earlier attempt to subordinate these agencies was partly an effort to weaken or preempt their investigation.

Second, almost no discussion is taking place about how this scandal coincides with the Trump administration's intensified push for negotiation settlement into the war, an approach that diverges sharply from Zelensky's own position. It is well documented that these anti corruption agencies were built with extensive Western assistance and have ongoing cooperation with US institutions. This timing therefore raises some legitimate questions. What's your view on these two angles?

**DL:** Well, we've known since long before the Ukraine war began that Ukraine was one of the most corrupt countries in the world. And the Ukrainian people themselves have consistently identified corruption as a top threat to national security. I think they did that in fact, during the war. There was a poll done. So none of this is a surprise. We in the West, here in Canada, where I'm currently situated, 22 billion dollars – that's what we've given to Ukraine. Hundreds of billions of dollars have been given by European nations. And who knows how much has been given by the United States. We have been funneling gigantic amounts of money into a country that we knew was rampant with corruption.

And the idea that Zelensky himself is above all of this when all of these people who are close to him are credibly accused – I mean, the NABU, this is not simply suspicion on their part. They actually have, I understand, over a thousand hours of recorded conversations amongst these officials. Timur Mindich, why did he fly off to Israel if the man has a viable defense? You know, this sounds to me like a guilty man. And Israel, by the way, is also where – people may not know this, but the person who's responsible for Zelensky's political rise is an Israeli-Ukrainian oligarch by the name of Ihor Kolomoyskyi, who is accused by the United States government of a multi billion dollar bank fraud. He's the guy who financed that program Servant of the People, which enabled Zelensky to become famous and ultimately to run successfully to be the president. So this man is surrounded by corruption – Zelensky. We all knew this, Zain. Anybody who was paying any attention could have figured out that they were taking huge sums of money. It was just a question of how much from the West and pocketing it themselves.

And I should also mention that before the war in Ukraine, the Pandora Papers – this was a huge leak of documents from tax havens, a particular tax haven – showed that Zelensky had offshore companies. And that there were very significant properties in those offshore companies. So the real question here is not is the corruption real? Of course it's real. Of course it involves Zelensky. It's just a question of how much money they all stole. The real question is why is this coming out now? This is the very curious thing. Why now? And it seems like this is an attempt to put pressure on Zelensky and perhaps to remove him from power. He's deeply unpopular. His term has expired. It expired in May of last year. He now has no legitimacy. He's ruling by martial law. And the Ukrainian people are becoming fed up with him. And frankly, I think he's always been stunningly incompetent. He has no idea what he's doing. All of this talk about the Churchillian Zelensky is a myth. And so maybe they just decided they need to replace him with somebody who's more competent. Maybe they are tired of him taking so much money, they think he's too greedy, and they want somebody who's going to take less. I don't know. I don't know why this is happening now, but nobody should be surprised about these revelations. I mean, please, come on.

And so why people in the West have put up with this is the real question. I mean, my God, when you see the quality of life of people in the West being diminished every day. It's not just happening in Europe, it's happening here in Canada, it's happening in the United States. Ordinary workers are getting squeezed more and more every day. People should put down their feet and say, "stop sending our hard-earned money to this corrupt regime in order to

prolong a proxy war that is only going to cause even more suffering to the Ukrainian people and start helping people here at home who desperately need support from their governments". And that's my main message to all of you who are fed up with this corrupt scheme.

**ZR:** Let us switch to Gaza, but let me first once again recap some of the latest developments for our viewers. Since what the mainstream media calls a "ceasefire" came into effect on October 10th as part of Trump's Gaza Plan, we have seen a noticeable drop in Western media coverage. For example, the Tagesschau, one of Germany's most watched primetime news programs has, according to my own observation, mentioned Gaza only twice in its 8 p.m. broadcasting throughout November. And even then, mainly just in the context of German diplomacy rather than focusing on the humanitarian situation on the ground.

Meanwhile, as you've already mentioned, in Europe and internationally, there have been significant political shifts. The German government has lifted its partial freeze on arms exports to Israel and returned to case-by-case approvals, arguing that the ceasefire has, quote, "stabilized", unquote, the situation. The European Union, for its part, has paused discussions on stronger measures against Israel and instead emphasized diplomatic engagement within the new framework. On the 17th November, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 2803, which formally endorses the US plan. The resolution authorizes an international stabilization force for Gaza and created a "Board of Peace" tasked with overseeing political and administrative arrangements during the transition period.

On the ground, however, conditions continue to deteriorate. UN-linked monitoring groups and Gaza health authorities report that since the ceasefire came into effect, Israel has carried out hundreds of violations. These incidents have reportedly killed several hundred Palestinians, including many children, and injured close to a thousand. Humanitarian agencies also note that the agreement, which foresaw up to 600 aid trucks per day entering Gaza, have only seen a few hundred enter a day. Meanwhile, the total death toll in Gaza has now exceeded 70,000, according to the data from what mainstream media routinely describe as a "Hamas-run Health Ministry".

My question is twofold. Can you first provide your assessment on Europe's political shift towards Israel following the so-called "ceasefire"? And secondly, as a lawyer specializing in international law, how do you assess UN Security Council resolution 2803?

**DL:** What we're seeing in Gaza is very similar in a sense to what we've watched in Ukraine. There is an elaborate spectacle being orchestrated by the US government with the complicity of all Western governments, to persuade their electorates, which had been putting so much pressure on them to stop this horror show, that it's over, that the genocide is finished. But if you actually pay attention, as I have, every single day I've been following the reports coming out of Gaza because I believe we should show confidence in the oppressed, the victims of a genocide, if they're telling us that they're being killed, then we should accept their word. And they are telling us this, and it's backed up by evidence, and it's backed up by credible international organizations like Defense for Children Palestine and UNICEF and on and on.

The average number of persons they've killed every day is eight to ten. There was one day during the so-called "ceasefire" where they killed 46 children in one day. This week they obliterated – the Israelis actually launched an airstrike. I don't know how anybody can say with a straight face that there's a ceasefire. They launched an airstrike on two boys aged 11 and 8, obliterating them from the face of the earth because they were scavenging for wood. And the claim by the Israelis – I mean, it's amazing that we even tolerate this explanation – was that the boys posed a threat to their ground troops. And they had crossed this imaginary yellow line. They admitted that they killed the boys. They admitted it. And they said because they constituted a threat to our brave, most moral army. And I could go on and on.

You mentioned quite properly the fact that they've not even allowed in 30% of the aid that they agreed to let in. They've not allowed any reconstruction. They've blown up, as I mentioned earlier, in excess of 1,500 structures. There was almost nothing left standing. Basically, whatever they can destroy, whatever remained, they're flattening it to the ground. So, how can anybody say that this is a ceasefire? I mean, this is absurd. It is an insult to our intelligence. All that happened is that the pace at which people are being killed has been reduced. That's it. That's it. And at the same time, they continue to say "it's all over, we're moving towards a resolution, we're going to reconstruct Gaza". The point here is simply to release pressure on Western governments. That's the objective, for their enablement, their support for this genocidal entity. And it's a disgrace, frankly.

As it comes to this resolution 2803, I have nothing but outrage in my heart for this thing. This thing basically, I'm going to be perfectly blunt here. People may not like this comparison, but it's the best comparison that I can find. It is like putting Hitler in charge of Auschwitz. That's what we've done. This is a genocidal death camp. That's what Gaza is. They're killing people every day, innocent people. They're starving them. They're blowing up what remains of their infrastructure. And the man that the United Nations Security Council has appointed to run this horror show is Donald Trump himself, a genocidal war criminal, who's going to give to Israel every means that it may request in order to finish off the Palestinian people in Gaza. So I was shocked, frankly. I don't put primary responsibility for this on China and Russia, but I was shocked that neither of them vetoed this resolution.

And it's not just that, it's not just their failure to veto this resolution. It's the fact that China is by far the largest importer to Israel. It is the third largest buyer of Israel's exports. So it's in the top two in terms of Israel's trading partners. And a recent report came out from Oil Change International showing that Russia has been one of the top suppliers of fuel to Israel during the genocide. So nobody's hands are clean here. The primary responsibility is with the West, because we are the ones, after all, who have been arming Israel. And every time there was a proposal at the UN Security Council for a ceasefire, the United States vetoed the resolution. What's happened here is a black mark on the United Nations Security Council, and it will never be washed off. I don't know whether the UN can recover from this travesty.

**ZR:** I mean, talking about the resolution 2803, I want to dig deeper about it – why do you think Russia and China abstain? I mean, I know you touched upon it, but could it be that China sees some interest regarding Taiwan and a backdoor deal was reached? And Russia in terms of Ukraine? We saw immediately after that ceasefire that the Trump administration went into offensive regarding diplomacy in Ukraine. Could there be some sort of deal being made behind the doors that we perhaps don't know about? Why did they abstain? Because we have seen the Western bloc, France, Britain, and the US almost vetoing anything that came from Russia and China in regards to Gaza over the past years. And even if Russia and China tried to enforce some sort of humanitarian corridor or pause in fighting Ukraine, this was also vetoed in the UN Security Council. So what do you think is driving Russia and China to abstain from this vote?

**DL:** Well, it's entirely possible there was a backdoor deal. And in fact, this 28-point peace plan was revealed to the world through anonymous sources only two days after the vote at the UN Security Council. And at the time when this was revealed, the claim was that the talks had been going on for weeks between Russia and the United States over this plan. And so, in other words, at the time when the Russian Federation did not veto the resolution, it was in active discussions with the Trump administration about a possible peace deal. So whether that influenced Russia or not, I don't know. It's possible. It's certainly possible that there was some kind of backdoor deal involving China.

What I would say to people – if there's anybody from the Russian or Chinese government listening to us, and it isn't in fact the case that there was some kind of a deal, what I say to you is: A, you claim to actually be you know, concerned about international law. Well, you just proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that you put your own interests before international law. All you had to do was veto this resolution to uphold international law, and in fact you allowed this thing, which is a violation of international law to pass. But also, why would you trust the United States government? Whatever deal they gave you, if it isn't backed up by a treaty that has been ratified, that has the force of law – and obviously whatever deal was done isn't backed up by a treaty because we would know about it. It would be put forward to the Senate or the other legislative bodies in the West for approval. So there's no treaty. Why would you trust the Americans? Why would you trust the British or the French or the Germans? Didn't you learn your lesson with the Minsk Accords? Didn't you learn your lesson in 2022 when you were on the verge of doing a peace deal with Ukraine and Boris Johnson flew to Ukraine and tanked the deal? I mean, you have no basis to trust these people.

The other possibility, it's not an acceptable explanation in my view, but it's that every single Arab government and the Palestinian Authority themselves supported this thing. And I think that the Russians and the Chinese have indicated that that was a major factor in their thinking. The problem with this rationale, of course, is that these people, all of them, whether you're talking about the dictator of Egypt – as Donald Trump calls him his favorite dictator – whether you're talking about the Saudi crowned prince, whether you're talking about Mahmoud Abbas, all of these people are corrupt tyrants who are vassals of Washington. So what they say should not be taken seriously by anyone. They have repeatedly betrayed the

Palestinian people. And the fact that they collectively wanted Russia and China to allow this resolution to pass is no justification whatsoever for allowing it to pass.

**ZR:** Let's move to another region and talk about the recent US military buildup in the Caribbean near Venezuela. Over the past month, Washington has deployed what analysts describe as the largest American military presence in the region since the late 1980s – including a carrier strike group, an amphibious ready group, advanced aircraft and several thousand personnel. Although presented by Washington as an expanded counter-narcotics operation, the United States has already carried out more than 20 maritime strikes in the Caribbean and Pacific, resulting in over 80 deaths according to the United Nations.

What stands out just as much is Europe's response. From September through November, European governments not only avoided commenting on the buildup, they also showed no willingness to criticize – let alone condemn – the US military strikes themselves. When asked directly, German and EU officials issued only vague statements about, quote, "regional stability", unquote, and declined to address the deployments or the lethal operations taking place under the US mission. Major European capitals continue to emphasize diplomatic and electoral issues in Venezuela while remaining publicly silent about the growing US military footprint, even as several Latin American leaders warn against militarizing the Caribbean. Given this context, how do you assess the real risks of escalation in the region? And why do you think Europe is unwilling or unable to publicly confront Washington, even when the situation appears to contradict the principles of sovereignty, non-intervention and the rules-based international orders that European governments are so vocal about?

**DL:** Because they never cared about those things. They never cared one iota about those things. I've been using the example of the genocide in Gaza. This is a perfect example of what I've been talking about. There's no question that what the United States government is doing in the Caribbean is a grotesque violation of international law, as many human rights experts have noted. Even if these people are actually engaged in narcotics trafficking, Zain, there's no legal basis or moral basis to blowing them to smithereens. So Trump has basically appointed himself judge, jury, and executioner.

And by the way, even under US law, the crimes that these people that they're killing are alleged without evidence to have committed is not punishable by death. Even under US domestic law. Okay? They have capital punishment, of course, in the United States, but these crimes, narcotics trafficking, is not a death penalty crime. So Trump has gone even beyond the boundaries of United States domestic law. He's committing crimes under United States domestic law. And the Europeans are sitting there doing nothing about it. Absolutely nothing. Why aren't they seizing American assets in Euroclear if they care so much about international law? I mean, this is absurd. So I think this is exactly why the Russians and the Chinese roll their eyes when they get lectured by Western countries about international law and human rights. I mean, there's no worse human rights violator on God's screen earth than the United States government, and that's been the case throughout the entire post-World War II period.

And one other thing I should add, by the way, is that two days ago or three days ago, Trump revealed that he's going to give a pardon to the former president of Honduras, Juan Orlando Hernández, who was convicted last year of cocaine trafficking. And we're talking about huge amounts of cocaine coming through his country to the United States. He's going to pardon him. The man just started a prison sentence a few months ago. And we're supposed to believe that the reason why he's murdering these people in the Caribbean is because of drug trafficking? I mean, come on. This is an insult to our intelligence, man.

So is there a real prospect of escalation? Absolutely. I think Trump has a demonstrated propensity for extreme violence, utter contempt for international law. Venezuela has the world's largest oil reserves. It has a government, whatever you may think of it, which leans very much to the left and has insisted on its sovereignty at great price to the Venezuelan people, and he's perfectly capable of employing military force to remove Maduro from power. And the last thing I'll say about this is that the person that they say should be the leader of Venezuela, Machado, who just got the Nobel Peace Prize, she has been openly praising Israel since she got the Nobel Peace Prize, a state that is currently committing genocide. This is the person – this genocidal racist, that's what Machado is, and she's also calling for the United States to use military force on her own people – this is the person they want to replace Maduro with. And I think if they ultimately go down that road, the Caribbean is going to blow up and there's going to be an even worse crisis of illegal immigration in the United States.

**ZR:** To my last pushback – there is, as you've mentioned, in the independent media scene, a lot of people I would say that still believe that Donald Trump would bring peace or some sort of stability around the world. They usually compare it to Joe Biden – like, for example, under Donald Trump, at least Trump has restored the hotline with Moscow, at least Trump has put some pressure on Netanyahu. According to internal documents that I saw on Democracy Now, under Joe Biden, Israeli officials basically said that there was no pressure applied whatsoever, you know? And under Trump, at least we're seeing some sort of ceasefire, some sort of decline in the violence, I would say, comparatively to Biden. And in Ukraine, we can see the same thing that there's some sort of appearance of peace and pressure being applied. Do you think Trump is nevertheless the lesser evil compared to Joe Biden?

**DL:** Not at all, no. I think there's a continuity here. I don't really draw a distinction between them. I mean, one thing that you left out of your litany there was Iran. Biden didn't bomb Iran. Not only did Trump bomb Iran, which in and of itself was a crime of aggression, he actually bombed Iran's nuclear facilities. Okay? This was extremely dangerous from a human and environmental perspective. For good reason nuclear facilities have special protected status under international law. Biden didn't do that. Biden didn't give Israel the green light and enable it, because it wasn't just that Trump allowed Israel to attack Iran. He actually provided the weaponry. He actually provided the refueling aircraft, he actually provided the intelligence to the Israeli military. So it was really a US-Israeli war of aggression on the Iranian people – again, for the purposes of changing their government, turning it into one that will do Washington's bidding, not because they care about human rights in Iran. So I could go

on and on. There are other things that are going on around the world that Trump is doing that Biden didn't do. At the end of the day, they were both driven by one objective, and that is US global hegemony. And they were prepared to break every norm of decency and international law and human rights, in order to achieve that objective. There's just simply been no real change, in my opinion.

**ZR:** Dimitri Lascaris, independent journalist and lawyer. It's always a pleasure talking to you. Thank you so much for your time and insights.

**DL:** Thank you, Zain. Take care.

**ZR:** And thank you for tuning in today. If you watched this video until the very end and you like the journalism that we undertook, then please don't forget to click on the subscribe button below. And yeah, don't forget that our crowdfunding campaign is ongoing. So if you want our independent and non-profit journalism to continue going forward into the next year, then make sure to participate today. I'm your host Zain Raza. See you guys next time.

**END**

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