



Epstein, Iran & The End of Western Power | Vijay Prashad

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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 I begin this interview, I would like to remind you to join our alternative channels on Rumble and Telegram. YouTube, which is 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 with our information, let alone with an announcement. Supporting alternative media is not only about consuming their information, but it's also about joining alternative platforms. You will find the links to all of these platforms in the description of this video below. Today, I'll be talking to author and historian Vijay Prashad. Vijay Prashad has written over 30 books, and one of them being *The Withdrawal Iraq, Libya, Afghanistan and the Fragility of US Power*. Vijay, welcome back to the show.

VP: It's nice to be with you, thanks.

ZR: Since the Epstein Files Transparency Act was passed, the US Justice Department has released around 3.5 million pages. A few days ago, however, US Attorney General Pam Bondi stated that the DOJ review has been completed, stating that the investigation was effectively closed. In the United States, the fallout has reached elite institutions and political figures. For example, Kathy Ruemmler, former White House counsel under President Barack Obama and later Chief Counsel Officer of Goldman Sachs resigned. Reporting shows that Morgan Stanley opened accounts for Epstein-linked trusts as late of 2019. Members of Congress including Ro Khanna and Thomas Massie have identified people like Les Wexner, the former CEO of Victoria's Secret, former President Bill Clinton and other prominent figures have also appeared in released records. The fallout has also spread internationally. Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem, Chairman and CEO of DP World, one of the largest port and logistics operators from Dubai recently stepped down. In France, prosecutors have opened preliminary investigations into trafficking and financial crimes. In Norway, senior diplomat Mona Juul stepped down. In the UK, police just today arrested Prince Andrew. The

documents have also rocked the Starmer government, given the revelations of Peter Mandelson, former British ambassador to the United States. The mainstream media has however provided very little coverage on Epstein's connections to Israel. Although there are plenty of emails that reveal his links to former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, as well as Mossad intelligence officer Yoni Koren, who both stayed in his apartment multiple times. Vijay, what in the revelation tranche has stood out for you the most? And what does it reveal about the nature of its system that it prides itself on the rule of law, rules-based order, equality and justice for all?

VP: Well, firstly, this is a horrible, horrible, horrible situation. I mean there are lots of young girls who have been brutalized in this whatever you call it Epstein-scenario. I mean these are young people's lives that have been devastated. And we know that at least one person has taken a life. We don't know about the rest. This is a very common thing with survivors of sexual violence. They take it upon themselves, they hate themselves for the rest of their lives. I mean, somebody can think: Oh, this fun, I'm having sex with an eleven year old, but that eleven year-old then spends the rest of their life hating themselves, and not being able to function as fully developed people. Anybody who does this to a child has really surrendered their humanity, in my opinion. Anybody who does it to a child is no longer fully capable of human emotion. They've become really something other than that. So that's the first thing that these revelations show.

The other is, it's extraordinary that nobody has just stood up and said: I am sorry, I apologize. I participated in this and I ruined somebody's life and I ruined my own life, and so on. Nobody. It is incredible that we have elites that are so filled with cowardice, that they all say, well, I didn't do anything. I mean, Bill Gates says: Yes, whatever emails exist, they are not true. They don't refer to me. I didn't, in fact, have sex with children on Epstein's Island. Deepak Chopra, who made jokes saying: God is a construct. Only cute girls are real. Deepak Chopra has denied having been involved in anything. Andrew Mountbatten now was arrested for other crimes, by the way, arrested for business crimes, denies having sex with children. I mean, nobody has had the guts to stand up and say: I destroyed the life of or the lives of children, nobody. And that tells you a little bit about the absolutely gutless elite that exists in the world. I mean you know not one person has come forward and said: Yes, I accept these things happened. How is it possible that not one person is willing? We know that these are heavily redacted files, and we know there's probably lots of other stuff and whatnot, but we're living in a world where even photographs don't seem to matter. There's a photograph of Andrew Mountbatten straddling a little body. We don't know who is there and yet he denies what happened. I mean it's extraordinary. Evidence perhaps of children being killed, nobody says: Yes I did it. I participated. I'm involved. This is the collapse of a civilization. When you have really important people, people that control things that can destroy the world through war, presidents of the United States, Bill Clinton, Donald Trump and so on involved in this, you have leading commentators on television, you have people like Ehud Barak, a war criminal, all these people involved and nobody has the moral fiber to stand up and say: You know, I want to apologize to every one of those young girls and I want to take the moment to say I did it. Why can't they do that? They have no backbone, no moral fibers. And so when

you ask, what does this say about this or that? I mean, what does it say? Are we closing the book on the nature of the elites that rule the world? And by the way, this is one person, Jeffrey Epstein. There are probably a hundred of them that exist that provide this sort of facility for the elites. There's probably a German one and a French one and an Italian one and Russian one. We don't know. We just were able to find one person. Why? Because some families in Miami were outraged by what had happened to their children and one journalist of the Miami Herald was dogged enough despite criticism to keep on the story, to fight against sweetheart deals and so on. These courageous people brought this to light. But there are other people, don't imagine that you pluck out this plant and that's the only weed in the garden. The whole garden is filled with weeds. Where's the Brazilian Epstein? I mean, I'm not convinced that this is a solitary example.

ZR: It is one thing when financial executives, celebrities, royals or political elites appear in the Epstein files. It is another when a globally respected intellectual known for a principal critique of elite power is also named. And I'm referring specifically to Noam Chomsky. I myself created Activism Munich after reading his book *Manufacturing Consent* and realized that we have to stay away from corporate and government power. Now 12 years later, I was in shock when I read his names in the Epstein files. Released records reveal that Chomsky met Jeffrey Epstein multiple times after Epstein's 2008 conviction for soliciting prostitution from a minor and registering as a sex offender. Also, they indicate that Epstein assisted Chomsky with financial matters. In 2019, after Epstein's federal arrest on sex trafficking charges, it reignited public outrage. Yet Chomsky responded to Epstein's concerns about reputation backlash by devising him to ignore what he described as, quote, "hysteria", unquote. Reporting also shows that Chomskys and his wife Valeria stayed at Epstein's apartment in New York and Paris and expressed a desire about the possibility of visiting one of his Caribbean islands, though they have publicly stated that they never went and later described the association as a serious mistake. You have co-authored a few books with Noam Chomsky and are familiar with his actual legacy; how do you make sense of all of this? And how does this episode affect Chomsky's moral authority and the broader credibility of the left tradition that is principled on the critique of elite power?

VP: Well, firstly, I mean, for me personally, this was a real blow, okay? Because Noam Chomsky is not only somebody I worked with, but also I respect his work highly. I love him as a person. He had a stroke, he's unable to speak or talk and so on, and I just feel terrible about the whole situation, okay? I would prefer, in fact, that we don't talk about it because it's quite difficult. But I'll just make a few points, Zain, and then we can move on. I mean, one is that, I'm sad that he got entangled with Jeffrey Epstein. The entanglement happened partly because he worked at MIT and Jeffrey Epstein targeted academics at MIT. It's also quite sad that Epstein arrived on the scene when Mr. Chomsky was having trouble with some financial matters, and Epstein provided a solution and then drew him into his world. I mean, I feel bad about all that. It also tells you a lot about vulnerabilities. When you're vulnerable, you get drawn into things that you may later regret. And I don't know how to put this, but look, frankly, Noam's best work was a critique of US imperialism, that was his best work. And his best work is critiquing power. One of the things he used to say to me is, you're much better at

engaging with people, I'm better with structures and US imperialism; for you go out there and as a journalist talk to people and so on. I mean those are skills to read people and so on. I feel like his sense of empathy for victims of violence just doesn't come through in the communications. I mean, Mr. Epstein was arrested for soliciting sex from a minor. And Mr. Epstein isn't a person on the left that was being targeted. Soliciting sex from a minor is not a minor, it's not a small offense. It must raise your hackles. Somebody comes to me and I find out in a day or so that, well, listen, be careful about this person, they were charged with soliciting sexual – I would think twice about entangling with them. So I just feel terrible about this because Noam Chomsky is a legendary figure and whatever political differences – I'm a Marxist, he's an anarchist – whatever political difference we've had, we work very well together. And I feel terrible that he got entangled in this and that his reputation is going to be harmed. There's no doubt about that. It's going to have a great deal of – he is going to be defined partly by this. It's very sad to me. And I think it's an error of judgment. I agree with Valeria's statement in that respect when she said it was an error of judgment. It was an error of judgment, but sometimes these things happen, it's very difficult to walk away from its end. It actually suggests to people to be cautious about who you are entangling with, be very cautious with who you get entangled with. I'm not going to presume that my house is clean and that I can throw stones at others. Obviously, we are all entangled with all kinds of characters. Sometimes we don't know about them; about their own character flaws. I can tell you many stories of such entanglements that then people blame you for. It's beyond guilt by association. So I would just caution particularly younger people, be careful who you get entangled with, particularly financially. Be careful, take care of yourselves. Reputations are very fragile, and they take a lifetime to build, and they can be destroyed with one email.

ZR: Let us move to foreign policy and focus on Iran. Let me briefly recap some of the latest developments for our viewers. In January, an Iran nation-wide demonstration erupted amid worsening economic conditions and political frustration, leading to violent clashes with government security forces. The Iranian government has put the death toll at 3,117, while the Human Rights Activist News Agency based in the US cited more than 7,000 deaths. And an investigation by the Guardian suggested that that toll could be up to 30,000. The European Union followed by designating the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist organization and approved additional sanctions. On the diplomatic front, indirect talks between the United States and Iran began in Muscat beginning February and continued with a second round in Geneva on February 17. Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said both sides agreed on broad guarding principles, thus significant disagreements remain over Iran's nuclear program, ballistic missiles and its support for groups such as Hezbollah and Houthis in the region. At the same time, the United States has expanded its military presence in the Middle East, which includes two aircraft deployments, while Iran recently carried out military drills at the Strait of Hormuz. The US has made it clear that it would be wise for Iran to make a deal, but kept the military option on the table. Meanwhile, public pressure in Europe is increasing for the West to intervene militarily. Last weekend, roughly 100,000 to 125,000 people rallied in Munich following a call by Iran's exiled Crown Prince Reza Pahlavi, who has openly called for regime change and Western military intervention in the past. Given the scale of repression and human rights abuses by the Iranian government, do

you think the West should consider military intervention? And what regional consequences could it have if the West would do so?

VP: I mean, after Iraq, after Afghanistan, it's pretty clear that military force is not going to solve problems anywhere. The United States, when it bombs countries, doesn't solve problems, it creates them. So I very much hope that the United States takes its nose elsewhere; back home. Mr. Trump spends some of that treasure building up the infrastructure in the United States. I mean bombing Tehran is not going to help the Iranian people. Bringing back the so-called crown prince as the Shah of Iran is a ludicrous idea. The West has done this before. They put his father back on the throne after the coup d'etat in 1953 when they overthrew Mohammad Mossadegh. They installed this guy's father. This is not a monarchy with deep roots, by the way, these are Cossack adventurers. They don't have a place in Tehran. He's better positioned to live his life in Los Angeles. He is the king or the Shah of the Iranian exiles in Los Angeles, there's a lot of them there, former residents of Tehran.

I would say that the current government in Iran has made a lot of mistakes economically. Firstly, of course, when you have immense sanctions on a country, it distorts the country, distorts pricing, it distorts the money supply, and so on. And so the sanctions have really created lots of problems within Iran. But the government chose a person to be the finance minister, Seyed Ali Madani-Zadeh. Madani-Zadeh is a very smart mathematical economist. He won the Maths Olympiad several times. He was trained at the University of Chicago. He trained in the economics department where he got his PhD. He is now the finance minister in Iran and he's been driving an austerity program. He's been driving an austerity program to deal with price distortions of sanctions. So there are many things you can do when you are faced with sanctions. One of them is austerity for sure. That's a tool .he's using the tool, he's creating problems within Iran. So hence you got discontent and discontent then came to the streets. I mean this government needs to recognize, the Iranian government, that austerity should not be used when there's sanctions because that's precisely what those who are sanctioning you want you to do. They place economic sanctions you then have a problem of credit, external credit, getting credit and so on, you have a problems selling your principal export oil, they further sanction you, then you have money supply problem, you have price inflation, you start either printing money or there's insufficient goods in the country, price inflation, and then to deal with that, to deal with inflationary pressure, you have the government constraining its own fiscal policy, strangling the budget. That's exactly what they're doing. When you do that, you're going to get popular unrest. This popular unrest, well, the people sanctioning you, are going to show up and say, there's no democracy. Let's bomb the country to overthrow the government to liberate the people. The people on the street are not necessarily saying: Bring back the Shah of Iran, okay? What they are saying is this economic situation is intolerable, which it is. When you look at the numbers in Iran, it's not easy for people. The government needs to U-turn on its policies, okay, that's the primary thing, it needs to win back the population.

They are dealing with two problems. One is an economic crisis, which is based on the sanctions as the primary instrument to create the crisis, but then redoubled by really bad

finance ministry tactics. That's one problem, but it's solvable because Iran has access to credit from China, it has access to trade with Russia, it does access to India and Pakistan and others, Iraq and so on. It's not like Iran is isolated. It is not like Cuba. It isn't an island. It has land routes to other countries for trade, inclusive of Afghanistan into China. These are all available. So it has avenues other than austerity. That's the one problem. The second problem is the United States, a mad dog of the world, barking away, saying we're going to bomb you. We're going to kidnap the grand Ayatollah Khamenei. Interestingly, Ayatollah Khamenei, after the attack on Venezuela, went and visited the grave of Ayatollah Khomeini, his predecessor. He doesn't go there often, by the way. It sent a signal to the Iranian population because they advertised it with photographs to the press. So here's Ayatollah Khamenei at Khomeini's shrine; what is he saying to Khomeini? I'm coming to see you soon? Is that what he's saying? The Yankees are going to come and bomb us? They want to kill me? Or is he saying: Ayatollah Khomeini may give me strength, give the Iranian people strength and fortitude to stand up against the attack. I don't know what he said. We just got the pictures of him there. Yeah. So what I'm saying is there are two problems for Iran to deal with. One is the class problem of the finance ministry. I would say they need to do a U-turn. And the other is the international problem of Iran's sovereignty. If countries are not going to come out and defend Venezuela when its president is kidnapped in front of everybody, how should Iran expect to be defended by the world? That is a very narrow corridor and the Iranians are thinking about that deeply.

ZR: Let me add to what you said, US Treasury Secretary, Scott Bessent, in early February during a Senate testimony acknowledged that Washington's sanctions strategy deliberately created a dollar shortage inside Iran by restricting the foreign currency, contributing to the collapse of the rial and thereby leading to rising inflation. He described this as part of a broader maximum pressure campaign. However, when we watch the media, especially in Germany here, when I watch one of the leading news channels at prime time at 8 pm, they usually provide us with a picture of a theological structure that is suppressing its people, there's corruption and economic mismanagement. So in other words, the framing is that it's mostly due to the internal problems and the mismanage of the government and there's little to no analysis on the amount that the US can levy pressure on states like Iran. What is your opinion when we look at these protests? Is it a cultural and domestic issue or do you think that the protests are primarily driven by what you stated before such as economic issues where the US is using the power of the dollar and the sanctions to get to the people on the streets?

VP: We already know that the United States is using sanctions to create distortions. That was the first point I made. Whether Scott Bessent says it or not is irrelevant. This is a very clear thing. In the 1970s, Richard Nixon told Henry Kissinger regarding Chile: Make the economy scream. That's exactly the tool. Deny them dollar credits and then they'll have a problem in the country and so on. The question isn't what the United States does. We know they're going to do that as part of a sanctions regime. It's what the government does. What I would recommend to the Iranian government is to do a national campaign against corruption. This is very important for the morale of the population; a national campaign against corruption.

What happens in a heavily sanctioned economy is you do get all kinds of corruption impacts. A national campaign. Secondly, I would immediately propose policies to protect vulnerable households from inflation. Do a class-based protection plan. Vulnerable households will be protected immediately. Then I would try to increase non-oil exports to neighboring countries; agricultural goods, for instance, technological goods, intermediate goods should be encouraged within Iran. Iran has incredible scientific and technological capacity. They need to encourage non-oil exports to neighboring countries; construction materials for Afghanistan, the rebuilding there, various agricultural goods for the neighborhood and not processed agricultural goods that could be processed in Iran. You need to get out of the oil dependency. And Iran has an enormous capacity for that. The government needs to frame an economic policy that reduces import costs, that reduces dependence on external markets, builds the internal economy, and creates a consumer base in the country. When you protect vulnerable households, you produce new demand in the country. You've got to coordinate – I'm going to talk like a neoclassical economist for a second – but you have to, in a sense, align whatever wage growth is happening with productivity gains. That's not happening. Productivity gains are being absorbed on top. You're having greater class differentiation in the country. You've got to align it. The government has to take these positions.

Now, what I'm proposing is a socialist path. That's not the orientation of the Iranian government. The Iranian finance ministry, for instance, is a neoliberal finance ministry. But I think the only way to go in the future is by doing these kinds of things. Putting energy and resources into increasing private sector production in non-oil goods is really, really important for a country like Iran. There's enormous potential in producing both a domestic market and a regional market. And in the regional market, you don't need to trade in dollars. You could start trading in local currencies, as Iran already does with India and so on. There is a way to fight against the make the economy scream policy, that's what the imperialists do. You can't complain that, oh, my God, Scott Bessent said that. Of course, he said that. Nixon said it earlier. They keep saying it. They want to crush your economy. But the issue isn't what they are doing, because you expect them to do that, the issue is how do you respond? Why do you respond by falling into their trap by doing austerity and allowing class differentiation and not cracking down on corruption? You're falling into their trap. You see, that's the point. When I say crackdown on corruption, that is about morale, much more than that you arrest two, three people for corruption. You're not going to increase economic growth, but morale in the country will rise; the government is serious about corruption. That has to be put to the people, frankly, because this corruption issue is a virus. If you don't tackle it, it creates social dismay, and that has to be prevented.

ZR: Before we move on, I would also like to get your opinion on US-Iran negotiations. Washington has made it clear that it seeks not only to enrich Iran's uranium enrichment program but has also put on the table two new things, Iran's ballistic missile program and its regional influence through Hezbollah and the Houthis. What do you think about this negotiation position and do you think Iran would be open to compromising on them?

VP: Look, the US puts things on the table that are ridiculous. Firstly, it is already clear that

Iran's so-called Resistance Axis or Qasem Soleimani's attempt to build a second border for Iran with Hezbollah and the groups in Syria, all of that has largely been weakened. Have you recently followed major attacks by the government of Yemen against anybody? No, it's largely quiet. Why put that on the table? That is a point of humiliation. Why put on the table this issue? The United States assassinated Qasem Soleimani in Baghdad airport and then the Israelis and the United States, assassinated Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah in Beirut. That issue should not be on the table. Iran has already faced a significant strategic withdrawal, not a defeat perhaps, but at least a setback. This is certainly a setback for Iran. Why put it on the table? It's a classic American technique of trying to humiliate your adversary. That's unnecessary.

The other point is also unnecessary. Iran has said repeatedly that we don't have a nuclear weapons program. By the way, I am of two minds about this. I would say to the Iranians after recent events, you might want to just test a bomb and get it done with because that will provide you with a shield like North Korea has. You're extremely vulnerable. Look at what happened to Libya, gave up their nuclear program and then the state is destroyed. Look at the situation of the Libyan people today. I'm totally against nuclear weapons; totally, 100% against nuclear weapons, against their use, against their existence in the world. But I'm also against the situation that happened in Libya, the kind of destruction of life for people. So I would say: Hey, listen, if it's going to give you a shield, it's gonna give you a shield. I'm against it, but everybody else has it. But the Iranians still are not interested. Isn't that sufficient evidence that Iran has no interest in this? Why put that on the table? Sometimes I don't get it. The Americans seek humiliation in negotiations. They don't seek a deal. Do you understand? They are not coming to the table in good faith. They are coming to that table in bad faith.

ZR: Let us turn to Europe and look at the war theater in Ukraine. In late January and early February, US broker talks between Ukraine and Russia were first held in Abu Dhabi and more recently in Geneva. Aside from agreeing on prisoner exchange, both rounds ended without any breakthrough on core issues. Kiev remains firm that it will not make any territorial concessions without robust security guarantees from its Western partners. Nevertheless, Washington described the discussions as constructive and remains publicly optimistic for future negotiations. On the battlefield, Western media, citing the Institute for the Study of War, reported that Ukraine forces recently recaptured around 200 square kilometers in parts of the Zaporizhzhia sector, where Russian forces continued gradual advances in eastern areas, particularly around Donetsk. What in your view is the significance of Ukraine's recent territorial gains? And do these developments strengthen the case that the West needs to now step up its military support for Ukraine?

VP: Look, this is a very strange situation. It's pretty clear that on the ground, there are some developments that are beginning to match the negotiating reality. In the sense that I think it's pretty clear on the ground that Russia has no interest in taking Kiev or taking Odessa or anything like that, that Russian interest is being met on the ground. And I think Russia should be ready to settle the situation. I don't understand what's holding the Russians

back. They seem to be dithering at the table. They should be ready to make a deal, because on the ground, they have made the gains they wanted to make; the Donbas is now within the domain of Russia, they have secured a land bridge to Crimea. Maybe they'll give up parts of the land bridge to Crimea in exchange for other guarantees. That's a negotiation issue. But it looks like the ground reality has already settled matters for the negotiators. I don't think any further gains are going to be made by anybody on the ground towards a changed negotiating reality, okay? I don't know what the Ukrainian government is seeking, are they seriously thinking that they are going to get the Donbass and Crimea back into Ukraine. Greater losses have been negotiated out by countries and this is not a major loss because Crimea has been out of Ukrainian hands for a very long time and the Donbas region has been a contested territory of Russian speakers who have not liked the tendency in Kiev to move to a Ukrainian nationalism. So I don't see what the Ukrainians are seeking. The Europeans are basically hallucinogenic. Because they somehow believe that their principal enemy is Russia and that if they don't stop Russia or roll back Russia to the borders before 2020 or something like that, or 2014 really, then Russian tanks will be rolling through Germany and so on – it's a fantasy. Russia said it many times, it is uninterested in the conquest of Europe this is not a game of Risk. They are dealing with what they think of as a security issue, not an ambition to colonize all of Europe. So Europeans are hallucinogenic. I don't think they are clear about reality. I don't understand them when I hear them speak. I just don't get it. I mean, on the other side of it, Zain, when Marco Rubio praised colonialism, I saw him receive a standing ovation in Munich. I saw them receive a standing ovation. He was not criticized the way J.D. Vance was criticized. When Mr. Vance, US Vice President, criticised Europe for constraining democracy, European leaders said: No, no, that's ridiculous. We are completely democratic, but you don't understand the far right. It's horrible. But we are completely democratic. They were outraged by J.D. Vance's comments criticizing Europe. Marco Rubio rolls in and he says: We used to be great from the age of Columbus all the way through 1945. We were great. That was the age of Europe, the age of Columbus and so on. And then we sort of gave up the ghost. We've got to get back to the age of Columbus, and he got a standing ovation. It tells you a little bit about the mentality of the European leaders. Every single person in that room seemed to have stood up. When I looked at the video, a few people, some people of African descent and others remained sitting because I think they understood immediately, this is outrageous. But all the men in suits were out there, Ursula Von der Leyen was out there clapping, applauding, let's return to the age of colonialism, let us return to the age colonialism.

ZR: Talking about the Munich Security Conference, let us look at the broader geopolitical picture. The Munich Security Conference, as you mentioned, recently concluded and much of its coverage framed it as a marker and change in global order. Munich Security Council Chairman Christoph Heusgen said, quote, "Europe's hour has come", unquote, urging Europe to take greater responsibility for its own security. German Chancellor Friedrich Merz rejected protectionism and emphasized economic openness, stating, quote, "We do not believe in terrorism and protectionism, but in free trade", unquote. He also warned that in an era of great power reviveries, the United States is, quote, "not powerful enough to go at it alone", unquote. Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi criticized the framing as systematic reviveries, warning that continued exaggeration or hype of this narrative would harm security relations.

And US Secretary of State Marco Rubio reaffirmed the transatlantic alliance, saying, quote, "It is our preference to do it together with you", unquote, but also signaled the United States is prepared to act independently if Europe does not align. And he pointed out two major political differences. Number one, climate policy, migration and economic strategy. Vijay, how do you interpret this shift in the West where the language of rupture and diverging direction is becoming more explicit and do you think Europe can realistically move towards more independence if it continues its posture towards Russia and China?

VP: Look, Mark Carney made the comments that he made as the Prime Minister of Canada at Davos. He had a very good meeting with the Chinese, they talked trade and whatnot. Okay, that was that. But then some months later, I just mentioned, Marco Rubio comes to Munich and everybody applauds him saying we are great pals and we need to become conquistadors again. This talk about rupture is extremely ideological. It's not real. Why? Firstly, the United States continues to be the military overlord of Europe and of the world and Europe is security tied to the United States through NATO. There can be no rupture unless NATO collapses and NATO is not collapsing. Mark Rutte is gonna make this his life's mission. As the perennial useless Prime Minister of the Netherlands, his life mission is going to be to strengthen NATO. So to talk about a rupture without disbanding NATO is ludicrous. It's completely ideological. It has no material reality to it. There is no rupture. European countries remain yoked to the United States through NATO and through the G7. I'm not seeing any evidence of rupture. What has been happening for the last 20 years since the credit crisis of 2007 when the West entered a third great depression is that Western countries have figured out that they need Asian productivity much more than they need anything else; that without growth rates in Asia, the very minor growth rates, 1%, 1.5% in the West would be negative. It's actually the Asian possibility. It is Western corporations based in Asia that are producing the kind of productivity gains and growth rates that Europe is living on. Germany would collapse if Germany cut ties with China. So China is actually pulling Germany along economically, frankly. And so to think of a rupture at an ideological level around things like Greenland is not the place to see it. What we need to look at is the long term. What happens in the long-term, if the US economy is not able to revive and if European economies are not able to revive their own engine, if their engines remain stalled and they remain [inaudible] to the engines of growth in Asia, then what happens to these countries? Then what happens to their ideas of greatness? That's going to take some time. These conquistadors have not yet registered that their horses are all dead and they are walking now from wherever, Mexico City to Peru and maybe they will all die of heat exhaustion in their giant metal plates because they don't have a horse to carry them.

ZR: Let me conclude with one more broader question about international order. In January, President Donald Trump formally launched the Board of Peace at the World Economic Forum in Davos as part of a Gaza post-ceasefire framework. By February, the White House announced that participating countries had pledged more than \$5 billion for Gaza reconstruction and humanitarian assistance. And today, as we speak, President Trump presided over the inaugural Board of Peace meeting in Washington, attended by representatives from more than 40 countries with discussions that include commitments and

contributions to a proposed international stabilization force. At the same time, the United Nations is facing a severe financial crisis. Secretary-General António Guterres recently warned of an imminent financial collapse due to unpaid member contributions, and the biggest one is the United States, which currently owes the UN approximately \$4.5 billion. As I understand, you've long advocated for the United Nations and international law. A system built on cooperation and development. And Mark Twain once said, I looked this up: "History doesn't repeat itself, but it often rhymes". As a historian, if you draw historical comparisons, what era do we find ourselves in today, looking at the collapse of this international order? And do you see any prospects for the change, of course, into a more positive world?

VP: I mean, you're asking a question, I'm not a soothsayer, you know, I can't look ahead very clearly. I don't also think there are historical parallels because you know the world is different now. This is not the collapse of the League of Nations, for instance, which was created prematurely before the European countries had sorted out their internal problems. The First World War and the Second World War are really one related long internal battle within Europe to settle the colonial question. And the League of Nations was built in between. It was unfortunate that it was built then and it collapsed and people then thought, Oh, international institutions are useless. But fortunately for us, in the 1940s, an appetite to try again was there and the UN was created. The Charter of the UN is beautiful. I recommend people reading it before they throw mud at the UN as an institution. The UN suffers because the world order suffers. It's a mirror of the world orders. There's nothing particularly bad about the UN. As long as the world order is in crisis, the UN will have a crisis. So, I don't put this at the UN's feet. I think the UN hasn't done everything it could do. That's partly because the funding for the UN comes largely from Western states. So they, in a sense, constrain the ability of the UN to act politically. You're saying the largest scoff law in funding is the United States this constrains them from acting. The UN for instance should have raised alarms about this Board of Peace. It's a completely ridiculous idea. Okay, the UN security council went for it because they were afraid of an even worse option; which is that the United States might drop a nuclear bomb on Gaza or something... I mean they would do it but they won't do it because it's so close to Israel. That's what protects the Palestinians from that kind of bomb. But they virtually experienced an atom bomb every month during the high point of the genocide. So. what can the UN do? The issue is the balance of forces in the world has to change. Countries like China, India, and so on need to be much more confident and self-reliant and advance their own agenda, their own concepts. I was speaking to somebody, a Chinese academic recently, and I said: Why do political scientists in China adopt the US political science epistemology or system of knowledge of realism and idealism? Why aren't we creating our own systems of knowledge to understand the world order? Because both, idealism and realism, come from the underlying assumption that one must dominate the world. Why should there be a country dominating the world? Why can't we live in peace and harmony? Why can't we seek peace and harmony? That's really what we want. So why are we using their concepts? Maybe we should think about harmonious civilizations and things like that.

ZR: Vijay Prashad, author and historian. Once again, it was a pleasure talking to you. Thank you for your time and insights.

VP: Thanks a lot, Zain.

ZR: And thank you for tuning in today. If you like the journalism that we undertook in this video and would like to follow us going forward, then make sure to click on the subscribe button below. And don't forget to donate. We don't take any money from corporations or governments and don't even allow advertisement, all with the goal of providing you with information that is free from any external influence. You will find the links to all of our donation platforms in the description of this video below. I thank you all for your support and for tuning in. I'm your host, Zain Raza. See you next time!

END

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