



## Behind the Headlines: Iran, Ukraine & Russia | Dimitri Lascaris

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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. Today I'll be talking to independent journalist and lawyer Dimitri Lascaris on a number of geopolitical issues. As a lawyer, Dimitri specializes in class actions, human rights and international law and as a journalist, he is the founder of the YouTube channel called Reason2Resist. Before we begin this interview, I would like to remind all of our viewers to subscribe to our YouTube channel as well as like, share and comment on this video as it boosts our YouTube algorithms and helps us reach a wider audience. Also join our alternative channels on Rumble and Telegram as YouTube is owned by Google and Google has a close partnership with the United States national security apparatus as well a long history of shadow banning and censoring content of independent and critical media such as ours. Even though we cannot prove it, over the last few months, we think we've been shadowbanned, as in the month of April or May, we were reaching millions of people worldwide and won over 7,000 subscribers, and those numbers have halved over the last weeks. Therefore, we are not asking you to leave YouTube, but simply join these channels as a precautionary measure, as if we get ever shadowbann and censored, then we won't be able to reach you with an announcement, let alone with our information. Dimitri Lascaris, welcome back to our show.

**Dimitri Lascaris (DL):** Hi Zain, always good to talk to you.

**ZR:** First of all, I want to say that your prediction last year was remarkably on point when it came to Iran. All of 2025 on your channel, you repeatedly asserted that the Trump administration's real strategic focus was a war with Iran and that its apparent push for peace in Ukraine was really about freeing up capacity for this, which turned out to be the case. Therefore, it would be really interesting to understand your perspective now relating to the current situation that involves the so-called agreement. The US and Iran recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding, creating a 60-day negotiating period. It includes ending the

war, lifting the mutual blockade, reopening the Strait of Hormuz, beginning sanctions-relief discussions, addressing Iranian frozen assets, restarting negotiations over Iran's nuclear program, and continuing the parallel war in Lebanon. It also includes a proposed \$300 billion reconstruction development fund for Iran, as well as, as I've mentioned, unfreezing of assets. But the timing and conditions remain disputed on these issues. The United States has issued temporary waivers for Iranian oil sales as the negotiation process begins. The Trump administration and figures such as JD Vance have presented this as a major success. The war has ended, the Strait of Hormuz is reopening, and the Middle East now can move towards peace and prosperity. Yet, this trade remains insecure as of today, and Israel is committed to staying in southern Lebanon despite Lebanon being part of the agreement. First, how do you assess the overall outcome of the war? And secondly, do you think the agreement will hold and Trump is actually interested in long-term peace?

**DL:** Before I answer your questions, which are very important questions, I just want to say a word about your preamble, okay? What I was saying all of last year was simply based upon what the US government was saying publicly. And specifically, I'm referring here to a speech that US Secretary of War Pete Hegseth gave to representatives of NATO countries, I believe it was February of 2025, a few weeks after Trump returned to the White House, in which he said: We need to have a division of labor. You, the Europeans, are going to assume responsibility for funding the Ukraine war, and we are going to take our resources, which are not infinite, and devote them to other areas. He didn't specifically mention Iran, but that turned out to be one of them, and he did specifically mention China. So I was simply repeating what the US government was publicly telling the Europeans to do at the time. And the Europeans sadly, you know, I am a citizen of a European country, Zain, and it pains me to say this, but they dutifully complied. They said, yes, sir. They immediately announced they were gonna increase their military spending to 5% of GDP and assume the responsibility for this disastrous proxy war. Now, with respect to your questions, let me simply cite a poll that was just done inside Israel. The poll done by Hebrew University asked Israelis who the winner was. A stunning, astonishing, 92% of Israelis, I repeat, 92%, said that Iran had emerged as the winner. This is not a society that is prone to defeatism. The Israeli public tends to believe strongly in their military superiority. I don't remember a time in the entire history of Israel – I'm old enough to have lived through most of that history – where the Israeli public was overwhelmingly of the view that they had lost a major war, but that is their view and they were quite right.

The problem is that the war is not over. And this goes to your second question about the MOU. The MOU is nothing but a piece of toilet paper in my opinion. My apologies for being crude about this, but what I believe that the United States has done is that it has dangled some big juicy carrots in front of the Iranian government, like a \$300 billion reconstruction fund, the lifting of sanctions, the unfreezing of all Iran's assets, and maybe even allowing Iran to charge fees in the Strait of Hormuz, although that's far from clear, in exchange for the opening up of the Strait of Hormuz at a moment when the United States was about to plunge into an oil crisis. That's what happened. And Trump even admitted this himself. He said that we're just weeks away from a full-blown oil crisis in the United States. And somehow, I don't

know how, he managed to engineer the Iranian government on his birthday, entering into this MOU, agreeing to open up the Strait of Hormuz, and giving him the biggest birthday present imaginable. Another poll I just want to mention that's very relevant to your questions is that CBS News just did a poll on US attitudes towards the war on Iran 78% of the respondents said they wanted the war to end. And this was true even though 69% said they believed that Iran's nuclear program had not been destroyed. So Trump was skating on very thin ice politically. He was about to get smashed, his Republicans in the midterms, and he managed to gain an 11th hour reprieve from an economic catastrophe. That doesn't mean he's out of the woods. But I believe what he basically did was temporarily exchange a lifting of the blockade for an opening of the Strait of Hormuz and that once the midterms are over, all bets are off about what Trump is going to do then.

**ZR:** I want to talk to you about a perception or reaction, to be more accurate, that is widely heard in the West and especially German media when it comes to Iran. For example, on June 18, Germany's largest public broadcaster, the Tagesschau, reported in its 8 p.m. news segment, which is watched by millions of Germans across the nation, on the signing of the US-Iran Memorandum of Understanding in Versailles by Trump. The report concluded with a statement that there's a lot of disappointment and anger in Iran, because even though the war to change the Iranian regime started by Trump had failed, the regime is still in power and continues to suppress, torture, and arrest its own people. More generally, the figure of 30,000 to 40,000 people allegedly killed during the January protests is often repeated in political and media discourse. Critics are saying that unfreezing Iranian assets, allowing oil exports, and moving towards some form of normalization, even though you don't agree with that, would still empower a regime accused of killing its own people. What do you make of this argument?

**DL:** Who are the Germans to criticize anybody for human rights violations? The German government has been arming Israel to the teeth as it has been murdering Palestinian children with gleeful impunity. And if you don't believe me, just read the latest report from the UN High Commission for Human Rights, which found that Israel was literally mass murdering children, Palestinian children. The stories that they recounted based upon eyewitness testimonies and other credible medical evidence are absolutely horrific. Germany's elite has, in complete disregard of German public opinion – the polls show that most Germans are opposed to Israel's crimes – but the German elite and the media elite have been justifying these monstrosities. For them to point the finger at anybody is really just too much to stomach, Zain. Now let's just talk about what's going on in the ground in Iran. I was actually there. I was there from March 20th to March 31st. I never encountered a German corporate journalist when I was down there. There was nobody from Spiegel or Deutsche Welle or the German state broadcaster, not a single one. There were other foreign journalists there, but no German ones. And what I saw in every city that I went to, and I went to seven cities in eleven days, were people protesting over and over and over again in support of the Iranian government and in opposition to the Israeli US war of aggression on the country; that's what I saw. So I'm not going to tell you that there is no opposition within Iranian society to the Iranian government. There is, there is opposition. I'm not going to tell you that the Iranian

government hasn't committed human rights violations. I believe it has, but I believe that those human rights violations have been grotesquely exaggerated. For example, when I was in Iran both in March and in May of last year, I saw hundreds of women every time I went out into public, walking in the streets without a hijab and nobody was bothering them. I saw this in every single of the seven cities that I visited when I was in Iran in March. Nobody bothered them and yet we're being told by the Western corporate media that if a woman dares to go out in public without a head covering she's going to be beaten, imprisoned, tortured or worse. This is a lie, and I think that the reality here is that Iran is a complex society where there is a very substantial degree of support for the government, and there is also a substantial degree of opposition. But what happened when these maniacs, these genocidal maniacs attacked Iran was that they united the Iranian people. That's what I saw. I saw a tremendous amount of unity, and this is backfired spectacularly. Even to the point that 92% of Israelis say that Iran won the war.

**ZR:** When it came to the unfreezing of Iranian assets, Washington reassured the public that the money would be used for humanitarian purposes such as food and medicine, and not for what they call funding terrorism. I want to focus on the word terrorism, which German mainstream media adopts and recycles uncritically from the establishment political figures and institutions, especially when it comes to Iran's support for regional allies such as Hezbollah. For example, on June 21st, the Tagesschau embedded a reporter with the Israeli military in southern Lebanon for its 8 p.m. prime time news segment. The report showed an extensive tunnel system in southern Lebanon containing explosives and drones. An IDF spokesperson stated in the report that these drones are used against Israeli civilians and soldiers and have a range of up to 200 km. The overall impression created by this report is that Hezbollah is essentially a rogue, Iranian-backed militia with no local routes or support, using Lebanese civilian areas as a cover and launching rockets and drones indiscriminately at Israel. From this perspective, Israel has the right, and perhaps even an obligation, to defend itself against a rogue Islamist entity such as Hezbollah, therefore justifying its occupation and assault in Lebanon. How accurate is this narrative and impression? Does it reflect the reality of Hezbollah's role in Lebanon for someone like you who has been on the ground there and talked to people and witnessed the carnage firsthand?

**DL:** Yes, I've been there six times since Israel's genocidal rampage began in October of 2023. Every single time I went to South Lebanon, I have documented Israel's attacks on hospitals, its destruction of ambulances, its mass murder of emergency workers in South Lebanon, its destruction of mosques, its complete leveling of entire villages like Kfarkela. I did an extensive report from Kfarkela, which is just a couple of kilometers from the border of occupied Palestine. All you have to do is look at my reports and the reports of others who've gone on the ground. It's just not just me. A great many other journalists have been there. They've risked their lives to do that. They are predominantly not from the Western world. And in fact, again, I'm gonna repeat this, in all my travels across Lebanon since October, 2023, I did not encounter a single German journalist, not one. So what are these people talking about at the end of the day? Did they notice that the Israeli government itself says that the number of civilians that have been killed in Israel – this is the Israeli Government, okay?

– since March 2nd, when Hezbollah re-entered this war after 15 or 16 months of daily violations of the November 2024 ceasefire by Israel, the number of civilians they say that were killed were four. Four. And two of them were contractors. They were actually civilian contractors who had gone into South Lebanon and were used to destroy civilian infrastructure. But let's assume they're civilians and they're not really military personnel. That's four. They have killed, the Israelis, thousands, thousands of Lebanese civilians since October, 2023. The number is now over 3,000. The total dead is over 4,000, who knows exactly what the actual count, and this doesn't include the people who have been displaced from their homes, who have no homes to go back to, this doesn't include the children who have been orphaned, the children have been permanently disabled, the persons who have permanently disabled. So how can you look at the statistics which Israel itself is providing and characterize Hezbollah as the terrorist organization while claiming that Israel is defending itself from terrorism? This is outrageous. Shame on the German media and the Western corporate media, all of them, I don't mean to pick on Germany, this is true of the Canadian corporate media, the Greek corporate media, the American corporate media, shame on them for ignoring the bald reality that Israel and the United States have murdered vastly more civilians than all of the resistance groups in West Asia put together, just based on independent statistics. So let's dispense with this notion right now that Israel and the United States are defending themselves from terrorists. They are the terrorists bar none, par excellence, the ultimate perpetrators of terrorism in this world today. There's nobody who's even in the same league as Israel and the United States.

**ZR:** I want to turn to an issue that is largely left out in the German corporate media, the role and extent and influence of the pro-Israel and Zionist lobby in shaping US foreign policy, especially in the Middle East. Many journalists here in Germany appear reluctant to analyze this issue openly because of fears of being accused of anti-Semitism, as it might portray it as a Jewish Kabbal behind the scenes and sort of a similar language that we saw during the Second World during the reign of Hitler. So many journalists refrain from even having something closely like an analysis of the Zionists or the pro-Israeli lobby. One view, associated with scholars such as Professor John Mearsheimer and Professor Stephen Walt, argues that the Israeli lobby has a major influence over US foreign policy and can push Washington in directions that harm US national interests. Another view historically associated with long-time critique and now defamed professor such as Noam Chomsky, argues otherwise that Israel has long functioned as a strategic asset and projects US influence in the region. Ironically, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz put this very bluntly in a 2025 interview with ZDF, one of Germany's largest public service broadcasters, when he said that Israel is doing, quote, "the dirty work for all of us", unquote, in relation to Iran. First, is analysing Israel's influence on Western foreign policy inherently antisemitic in your view? And secondly, is US foreign policy captured or distorted by the pro-Zionist Israel lobby or is it the other way around, that the US is using Israel as an instrument to project power?

**DL:** Well, I'm absolutely firmly in the camp of Noam Chomsky on this one. With all due respect to Professor Mearsheimer and Professor Walt, I find their thesis to be completely devoid of credibility for one simple reason. And that is, as Donald Trump loves to say, in the

US-Israeli relationship, the United States holds all the cards. Israel could not survive a single day without massive economic, military and political and legal support. I mean, let's just look at how extensive it is. It's not just that over the course of this genocide, the US has provided two-thirds of the munitions to Israel, which is what JD Vance said in a press conference about ten days ago, it's just not that, it's also the fact that they provide economic aid to Israel through free trade agreements and direct economic grants and they are so determined to protect their proxy in West Asia, the Americans, that they have even sanctioned judges of the International Criminal Court, who finally had the spine to indict two Israeli war criminals, Benjamin Netanyahu and Yoav Gallant, the former defense minister. And of course there's the rhetorical support, constantly demonizing and threatening people who contemplate holding Israel accountable, like the Spanish government. The Spanish government has been, I guess, an honorable exception to the European rule, and has been criticizing Israel strongly for its genocidal rampage. Trump has been threatening the Spanish government. So in every conceivable way, Israel is protected and coddled by the US government and needs existentially that support. When you are in a relationship of existential dependence on a third party, you are not in control. That's just obvious. It's obvious. The United States is the boss and Israel has to comply. Then that doesn't mean that they don't have differences of opinion. They might disagree on some things and there may be times when they get into debates, the leadership of the United States and Israel, and maybe once in a while the Israeli leadership manages to persuade American military and political leaders that they should do something that they weren't inclined to do, but the final decision rests with Washington. It always has. And you may say: Well, why does Washington? Why does Washington want to do this? Why does Washington want Israel to do what it's doing?

Very simple. As Professor Chomsky pointed out, in the aftermath of the Second World War, American military planners identified West Asia and its resources as a, these are the words they used, a stupendous source of strategic power and the greatest material prize in human history. Why? Not just because of the oil and gas, but there are plentiful other key commodities and it is the nexus between Africa, Asia, and Europe, and there are two extremely important maritime choke points, the Bab el-Mandeb Strait and the Strait of Hormuz in this region. You control that region, you have a tremendous amount of power, and as the West's power has declined relative to the power of China and Russia, the West has become increasingly determined to exercise undisputed control over this strategically vital part of the world. Israel is there to destroy any and all resistance to Western hegemony. That is the job that the Western governments have assigned to it. And what they love to do when Israel's crimes become too much to stomach is they say: Well, we don't like it, they may even criticize Israel rhetorically, and they'll say something like Israel lives in a very tough neighborhood, they're really bad actors, they have to do some nasty things sometimes, we don't feel comfortable with it, but who are we to tell this sovereign state that they can't take the necessary measures to protect themselves from another holocaust. That's the line. They use this myth that Israel is sovereign and independent of the West in order to place a distance between themselves and Israel's crimes. And we have been subjected to this absurd Kabuki theater for the entire existence of Israel. It's time for us to stop talking about Israel controlling Western policy, foreign policy, and to understand that Israel is a proxy of the West and does

precisely what Western governments want to do. Which leads us, Zain, to the horrifying conclusion that our governments are the ones who are primarily responsible for the mass murder of Palestinian children. They are responsible. The first people that the ICC should have indicted, not Netanyahu and Gallant. They should have indicted Donald Trump, they should have indicted Olaf Scholz and Annalena Baerbock and Macron and Rishi Sunak and Starmer, but they all got a free pass. That is a red line that not even the ICC is prepared to transgress. That's the reality in which we live as citizens of the West.

**ZR:** Right now we have this sort of discussion and peace agreement or this framework for a Memorandum of Understanding going on. I know your view is that it's toilet paper, but even if it's just toilet paper, Israel is having a hard time digesting this toilet paper. So it has committed itself to staying in southern Lebanon and we can expect it to continue undermining whatever comes out of this agreement. So what do you think would happen going forward? Are we seeing a split between US national interests and Israeli national interests? Because on one hand, Trump is having the elections coming up, the midterm elections, and his votes depend on low oil prices, on the other hand, we have another election coming up, and you've already mentioned that Israel's public is craving another war and wants Netanyahu to be the strong man in the region. And we've heard reports about Netanyahu and Trump having some sort of conflict over and over again. Do you think this could mean a split between these two? How do you see this entire theater playing out?

**DL:** First of all, I want to be clear, I don't want to be unfair to our brothers and sisters in Iran. I don't think it's just the MOU that's toilet paper. I think any ceasefire agreement that is signed with the United States is toilet paper, you cannot trust these people. They are agreement-incapable. They are genocidal mass murderers. And look, there may be a good justification for signing that piece of toilet paper. It may be that the Iranians needed to get the blockade lifted. They really needed money from oil sales and in order for them to do that, they had to open up the Strait of Hormuz. So there may be an economic justification for this, but nobody should have any illusions about whether the United States is gonna comply with that thing. It's already violating it and it will not deliver the major benefits to Iran that are required by the MOU, okay? Now let's talk about what's actually happening between the United States and Israel. There is a conflict in my view, but the conflict is about political ambition, which is to say this: the United States electorate, as I mentioned, 78% want the war to come to an end. Donald Trump is heading into midterms. So he's got to put a stop to this until the midterms happen, if he doesn't want to commit political suicide. On the other hand, Israelis are furious that the war has ended. They believe that they have been defeated. They cannot stomach this and Netanyahu is heading into an election. So his personal political fate depends upon continuing the war and being able to say that he has won it in some sense. So the personal political ambitions of Donald Trump and Netanyahu conflict at this particular moment. That doesn't mean their overall strategic goals are different. It just means in the near term they are confronting two dramatically different political realities. Trump needs to pretend the war is over and Netanyahu needs to ensure that Israelis believe the war is continuing and that they're on the path to victory. And in this fight, Trump is going to get his way. Why? Because the United States government holds all the cards. At the end of the day,

somehow, some way, Netanyahu who going to have to restrain his genocidal military long enough for Trump to try to survive these midterms, and it might come sooner than that, but once the midterms are over, then you're going to see, in my opinion, a convergence of the efforts and the policies of the US and Israel again. And they're going on the war path again. Not to say they're completely off it yet, but obviously there has been a major diminution in the level of violence. That is temporary in my view, and the disagreement between them is just about timing. That's all it is. And I think at the end of the day, because Trump is going to win this fight and Netanyahu is not going to be able to return to a hot war before the elections in Israel, probably he won't be able to pull that off. I think Netanyahu is finished, politically he's done. Donald Trump may survive, but Netanyahu is done.

**ZR:** I want to pick up on the report you mentioned for our viewers. On June 23, 2026, the UN Human Rights Council's Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and Israel released a renewed report. Its latest findings state that Israel deliberately target Palestinian children and includes that this has resulted in genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes in Gaza, as well as war crimes in the West Bank. The Commission documents the deliberate killing and maiming of children, severe physical and psychological harm, starvation, deprivation of essentials, and attacks on schools and medical facilities. As far as my research is concerned, I looked through the Tagesschau website its Gaza and genocide coverage and broader search results for this specific report, but I was unable to find anything. I would be happy if I can be proven wrong. What I can say for sure is that I've not even seen it aired on its primetime 8 p.m. broadcast, which is watched by millions of people every day throughout Germany, and Germany and its media pride itself on upholding international law. When the ICC issued war crimes against Putin for what it calls abducting children from a war zone in eastern Ukraine, we saw a huge coverage, and I think rightfully so, by the media in Germany, as well as a political establishment making this a huge issue that sees Putin as a war criminal; he abducted and took away Ukrainian children and moved them into Russia. However, in this case, we're not seeing abduction. We're seeing genocide, even rape, physical and psychological harm and starvation. Can you talk about these double standards and how one can make sense of them? Shouldn't the West and the media be approaching? What is the real agenda behind these double standards in your view?

**DL:** Well, let's talk about this report in some more horrifying detail. I'm reading here from a summary of the report by a Jewish academic, Shaiel Ben-Ephraim, who expressed absolute horror at what he read in the report. I'm just going to give you a couple of examples. A ten-day-old baby in Nuseirat Camp in Gaza on April 12, 2024 was shot in the head by a quadcopter-mounted rifle while being breast-fed inside a tent. I repeat, his mother was breastfeeding him, this ten-day-old baby, and a quadcopter shot him in the head. A 14-year-old was killed with fragmenting pellets in August 2024, cube-shaped pellets that fragmented internally, like cluster munitions, destroying multiple organs. The report flags the munition itself as a possible war crime. And I'll give you one third example. There are many here. I recommend that you read the report in detail. And if you can't do that, take a look at Shaiel Ben-Ephraim's post on X. A third example, Layla Mohammad Al-Khatib, 25 January,

2025, two years old, shot in the back of the head during dinner at home. Four bullets fired through the living room window. Youngest West Bank child killed in the reporting period. The Israeli human rights group, B'tselem, found the only man in the building was her grandfather contradicting the wanted terrorist claim.

Now I ask you, Zain, if there was evidence that Russia had engaged in this behavior, that it shot a baby in the head with a quadcopter as his mother was breastfeeding him, would there be any hesitation on the part of the Western corporate media to blare this across its headlines day after day after day and accuse Vladimir Putin of being a Nazi?! And yet we needed to rely upon the UNCommission of Inquiry to tell us this horror, this Nazi horror; that's precisely what it is. Why is it that there is this double standard? I'll tell you why. Because the corporate media in the West are owned and controlled by billionaires and billionaires want to control the damn world. It's as simple as that. And they are prepared to commit any crimes necessary in order to achieve that goal. And as I've already suggested, the utter domination of West Asia is key to that objective, especially in an era in which China and Russia and Iran are rising in terms of their economic and military power. So they have assigned Israel to carry out these monstrosities in order to consolidate their control and prevent further decline in their global power. It is the oligarchy, most of whose members are not Jewish, who are the true enemies of humanity. That's who they are. They don't give a damn about human rights violations in Ukraine. They couldn't care less. This is all an attempt to simply build public support in the West for this insane increase to military spending, 5% of GDP, which is gonna bankrupt Europe, is going to result in the evisceration of our social programs, the rapid degradation in our quality of life, something that they would love to see, so that they can effectively remain at the apex of human power in the world. That's what this is all about.

**ZR:** Talking about the Ukraine war, let's look at that now and let me summarize some of the developments that have happened over the last few weeks. Russia has continued large-scale missile and drone attacks on Ukrainian cities over the summer, while Ukraine has increasingly focused on long-range drone strikes against oil refineries, fuel depots, military logistics and industrial sites in Crimea, striking deeper and deeper into Russian territory. Recently, for example, Ukraine carried out attacks near Moscow, just 15 kilometers from the Kremlin, disrupting flights and targeting energy and industrial infrastructure. Russia still controls one-fifth of the Ukrainian territory and based on the Institute for the Study of War mapping, Russia has made a net gain of around 3,700 square km over the last 12 months, from June 2025 to June 2026. At the same time, the Institute reports, however, that Ukraine forces had liberated more territory than Russia forces seized across April and May of 2026. German media increasingly portrayed Ukraine as emerging in a stronger position. It has highlighted Ukraine's drone-warfare successes and the first €3.2 billion tranche of the EU's €90 billion loan package, paid out this week at the Ukraine Recovery Conference in Poland. Tagesschau, which I've mentioned many times in his interview, for example, framed the G7 meetings as a possible change of course in Washington. It presented Ukraine as now being firmly in the lead and suggested that European leaders had successfully leveraged Trump's need for a political success after the Iran War to secure greater support for Ukraine. How do you assess this recent turn being portrayed in German media? And has the European Union

successfully taken over the burden from the US and put Ukraine in a stronger strategic position against Russia?

**DL:** Well, I never attach much credence to what the Institute for the Study of War has to say because the Institute of the Study of War is funded by merchants of death and is led by the most notorious neocons in the United States. People like Robert Kagan, I think Victoria Nuland is on the board of the Institute For the Study Of War. But in any case, it is an incredible source of information. It is true, I think it is true that the pace of Russian advances have slowed significantly this year; but they're still advancing. And so for example, they have essentially captured the fortress city of Kostyantynivka. A few months ago, they completely captured the fortress of Pokrovsk. They captured a few months before that, the fortress in eastern Ukraine of Sivers'k. They are closing in now. They're very close, within a few kilometers of Sloviansk and Kramatorsk, which are the last two significant cities in Ukrainian hands in the Donetsk region. Show me one fortress city that the Ukrainians have captured in the last three years. And in addition, although they did make a lot of headway into Kursk, they were completely expelled from the Kursk region at great cost to the Ukrainian military. And now the Russians are closing in. They have not only retaken all of Kursk, but they have taken a substantial part of the Sumy region and are closing-in on the city of Sumy. Those are the facts. It's a grind. It is unquestionably taking place slowly. And that's, I think, largely due to the drone capabilities of the Ukrainian Military and the fact that the Ukrainian military is very capable, no question about it, and a lot of the soldiers have shown incredible courage. It's admirable. But ultimately, the Russians are advancing. The tide has not turned. What has changed, Zain, is that Ukraine's capacity to inflict damage on infrastructure, sometimes it's civilian in nature, in Russia itself has improved. That's true. It's not nearly at the same level of Russia's capacity to inflict damage on Ukrainian infrastructure. But the Ukrainians have gotten better because of massive investments by Europe and Ukrainian ingenuity on inflicting damage on Russia.

And the question we have to ask ourselves is, where ultimately is that going to lead? Do we actually think that the Russians are going to surrender? I mean, you have to be delusional to think the Russians are going to surrender. They're not going to surrender. Eventually what they're going to do – I made this prediction on my own program two months ago, and I stand by it I hope I'm wrong, I really do – but my prediction two months ago and I made it with a high level of confidence is that before the end of this year the Russian military is going to strike a European member of NATO. I am almost certain of it because that's the only way that they are going to deter the European vassals of Washington from continuing to plow huge money into Ukraine's missile and drone program and escalating the attacks inside Russia. The Russians are not going to surrender, ever. This war ends in one of two ways. It ends either with a Ukrainian surrender or it ends with nuclear war. Which one of those would you prefer? Are we really prepared to go to a nuclear war so that Ukraine recovers 20% of its post-USSR territory? Really? When we're telling the Palestinians that they have to give up 80% of Palestine? That's what the two-state solution is, Zain. It's the Palestinians who have to give up 80% of Palestine and they get this little rump state. They don't even yet have their own army. They don't control their borders. That's the two state solution. But we are saying that the

Ukrainians cannot under any circumstances surrender an inch of their territory to avoid a cataclysmic nuclear war? No. No sane person would see that as a logical and consistent position to take.

**ZR:** Dimitri, another perception that has increasingly been created in German media over the last months is that Ukraine President Zelensky is seeking peace, a ceasefire and a negotiation settlement while Russia is presented as the aggressor with little interest in ending the war. In May, Ukraine announced a unilateral ceasefire, for example. In early June, Zelensky sent Russian President Putin an open letter proposing direct talks, including a personal meeting in a neutral country such as Switzerland, Turkey or an Arab state. Germany, France, the UK and Ukraine then jointly called for an immediate ceasefire and negotiations beginning from the current front line. Putin rejected Zelensky's proposal for a direct meeting, saying he saw no point in it. So given all of these facts, why do you think Russia is refusing these overtures? Isn't Moscow leading itself into the trap of a nuclear exchange or attacking what you're saying, a European country in the coming year? Isn't it creating like its own destiny by just rejecting any offer that's coming from Ukraine and Europe?

**DL:** Well, we need to understand what Zelensky's offer actually is. It sounds really good. Oh, let's sit down at the table and talk, Vladimir. But what exactly is he prepared to offer to the Russian government? Zelensky has said that under no circumstances will he surrender an inch of Ukrainian territory. Zelensky has said that Vladimir Putin has to be tried for war crimes. Zelensky has said that Russia has to pay reparations to Ukraine. Zelensky has said that Ukraine can become a member of NATO, when it's clear that NATO is an offensive military alliance. Zelensky's position is maximalist. It's 100% maximalist, so it's one thing to say, sure, let's sit down and talk, Vladimir, it's quite another to actually be willing to negotiate and make concessions. If he were willing to make concessions, my argument would be so too should the Russians, but he's not willing to any, nor are any of the Western governments, zero. They've all backed up Zelensky to the hilt. And let's recall, Zain, that Zelensky is now a dictator. Zelensky's mandate expired in May 2024 over two years ago, okay? He makes up some bullshit story: Oh, I can't hold an election while there's martial law. Well, the parliament, the Ukrainian parliament, is free to lift the martial law, they can lift it for several months so that they can actually hold an election. Russia held an election during this war. Plenty of states have held elections, including in the United States during massive wars. He doesn't want to hold an election because he would lose. He would probably get crushed. The Ukrainian people are sick of this war, despite what we're being told. There are countless videos of young men being dragged off the streets, beaten senseless, and sent to the front line to die; that's what Zelensky is doing to his people. Zelensky is one of the most corrupt leaders on earth. He's not only a dictator, he's massively corrupt. And unless that man is removed from power, there will be no real negotiation over the war in Ukraine. The settlement of this war is going to require mutual compromise. And I don't think the Russian government has any reason to sit down at the table when they're being told basically they have to surrender. That's not going to happen. You may hate it, you may not like it, you may think Vladimir Putin is evil, but there is no way in God's green earth that Russia is going to surrender. So what are we going to do? Go to nuclear war? Really? Over 20% of Ukrainian territory? It's

insane.

**ZR:** Also, I want to end this interview with something that I could imagine would happen in our comments that people would say, oh, well, Dimitri's position has a contradiction. Like, for example, he considers Israel's occupation as illegal and Palestinians standing up as legitimate resistance against this occupation and therefore advocating that they should not give any centimeter of territory away of Palestinian territory that Israel occupies and we should return to at least the 1967 borders, but in this conflict or war that we're seeing between Ukraine and Russia, Ukraine is asked to make territorial concessions, even though Russia illegally invaded and occupied a country. And also that the resistance that's coming from Ukraine, represented by Zelensky, there's a sort of a double standard the way you view the resistance coming from the Palestinian people and the wave coming from Ukrainian people. Do you see a contradiction in this position and how would you address territorial concessions between these two conflicts?

**DL:** Well, whoever those people are, they're mischaracterizing my position. I've never said the Palestinians shouldn't make territorial concessions. I said, no such thing. If the Palestinian people want to make territorial concessions to finally have a decent life in their own state, I would fully support them. And a significant proportion of the Palestinian population wants that. In fact, my position is that we should treat Palestine and Ukraine the same. Our position with respect to Palestine is that in order for there to be a permanent settlement and peace, there should be concessions, territorial concessions by both sides. And I'm fine with that, I got no problem with that. This is my position with respect to Ukraine. There should be territorial concessions. And there's something at stake in the case of Ukraine that isn't at stake in Palestine. What is at stake in Ukraine is that the party against whom we are asserting a maximalist position has the largest nuclear arsenal on God's green earth. So that is a very important consideration. I have no problem with Palestinians making territorial concessions. The problem here, Zain, is that the Israelis refuse to make any. They refuse. They won't even give them the West Bank, for God's sakes, which is 20% of Palestinian territory. So no, the problem isn't in the contradiction in my position, the problem is in the contradictions of Westerners who say Ukraine should make no territorial concessions, but Israel can have all of Palestine. There can't be a more blatant contradiction than that.

**ZR:** Dimitri Lascaris, independent journalist and international lawyer, thank you so much for this insightful analysis. I look forward to having you back on our show soon.

**DL:** Thank you, brother. Peace out, everybody.

**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 click on the subscribe button below. And please don't forget to donate as we are an independent and non-profit media channel that does not take any money from corporations and governments and only depends on you, the public, to continue our journalism. I thank you for your support and tuning in. I'm your host, Zain Raza. See you next time.

**END**

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