

Chas Freeman: Trump's Genocidal Threat & the Rising Risk of Nuclear War

Ambassador Chas Freeman was a former Assistant Secretary of Defense, earning the highest public service awards of the Department of Defense for his roles in designing a NATO-centred post-Cold War European security system and in reestablishing defence and military relations with China. He served as U. S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia during operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Read Chas Freeman's Substack: <https://substack.com/@chasfreeman662157> Books by Prof. Glenn Diesen: <https://www.amazon.com/stores/author/B09FPQ4MDL> Follow Prof. Glenn Diesen: Substack: <https://glenndiesen.substack.com/> X/Twitter: https://x.com/Glenn_Diesen Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/glenndiesen> Support the research by Prof. Glenn Diesen: PayPal: <https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/glenndiesen> Buy me a Coffee: buymeacoffee.com/gdieseng Go Fund Me: <https://gofund.me/09ea012f> Buy Diesen merchandise: <https://diesen-shop.fourthwall.com/en-nok>

#Glenn

Welcome back. We are joined today by Ambassador Chas Freeman, former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense and also the former U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia. Great to see you again. Great to see you, Glenn. World leaders are now meeting in New York for the UN meeting, and the president of Iran addressed the UN, arguing that they are still open for diplomacy, but they will not do it under coercion. So it's an interesting situation now. It seems like the U.S. and Iran are still talking about diplomacy while, at the same time, there's indications of military escalation and a lot of contradictory signals. I was just wondering, from what I understand, and please correct me if I'm wrong, but the Iranians are more or less sending the message that they're willing to open the Strait of Hormuz under Iranian administration if the U.S. lifts its blockade and, yeah, unfreezes Iranian assets and, well, the wider wars have to be brought to an end, which might be a big ask for the Trump administration. How do you see these developments going?

#Chas Freeman

Well, you're right. The Iranians have said that they could have the Strait open in seven days under the arrangement they've negotiated with the Omanis, which has yet to be endorsed by the Gulf Cooperation Council generally, although I think they are in a very difficult position and will have to agree to whatever it is that comes out of here. The end of the American blockade is indeed the principal condition for the opening of the Strait. The rest of the region, however, remains. I think the Iranians are the only logical mediator between Ansar Allah in Yemen and the Saudis. But whether the Saudis can bring themselves to avail themselves of that mediation is another question.

Mohammed bin Salman is an irascible individual and somewhat impetuous, as he has shown on numerous occasions, not to his credit particularly, and he seems to have responded to Ansar Allah's escalation with his own counter-escalation. They're working very hard on reconnecting the Eastern Province's oil to the Red Sea via the East-West Pipeline, which was blown up by apparently Iraqi militias, Shiite militias aligned with Iran. Whether they did that in coordination with Ansar Allah or with Iran, we don't know. But we're now seeing attacks from Ansar Allah, which is, of course, the overarching confederation of which the Houthis are the main element, but by far they're not the only ones.

So I think it's probably better to refer to Ansar Allah as a policymaking instrument in Yemen. They are now bombarding Riyadh, which raises serious questions about what help Saudi Arabia may expect from its backers, whether it's the old backers like the United States, which has declined to help them on the grounds, I think, that Donald Trump doesn't want another war before the midterms. I'm not sure what he'll do after the midterms. And they're not getting any overt help either from their new backers, the Pakistanis and Turks, on that issue. It's clearly regarded as outside the framework of the cooperative security arrangements that they've worked out, the nature of which we don't fully know will evolve.

Finally, you're quite correct that at the United Nations, Donald Trump, I think brazenly is the only word I can think of, brazenly threatened to, quote, annihilate, unquote, Iran. And he did this in front of the audience at the General Assembly at the United Nations, which is the principal body entrusted with sustaining peace and avoiding the annihilation of nations in that manner. President Pezeshkian of Iran apparently set aside his prepared text and delivered something else. The main point in it, I think, was exactly the one you cited, Glenn, and that is Iran will not negotiate under coercion, under duress, but it is open to discussions on the basis of sovereign equality.

That is nothing new. President Pezeshkian did say, more or less, reaffirm Iran's lack of interest in a nuclear weapon. He didn't say they wouldn't build one. He said they would pursue the peaceful nuclear program to which they're entitled under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which he didn't mention, and that Iran had no intention of building a nuclear weapon, I believe he said. So this is a bit of a step back. And clearly, Iran has been given every conceivable excuse to build a nuclear deterrent. And I assume that is the explanation for the slight tweak to the wording that he used. But this is essentially an impasse. It is a war of economic attrition at the moment.

We are headed into the midterms. The Republican Party is beginning to show signs of dissent from Donald Trump, breaking the tradition it's recently established of behaving like a cult. It is actually beginning to behave like a coalition of individuals who have a common ideology and who are not wedded to the dominant personality in their ranks. So this is very interesting. I would say the Trump administration—finally, Donald Trump, when he spoke to the United Nations, repeated several times, "I am not running in these elections," meaning that he knows very well he's going to be deeply embarrassed by the results of the midterms and wishes to exempt himself from the fallout.

I don't think he can succeed at that. And when he says the war with Iran will end after the midterms and couples that with a threat of annihilation, it is very hard not to conclude that he is thinking about the use of nuclear weapons. And if so, that would be the gravest crime against humanity that he has committed. One gains a bit of solace, however, from the fact that he is well known for making outrageous threats and then failing to implement them. So we shall see. But this is a moment in which many things are going wrong for the United States, not least in West Asia.

#Glenn

About this dissent, though, that is, again, some people are moving away from the cult and pushing back a little bit. And I've heard more voices saying we have to put an end to this Iran war. But I'm wondering, are these politicians willing to accept essentially the price for this? Because it was a dangerous gamble and it was a loss. But I'm also thinking that, you know, if the overarching objective of Iran is to remove the enduring threat against it, that is, the U.S. presence in the region—or, well, to rephrase it, the regional security architecture of the whole region is essentially an anti-Iranian alliance.

So, if you want to get rid of this, you'd want to destroy the U.S. bases. You want to incentivize the Gulf states to want to diversify their foreign partnerships, control the Strait of Hormuz. But can this development, the overarching one, still be resisted, though? Because I'm not sure how much we actually know yet about the damage to U.S. bases, if it can be rebuilt, if anybody wants to pay for it to be rebuilt. But is there some recognition, you think, that what the Iranians want is not unavoidable, but at least we have to take some steps in that direction, that we can't go back to the old status quo?

#Chas Freeman

I don't think there is any possibility that the bases will be rebuilt. First of all, they are not American bases. They are bases of the countries where they are located, which have been made available to the United States. Much of the construction at those bases, nearly all of it, has in fact been paid for by the United States for American purposes. But as we've discussed before, the United States has proven it's unable to defend those countries from those bases. Those bases are now widely recognized as inducements to attack rather than instruments of defense. The United States has proven unable to restrain Israel in the region. And the value of the American presence to those countries basically depends on the American ability to defend them, which no longer is credible; the American ability to counter Israeli actions, which is no longer credible.

Ask Qataris about that. They had an attack on Doha against the Hamas negotiators, which they suffered. And the other point is that the context for these bases, it turns out, is almost entirely to serve an American interest in projecting power against Iran, which the Gulf countries share now only in terms of a desire for vengeance. That is not a long-term strategy for them. So they have to make

peace with Iran. Can the United States senators and others who are beginning to come out against the war and who are beginning to criticize Donald Trump and his very incompetent entourage for making a grave strategic mistake by launching that war in partnership with Israel, can they be counted upon to accept that the United States must pay the price of failure? That is an open question.

There is, of course, the elephant in the room, which is the influence of the Zionist lobby. Israel wants regime change in Iran for some reason. Apparently, it quite foolishly believes that regime change would produce a less nationalistic and assertive government in Tehran. I don't see any basis for that assertion. In fact, I think quite the opposite has been the case. There has been regime change away from a more prudent government that was against the development of weapons of mass destruction and which behaved rather passively in the face of continued Israeli provocations. That government has been replaced by a government that is stalwartly opposed to both the United States and Israel and is pursuing precisely the agenda of removing the American presence from the region that you outlined.

So I think in judging politicians in the United States and perhaps in other countries as well, one must be aware that they never want to pay a price for anything. That's why they rely on sanctions. This is a means of displacing the cost of doing something onto someone else and claiming the ability to—claiming that you have done something when in fact all you have done is posture. And the sanctions never produce the regime change that they are premised on producing. So I don't know. Do American politicians have backbones? Perhaps they are some form of invertebrate life that lives in the countryside and is very good at waving its arms, posturing and obviating, but is incapable of lifting anything or doing anything.

I don't know. I mean, we'll find out as we get toward the midterms how serious some of this is. It appears that there is a wide trend, not just—we've been talking about the Republicans who are breaking ranks with Trump, and there are more and more of them—but there are also Democrats, and there are also the Democratic Socialists of America, and there are progressives, and there is a deep antipathy now to Israel and the policies it advocates in West Asia, and American entanglement in those policies. So I think this is an interesting political moment. But in answer to your question, I'm not sure that American politicians have the guts to actually do anything.

#Glenn

But what is of concern, though, is, well, what you already referred to. That is, Trump can stand there in front of the nations of the world and declare the destruction of a civilization, or intention to do so, and then have complete silence, no opposition. Nobody wants to anger him. I mean, it must be very emboldening for Trump to be able to stand, you know, on that stage and, you know, call for the destruction of a nation without any pushback. And while I'm just thinking about what you said about, you know, some possible hints towards using nuclear weapons, that is, if a...

Things don't go his way in Iran, and it doesn't appear that any of the conditions are right for having any significant success there. How likely do you see this scenario, that he could be reaching for the nuclear weapons to—essentially, well, it would fit within his profile, I guess, the whole idea of bringing back American strength through overwhelming force, that is, to assert its dominance and deterrence. So again, using nuclear weapons to overwhelm the Iranians.

#Chas Freeman

Well, let me make a number of points. I think Donald Trump has correctly sensed the zeitgeist, the spirit of our age, which is genocidal. I mean, basically, he's stating an intention to commit genocide against the people of Iran. And people sit there and they say nothing. Why do they say nothing? First, they may regard him as a comic character, a tragicomic character, who has the habit of blustering and not following through, so they may not take him seriously. But I think there's every reason to take him seriously, because I think Donald Trump is a bully who respects only two kinds of people or nations. One is the powerful, and he faces in the United States a very powerful Zionist lobby, which remains committed to the destruction of Iran.

And he is enthralled through that lobby to donors from that lobby who take their cues, their direction from the fascist government in Israel. And the second kind of person he respects is those who can blackmail him. And the Israelis apparently have the ability to do that. The Epstein files are one of the several reasons that Mike Johnson, the Speaker of the House, prematurely adjourned the House until after the midterm elections. The other reason was that it looked very much as though Thomas Massie's introduction of a bill of impeachment with eight counts of impeachment against Secretary of Defense, self-styled Secretary of War, Hegseth, was going to pass. But the Epstein trials were part of this.

So were several other issues. And so you can see that the Speaker of the House, who probably is the least independent such person in our history, is nonetheless aware that Trump's control of the slight Republican majority in the House and the larger majority in the Senate is slipping away. So what will Donald Trump do? What does he do when confronted with an intolerable reality that he chooses to deny? There's lots of evidence that he's capable of a volte-face and abandoning the threats that he made. But there's also evidence that he will carry out the threats. Look at the decapitation of Venezuela, the invasion of that. Look at the wars, two wars, begun by Trump against Iran in partnership with Israel.

One last year in June, one this year on February 28th. So I can't rule out the possibility. What I will say is, I think there will be enormous opposition to this from the U.S. military. Whether it's sufficient to produce a sit-down strike, in effect, a passive resistance or a mutiny of some sort, or a stimulated coup d'état, I do not know. The U.S. military, despite Pete Hegseth's efforts to politicize it and turn it into an arm of white nationalism, Christian nationalism, remains deeply indoctrinated in

constitutionalism and dedicated to the notion that illegal orders must be resisted. So I don't know what would happen. But I don't think you can rule out the possibility that Donald Trump's threats are both sincere and intended to be implemented.

#Glenn

Well, again, if there was some pushback, you know, but let's say it's feeling out the room. You can interpret it in different ways. It could just be bluster. You know, here's a deal: accept it or we will annihilate you. Like, this is a negotiation tactic. But he can also be feeling out the room, though. You know, what would happen if he would use nuclear weapons to exterminate a country or annihilate it, to use his words correctly. And there's nothing, no mild criticism from any of his allies.

#Chas Freeman

I mean, nobody wants... We're in an age where open genocide is not just committed, but boasted about by Israel in Palestine. The same thing is now happening in Lebanon. Who's doing anything about any of this? You know, I mean, people aren't even wringing their hands about it. They're just sitting there silently tolerating it. The intolerable has become tolerable, and Donald Trump is the avatar of the intolerable.

#Glenn

Well, one of the reasons I think, you know, even the, well, not just the U.S. politicians, but also the European, well, let's call them allies, wouldn't respond, or even if you use nuclear weapons, they might, you know, excuse it or look the other way, is because of the shift in world order. I mean, the fact that if this could reverse essentially the relative decline, not just of the United States, but of the political West, away from this hegemonic position, which, let's be honest, is already lost. But what are these wider changes? I mean, to shift gears a little bit, these changes of the post-hegemonic order or a post-American Middle East, even though we're heading in that direction, what do you think that the political establishment is most concerned about?

#Chas Freeman

Well, let's remember that Donald Trump is not the only person implicitly to threaten the use of nuclear weapons. Vladimir Putin has been doing this a fair amount, or at least Dmitry Medvedev has been doing it on behalf of the Russian government. And, of course, there has been no use of nuclear weapons by the Russians. The United States remains the only country ever to have used them in warfare. But I think we need to recognize that many taboos, including the nuclear allergy, are under assault. What has happened in terms of the global order, and particularly the transatlantic relationship, which was the center of global affairs for so long, is that the United States has changed from a protector into a predator.

And we have a predatory government, which now is asserting a doctrine of spheres of influence, an extreme form of spheres of influence in the Western Hemisphere, and which basically is trying to operate a global sphere of influence against Iran, North Korea, Russia, et cetera, China on a less assertive basis. But if you look at this, part of what I do with my life, since I spent 30 years serving my government, which in the old days before Donald Trump was guaranteed to impoverish you, now apparently is a source of wealth, since he's never met a conflict of interest he doesn't see as an opportunity to profit. But, you know, I emerged from my 30 years of service a pauper. And I've been devoting my life since then. That was quite a while ago. Thirty-three years, I think. Is that right? Yeah, 32 years since I completed my service.

I've been devoting that to business activity in association with some very close friends and colleagues. And I can tell you, you know, the main thing that you want in business is predictability. Well, there is no predictability. You know, you start doing a, quote, deal, meaning a transaction or building a relationship of some sort between the United States and a foreign entity or company or an individual, because I don't do anything—I don't lobby, I don't do government-to-government stuff anymore. I did that for 30 years. Now I do try to make money by building things in business. You know, you start doing this and then suddenly there's an executive order or some weird act by the Congress imposed out of the belief that the United States somehow is the global government. And it screws up everything. So what is the world order now? It is verging on anarchy. There is no predictability.

What will emerge from this? I think we're seeing what will emerge from it, partly in West Asia. We've talked before about the tripartite entente, a word we've lost, like many diplomatic terms, a French word meaning a limited partnership for a limited purpose or purposes, sometimes for a limited time. This Pakistani-Saudi-Turkish entente is the kernel, the centerpiece of a system that is emerging that will hopefully, in their view, replace the United States as the guarantor of stability in West Asia. Guarantor against whom? Guarantor in part against Israel and its Greater Israel Project, in part possibly against Iran. But on the other hand, Iran may, since it shares many of the objectives of this group, may be part of it.

Maybe as it expands, it will include not just countries like Qatar, which aspire to join it openly, but Iran, which has expressed its approval of the tripartite entente. So we're seeing that. This is, in a way, comparable, I think, to the role of ASEAN, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, which filled the vacuum in Southeast Asia caused by the American defeat in Indochina with a cooperative security arrangement, which is in dialogue with the great powers: the United States, the Soviet Union, now the Russian Federation, the European Union, and great powers in the region like Japan and South Korea. So we're seeing this emerge in several places.

In Latin America, there is a split between those countries that have signed on to the Trump bandwagon, a few right-wing governments, and those who are associated with Brazil and Peru and others that are not in that basket. So the world order that was sustained first by the Cold War, by the bipolar world that connected everything to Moscow and Washington and the interactions

between them, and which caused every country in the world to define its position geopolitically in terms of which overlord it supported or opposed, this is gone. And we're seeing regional orders emerge, which are specifically designed to achieve strategic autonomy. So far, in Europe, this is only talk. Europeans apparently enjoy subservience to Washington. If you doubt that, look at the Secretary General of NATO and what he does.

Mark Rutte puts on a remarkable sycophantic act when he grovels in front of Trump. But he's expressing a European tendency, perhaps, in particularly ludicrous form. But it is still the reality that most European countries kowtow to Washington. But can this last? I don't think so. Among other things, I see the war in Ukraine going very much against Ukraine, and the possibility of Ukraine emerging as a failed state with diminished territory and diminished access to the global economy, and no qualification to join NATO, the European Union, as it aspires to do. The European order is ripe for reorganization. The kaleidoscope may yet bang and reorganize it. So anyway, you asked a complicated question. That's the only kind of question you seem to know how to ask. So I've given you a complicated answer.

#Glenn

Yeah, why make it too simple? Well, no, I agree. I agree with what you said. I mean, with Rutte, I thought Stoltenberg was an unmitigated disaster, but Rutte appears to, you know, be even worse. And, you know, if you see a lot of the European states, they're trying to wash their hands of the Iran war. In the beginning of the war, you know, it looked like many of them wouldn't mind jumping on board, but Trump was quite dismissive of it. But that's when they were optimistic about the ability to defeat and destroy Iran. But now they want to wash their hands of it. And at the same time, you see Rutte, he also wants to sell Europe to the Americans. So he's trying to sit on two chairs. On one hand, the Europeans don't have any role, but then he sits there going, "Listen, you need us. We're a force amplifier. Five thousand planes have taken off from Europe in the war against Iran." And suddenly he's taking... So NATO is now a participant in the war against Iran. That's what he said. It can't be interpreted any other way. So...

#Chas Freeman

He makes this claim, which is frankly absurd. The fact that the United States has lily pads, as the American military have called them, in Europe is well known. I mean, Ramstein in Frankfurt is a huge base from which the United States projects power to West Asia. But, you know, some Europeans ask pointedly, is the purpose of these bases to defend Europe, or is it to project American power to the Middle East, to West Asia? It appears it's the latter. And the United States no longer is using these bases to project power against Russia in Ukraine. And in fact, the American role in Ukraine has been reduced to intelligence support and technological support for the Ukrainians. And the bag has been handed to the Europeans, who don't seem to have anything to put in the bag. Anyway, I think Mark Rutte, yes, he's taller than Stoltenberg, but that is the only thing I can say about him that is good in this context.

#Glenn

You're full of compliments. Well, but, you know, for all the craziness coming from Trump, if you saw the talks by the Europeans as well, it's, you know, there's this panic, the anger, the seeming desire to go to war with Russia. I mean, we have our fair share of crazies on this continent as well. But about what you said about the U.S. objective in Europe, is it to protect or is it to project power? And again, on this as well, Rutte sits on two chairs. You have to tell the Europeans that, well, the Americans are making us secure. They're defending us. We have a world full of Chinese and Russians. They have to help us. And to the Americans, he's selling, "Listen, we are the launchpad to Iran and anywhere else, whoever you want to attack." So it's a bit complicated. But it did take me to my question, though, about how you see the wider U.S. strategy here, because...

It seems as if the U.S. is seeking in this new multipolar world, or multinodal world, to carve out certain areas of exclusive influence. You know, if you can't compete, why not? And you kind of saw this first with, you know, the Monroe Doctrine, he calls it, in the Western Hemisphere. This was kind of the deal with Venezuela. He made a big point out of it: the Russians and Chinese are out. It's our monopoly now. And then we have the deal in Greenland, which also meant that non-NATO countries aren't allowed to do business, essentially, or extract energy. So again, it should be an American domain. So, like, not a complete annexation—well, not annexation at all—but making it such an exclusive sort of influence. Do you see this being the formula for the Middle East as well? Because that would require pushing out the Russians, the Chinese, and neutralizing Iran. I'm not sure how this would be achieved.

#Chas Freeman

Well, Greenland is one thing. Congratulations to the Danes for preserving their sovereignty within the context of accepting some limitations consistent with this sphere of influence. Sphere of influence basically is an arrangement by which a dominant power asserts specific restraints on the sovereign territory of another, and usually it is aimed at excluding third parties. I think you can look at the world in terms of spheres of influence, interestingly, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and its replacement by a weak and disorderly Russian Federation, as well as in newly independent states in the Baltics, in Central Asia, in Ukraine, in the Caucasus.

The United States basically asserted a global sphere of influence, as I mentioned. That is to say, we reserve the right to veto the decisions by any government anywhere in the world, outside North Korea, Iran, the Russian Federation, and China, which are too powerful and too ornery to push around, apparently. I think we have retreated from that, are in retreat everywhere, including in Europe. It's a partial retreat in Europe. I think it's going to be a pretty total retreat in West Asia. And we are retreating to the Western Hemisphere.

And an old American concept, which was more aspirational than real in the 19th century, that we would dominate our hemisphere, both North and South America, or at least Central America, the Caribbean, and North America, including Mexico and Canada. This was an aspiration. We didn't have the power to enforce that, so the British Navy kindly did it for us. But the British Navy is not what it was, and the U.S. Navy is not what it was. And I don't think our grip on the hemisphere is anywhere near as strong as we imagine, or I should say the Trump administration imagines. The largest trading partner of almost every country in the region is not the United States, but China. Mexico, of course, is the exception.

And so, well, they matter in a few other countries, but the greatest trading partner is China. The EU is not far behind in many cases. The links between South America and Africa are growing. There is Lusophone Africa, Angola, Mozambique in particular, São Tomé, Príncipe, Guinea-Bissau, Cabo Verde. You know, these are all Portuguese-speaking countries that are now drawn to Brazil, which, interestingly, was once where the Portuguese Empire was centered. You know, after Napoleon, the Portuguese government moved to Rio de Janeiro and was there through most of the 19th century. A very interesting, unique situation where the metropole moves to the colony.

And anyway, so... this brings me back to your point about the Europeans blustering about war when they have no capability to conduct it successfully. They're blustering on the basis of various fictional reinterpretations of history that they believe show that the Russians are desperate to conquer Western Europe and planning to do so, when, as we've mentioned many times, history shows that it's the Europeans who invade Russia and the Russians who pursue them back home, not the other way around. So anyway, I'm reminded, since we were talking about South America a bit, and I once had a very detailed knowledge of Paraguayan history, but I don't anymore, so don't hold me to the details.

But sometime in the 1840s, a dictator in Paraguay decided that he had the spiritual and military strength to launch a war simultaneously against Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina, and Bolivia. And the result of this war was that nine out of ten Paraguayan men died. And at the end of the war, there was polygamy in Paraguay because there weren't any men around. I don't think that will happen to Europe. Some men might enjoy that. Having observed polygamous relationships in the Muslim world, I would counsel against it. Usually the women form a sorority and gang up on the husband and make his life absolutely miserable. So I hope this is not the fate of Europe. But I think the delusion of the ability to do crazy things in warfare is truly comparable.

But why do the Europeans imagine that if they actually did get into a fight with the Russians directly, they would prevail? I see no basis for that. And why do they not consider that the exclusion of Russia from the councils of Europe divides Europe in a way that perpetuates warfare and prevents peace and stability from emerging? But that is where they are. And they blame the United States for this. And maybe we are to blame. But whether we're to blame or not, that is no excuse for European brain death, delusions, and lack of realism about geopolitics in the European subcontinent. It is a

subcontinent, by the way. It's an extension of Eurasia, much like India. Only the Greeks believed it was a continent, and they're very tricky people, and they've persuaded the rest of us of that truth.

#Glenn

Yeah, no, there's a lot of challenges for the Europeans now, yet they prefer to be tilting at windmills instead by going, you know, expending all of their energy on confronting Russia, which could actually assist the Europeans in finding a new approach. With this, yeah, the not being a continent, I actually wrote a book published in Paris six years ago with the title of Europe as the Western Peninsula of Greater Eurasia. I was arguing this as well. To what extent it doesn't have to be a threat. It could be an opportunity for Europe, for renewal and recovery. Yeah, a position in a multipolar world as opposed to fighting it tooth and nail for the glory of being a subordinate to the United States. I mean, they, and at the end of the day, also Russell wrote, I think, yeah, six years ago, it would require such a subordinated position that it would ignore national interests and thus only earn the contempt of the Americans, who wouldn't see any, you know, real value in the Europeans anymore.

#Chas Freeman

You know, there was merit in the Gaullist vision of a Europe from Lisbon to the Urals. There was merit in this, although it was racist. And it assumed that anybody east of the Urals was an undesirable human being. But I think the reasons for a rapprochement between the Russian Federation and the rest of Europe, or this extension of Eurasia, as you put it, which I completely agree with—the reasons for that are multiple. I'm sure you rehearsed them in your book, which I sadly have to admit I have not read. But they include energy supplies, resources of various sorts, mineral resources, human resources, and a wider space for achievement for that little peninsula that sticks out from the Eurasian landmass. You know, Europe in many ways is comparable to India.

I'm speaking of geographic India, South Asia, and not the country, in that it is composed of many ethno-religious entities, states, which is the reason it has been the most bloody subcontinent in history. The Indians are second. India has a federal structure imposed by the British now, which broke up when the British left, and now it's complicated by the division between India and Pakistan and India's swallowing of various princely states that were once independent. But the histories are comparable. And what everyone says about India, its federal system is more comprehensive and effective than the confederal arrangements that exist under the European Union.

And so Europe has, I know as an American, I'm reminded when I look at Europe, of the American Articles of Confederation, which were drawn up in the wake of our independence once the British had recognized our independence in 1783, and lasted until 1787 when we adopted our current Constitution. Those Articles of Confederation didn't work. I don't think the European Union is working. And the fact that the British foolishly have dissociated themselves from it, and that others are talking about doing so, should be an indication that Europeans need to get their act together.

But I see no evidence that they're doing that. And I think they use the United States and our superpower status as an excuse for not getting the European house in order, as well as not conducting an intelligent relationship with the Russian Federation.

#Glenn

Well, my last question is just, again, going back to East Asia—sorry, West Asia. If the U.S. still wants to hold on, it does have some problems. That is Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia, that is where you were an ambassador. They're also facing greater incentives to chart a different path. I mean, as you said, if they want to put an end to the war with Yemen, at some point they're going to have to make some kind of a deal with the Iranians, and that's going to put them at odds with the United States. But more importantly, just expanding the question, which you commented upon, if the U.S. decides to draw down, again, this is why the shift in the distribution of power is so disruptive, because all the dynamics become changed.

But the U.S.-Israeli relationship would also need to change because in the past, you can argue that the U.S. seeking global primacy, it harmonized with its bridgehead in the region, Israel, because it pursued regional dominance. And so, a lot of interests overlapping. But if the U.S. begins to pull back, and it might, again, have to, you would see interests diverging. You have greater public, you know, worse public perception in the U.S. towards Israel. So how would this work, though? Because Israel, in its current form, under its current policies at least, it's hard to see it holding up. I mean, it can't take on the whole region without the United States standing behind it.

#Chas Freeman

Well, we have stood behind it, but I don't think we're going to do that forever. The trends in the United States toward dissociation from Israel are very strong. And why is that? I can explain. I don't think Israel has been an effective instrument of American policy in the region. Quite the contrary. It has been an albatross around our relationships. Think of it: the Suez War, in which two American allies in Europe, Britain and France, were humiliated by us as a result of collusion with Israel; the war of 1967, where Israel launched a surprise attack on its neighbors and created an occupation in Palestine that is the most disruptive thing in current politics at present.

Think of the 1973 war and the oil embargo that affected both the United States and Europe as a result of the Israeli occupation of Sinai and unwillingness to negotiate peace with Egypt. Think of the war with Iran. Think of the torture that has been administered to Lebanon. Think of the chaos in Syria that was involved in American collusion with an Israeli objective of fracturing Syria and weakening and subjugating it. Israel has not—you know, when I became Assistant Secretary of Defense, I imagined, as you just stated, that Israel was an asset for the United States strategically. I was shocked to discover that the Israelis did no exercises with the United States.

Exercises are a fundamental element in any alliance, even in an entente, because they produce interoperability and they plan, they practice against contingencies. The Israelis would not exercise with us because they considered their own military techniques superior. They did not want to disclose them to the United States. And they were also afraid that the United States, which had relations with Arab militaries, would inadvertently give away their secrets. So they had a reason for their stance. But the fundamental reason was they are not allies of the United States. They have no obligation at all to us. They are clients. They are a protected state. The protection is the result of the illusion that you just mentioned, that somehow they are a force for American influence in the region.

Until quite recently, you could not fly out of Israel to any other country in the region. You couldn't get air traffic control permission. That is no longer the case, but it could be the case again. And so I would argue that the American relationship with Israel is purely rooted in domestic political influence and concerns and has no strategic element to it at all. You know, even the technological developments that Israel is famous for—Iran Dome, Arrow, David's Sling—were all paid for by the United States and conducted in cooperation with American scientists and engineers. I know because I used to write the checks for these things when I was in the Defense Department. So, you know, they could just as well have been developed in New Jersey, but they were essentially irrelevant to American defense needs.

So this was... All of these are subventions for Israel. The United States has given over \$300 billion in aid to Israel since its establishment because it's not viable without American subventions. So all of this is to say that the bulwark against disassociation from Israel is far less strong than many people imagine. And as the tide goes out on American support for Zionism, Israel risks being isolated. It knows that. Premier Netanyahu, Prime Minister Netanyahu, has done several things to protect Israel against that. One of them is the effort to merge Israeli and U.S. forces for purposes of weapons development, design, intelligence sharing, and procurement, to replace the sale of weapons with their co-production.

Another is his statement that Israel needs to become a Sparta, an independent, militarized society that is autonomous and not dependent on foreign support. I think both these are pipe dreams, but they are a response to a very gifted politician's understanding of which way the wind is blowing. And it is not blowing in favor of continuing unquestioned American support for Israel. And that is, I think, tragic. But it is a product of Israel's own behavior. I'll just close by saying that I think Israelis imagine that the world loathes them because of who they are. They're Jews. So it's all based on Jew hatred, meaning anti-Semitism. But that is not the case at all. In the United States, which has been the victim of Zionist lobbying and which is turning against Israel,

#Glenn

The most highly regarded religious community is the Jews. Every poll shows this.

#Chas Freeman

So there may be incidents of anti-Semitism. There probably always are, just as there are instances in Israel of anti-Christian behavior as well as anti-Muslim behavior. But Israel has cooked its own goose. It has adopted policies that are genocidal. It has spawned politicians who are boastful about their sadism. It has created an army which is not the world's most noble or moral, but which is the most ignoble and sadistic on the planet. It has cost itself its own reputation. And the European sense of guilt about the Holocaust is now being answered by an Israeli Holocaust against Palestinians that raises the question: what did Israelis mean when they said, "Never again"? And I think what they meant was never again to Jews, not never again to the rest of us. And I don't think that is a sustainable moral position in a world of multinodal networks.

#Glenn

Yeah, I know that some of the discussions taking place in Germany is why Palestinians must eventually, essentially, pay for the World War II crimes of the Germans.

#Chas Freeman

Yeah, I would have much preferred that we give Bavaria to the victims of the Holocaust. But, of course, the secret agenda of Europeans with regard to the Jews has been not just to persecute them, but to persuade them to leave. It's rather like the Israeli approach to the Palestinians with ethnic cleansing. You know, nothing good to say about that. The Jews of Europe have every right to be affronted and to be irate about the way they were treated.

#Glenn

Well, Ambassador, thank you, as always, for sharing your insights, and I hope we can come back soon.

#Chas Freeman

Well, let's, you know, have another grim conversation. Yes.

#Glenn

I'll look at something more optimistic next time.

#Chas Freeman

I hope your meeting in Istanbul goes well and you produce the outlines of a peace for Europe and West Asia. And I gather you're going on to Moscow, is that correct? Yeah. And I hope you have

fruitful talks there. Somebody's got to talk to the Russians. More importantly, someone's got to listen to them.

#Glenn

Yeah.

#Glenn

Yeah. Yeah, well, that's a rebellious act in Europe these days: talk to the other side.

#Chas Freeman

Yeah, I know. And no doubt it's regarded as some sort of moral apostasy. However, it's necessary.

#Glenn

So go to it.