

Trump Deploys Squadrons to Israel, Iran 'DOOMSDAY' War IMMINENT | Mercouris

Geopolitical analyst and host of The Duran Alexander Mercouris discusses all signs pointing to a new round of war between the US & Israel against Iran as the Ukraine conflict reaches a breaking point for Trump & NATO, but not for the reasons you may think. <https://www.youtube.com/@AlexMercouris> <https://www.youtube.com/@UCdeMVChrummySxV9N1w0Au-w> PATREON.COM /DANNYHAIPHONG Support the channel in other ways: <https://www.buymeacoffee.com/dannyhai...> Substack: chroniclesofhaiphong.substack.com Cashapp: \$Dhaiphong Venmo: @dannyH2020 Paypal: <https://paypal.me/spiritofho> Follow me on Telegram: <https://t.me/dannyhaiphong> #iranwar #trump #putin

#Danny

Welcome back to the show, everyone. As you can see, I'm joined by Alexander Mercouris of The Duran. Let's go over the latest developments. So, the United States has reportedly deployed two squadrons of fighter jets to Israel. This comes as we are also hearing that the U.S. is deploying refueling aircraft, tankers, to Ben Gurion Airport as well, and sending the USS Theodore Roosevelt to the Middle East to relieve the USS George Washington, as the United States, it seems like, is preparing for an attack and to continue the so-called robust blockade of Iran. Now, here's what Abbas Araghchi had to say this week, Alexander. He hinted at preparations for a doomsday war.

#Speaker 1

I just want to ask you, because The Wall Street Journal is reporting that President Trump expects to resume bombing Iran after the midterms. As you know, he stood at the U.N. and threatened to annihilate Iran. Are you preparing for this war to resume?

#Abbas Araghchi

We are fully prepared for the time for the war to be resumed. And I repeat, we stand firm in the face of any new aggression, even if it comes to a doomsday war.

#Danny

So, Alexander, you know, the airspace over Iran has been closing on and off. It's been on maximum alert. But yet all the conversation in the mainstream Western media, especially in the United States, has been talking about Iran losing control over the Strait of Hormuz. Oil is flowing like never before, almost up to pre-February 28th levels. What do you see as going on here, and how is this impacting

the overall geopolitical landscape? What does a doomsday war even mean at this point, with Trump threatening annihilation of Iran at the U.N.?

#Alexander Mercouris

Well, look, if things were going so well in the Strait of Hormuz, if oil was flowing in these kind of quantities, we would not have oil floating around at \$100 a barrel, the crude oil prices. We would not have shortages of diesel. We would not have talk of further wars and assemblages of huge forces against Iran in that way. On the contrary, it's because Iran obviously still retains a degree of control over the Strait of Hormuz that we are in this situation. Here's what I think is happening. I think some oil has been flowing through the Strait of Hormuz. I think it's been doing so because some shipowners are wisely paying money to the Iranians. They're paying the Iranians their fee. I think it is as simple and as straightforward as that. But I think we are clearly in a fork in the road now.

Either the United States chooses to begin a serious negotiation with the Iranians, in which case we would end up with something not that different from the MOU, which, however, would stabilize the international situation. It would cause energy prices to fall. It would see the Strait of Hormuz reopened. It would stabilize the situation in the Middle East. It would ultimately, in my opinion, be good for the United States because I think the United States is better off leaving the Middle East. Either that's what happens, or we're going to see a renewal of the war within the next few weeks. All the indications are that we're going in that direction, towards a renewal of the war, because I think that the United States simply cannot abide the idea that it is being pushed out of the Middle East by a country like Iran.

#Danny

What do you think Abbas Araghchi means by a doomsday war? Because, of course, you've probably been following a lot of analysts, commentators, even mainstream ones. I mean, even Max Boot, an out-and-out neocon, talking about how the U.S. needs to dramatically shift how it fights wars, where it puts its resources, which seems to indicate a difficulty in potentially escalating with Iran. But at the same time, Abbas Araghchi says they're ready for a doomsday war. So what do you think that could mean, especially in the realm of how wars are fought now? You follow Ukraine very closely, as well as what happens in the Middle East. So what do you think he means by this?

#Alexander Mercouris

The war in Ukraine, up to this point in time, has been controlled incredibly tightly by the Kremlin. They worked to keep it very, very controlled and very, very contained, precisely so as to avoid doomsday scenarios such as the ones that are now being talked about. We had the President of the United States go to the United Nations and threaten annihilation. I know some people believe that he was hinting at the use of nuclear weapons. Now, I don't know whether he was because, of course, he doesn't speak to me. But it seems to me that that's what Araghchi is effectively

responding to. He's saying that Iran will not be intimidated by any type of force the United States uses.

If we're talking about conventional war, the Strait of Hormuz will definitely be closed in that case. If we have round-the-clock bombing of Iran, they will respond with strikes against the energy facilities across the Middle East. They will no doubt take steps against the desalination plants. The Houthis are now there on the coast of Yemen. They could close the Red Sea. We could have that kind of thing. I cannot see how a conventional war can be won. If we do see scenarios like the terrifying one of nuclear weapons use, I don't want to speculate too much about how that would play out because that's a horrifying prospect. But I think what Araghchi is saying is that even if that is what is threatened, Iran is standing firm.

#Danny

Now, he was asked about the midterms, and that's when another attack is being foreshadowed. But also, we have Israel today, Netanyahu, saying that they are on high alert for a potential Iranian attack or Iranian-sponsored attack against Israel. And this is all coming among—not just the midterms, but also the Israeli elections. Some people see that as a potential, I guess, opportunity for the wars to be maybe tamped down a bit. But do you see that? I mean, there also could be a possible justification for restarting it, given the behavior of both Trump and Netanyahu in these months.

#Alexander Mercouris

Well, I think that if you're talking about Netanyahu, his political interests are best served by resuming the war now. I don't think he wants to wait until after the midterms. The outcome of the midterms is incidental to him.

#Abbas Araghchi

Whoever wins the midterms, they will still be supportive of Israel, for one thing.

#Alexander Mercouris

So I don't think he worries too much about that. But he's got a very difficult election coming up in Israel, and I think from his point of view, having the war on now, getting it going, will strengthen his position, or so he believes, in that election. So I think he's probably pushing for war now, not for later. And yes, possibly if there is a war, one thing that Netanyahu might do—there's precedent for this in Israel—is try and form a so-called government of national unity, bring Lapid and people like that into the cabinet. That's what happened during the Six-Day War. I believe it happened in other wars too. So that, of course, also neuters any threat to Netanyahu's position. So I suspect this is what Netanyahu's current game probably is.

#Danny

Now, there's also this curious—I definitely wanted to talk to you about this, given your strategic position in the United Kingdom—at the Royal Air Force, really the U.S. Air Force base in the United Kingdom, in Fairford, and that incident. Now, those five gentlemen who were allegedly going to bomb the airbase and were caught beforehand, they've been released on bail. Here's what Donald Trump had to say about that and how the UK handled the situation.

#Donald Trump

I will tell you, I would have said, don't let them have bail, cashless bail. Is it cashless bail, I guess? That was one of the problems that we had, which started the whole mess of crime. And we're ending cashless bail. But over there, I'm surprised that they released them. I wouldn't have done that.

#Danny

So Trump wouldn't have behaved like the Burnham-led counterterror forces in the UK, but the United Kingdom authorities are supposedly looking into whether Iran had anything to do with this. What's your thoughts about this incident and the way that Trump is reacting to this here? Well, it...

#Alexander Mercouris

There is, of course, a current of opinion in Britain, as there is everywhere else, by the way, that this was some kind of false flag operation which has been prepared in order to justify an attack on Iran. These kinds of statements by the President of the United States are only going to reinforce that impression. They give the sense that he is very angry that these people were released, because that is not giving him the opportunity to conduct the attack on Iran that he wants.

Any country should leave another country alone to conduct its own investigations and its own criminal processes in its own way. In Britain, we normally grant bail. I mean, it would be unusual not to do so unless, of course, there was genuine reason to suspect an immediate threat and genuine reason to suspect that there was a terrorism incident. But the word in London is that the evidence against these people is extremely thin, and the police are not particularly keen on this case, and that there was no particular reason, therefore, to keep them detained at all.

#Danny

Hmm. Well, does this mark some kind of disagreement between the United Kingdom and the U.S.? I mean, this base has been used throughout the war as a launching pad for U.S. forces. But is there a

problem now with the United Kingdom and the U.S.'s Iran policy? Is it a matter of—I know that the United Kingdom government is very much focused on Russia. What's your thoughts on this? Could it be some kind of disagreement between the U.S. and UK around this?

#Alexander Mercouris

I think there is a disagreement. But before I do that, let me just explain something about this base. I mean, don't be misled by the fact that it's called RAF, Royal Air Force. It's an American base. Way back in the 1940s, during the Second World War, when the Americans were coming here and establishing their bases in Britain, our Prime Minister of the day, Winston Churchill, didn't want the world to know that we were depending entirely on the United States for our survival. So he did this deal with the Americans that they could have as many bases as they wanted and build as many bases as they wanted. But in every case, they should preserve the fiction that this was a British Royal Air Force base. So that's all that means.

That's continued to this day. This is an American base. Now, there is tension between Britain and the United States, and it is about geopolitics. It's about global strategy. The United States, at the moment, the major conflict that it's worrying about, is immediately worrying about, is the one with Iran. It's in a standoff with Iran. That is the U.S. priority. It is absolutely not the British priority. The British priority wants the United States to wrap up Iran, forget about Iran, focus instead on Russia, because that is Britain's enemy. And, well, the British are not keen on having incidents involving the United States and Iran happen on their territory. That is a conflict that they're not interested in.

So, you know, if this is a story spread around through the intelligence agencies, a tip-off about all of these people and they're linked to Iran, well, the British are going to come back and say, well, where's the evidence? What's the proof? Of course, if it was about Russia, then it would be completely different. You wouldn't be asking for proof then. You would accept very quickly, very, very swiftly that this is exactly what took place. And we'd have stern editorials in every British newspaper talking about that. The difference in policy highlights the difference in attitudes. Britain is all about Russia. The United States, it's to some extent about Russia, but at the moment, even more about Iran. And ultimately, the real enemy, China, always looms large in America in ways that it doesn't do over here.

#Danny

Yeah, I mean, I thought, given that last point you just made there, the way that Trump was treating Xi Jinping was, just from an optics standpoint, shocking. The lack of policy, what they call—what the mainstream think tankers and the intellectuals, they like to call it—deliverables, the lack of deliverables, not so shocking. But back to your point about this difference in policy too, I see the United States right now, every single day for the last, I don't know, five, six, seven days, Iran has been seeking to enforce its control over the Strait of Hormuz, firing on ships every single day. They said two days they hit 19 vessels. UKMTO not reporting so much anymore on these vessel hits.

But nevertheless, the United States is putting in resources, naval resources—they say naval resources, really Air Force resources—to try to escort ships out. They even had U.S. forces hit on one of these ships, and that's just recently come out, that eight Marines were injured in a strike there. So that's a lot of resources, and that could be—I mean, unless something dramatically changes—that could be a relatively permanent role that the U.S. is trying to play there. How much does that then hurt the U.K.'s attempt and Europe's attempt to get the U.S. to shift back to Ukraine? The U.S. is not giving nothing to Ukraine. Obviously, there's still some amount of aid flowing, but there's not a lot of attention, and there's definitely no decisive action around that, if there is such a thing.

#Alexander Mercouris

The British see it as a geopolitical disaster. They see the whole Iran war as a geopolitical disaster. I mean, they weren't too bothered when it started because they all thought that it would end very quickly and that the Iranian government would collapse almost at once. But they absolutely did not want a long, drawn-out war in the Middle East, one which keeps energy prices high and one which continues to result in a diversion of American resources away from Europe and a depletion of those resources, because every aircraft, every fighter jet, every military unit that the United States posts to try to keep the Strait of Hormuz open is one that is not being deployed in Europe to confront the Russians. And the Russians are getting stronger. Their army is getting bigger. Their aviation is becoming more powerful. It's not just even about Ukraine anymore. It's about dealing with the Russians once Ukraine is over. Because every European state knows that without the United States, Europe by itself cannot take on the Russians.

#Danny

What do you make of—so, you know, in Europe's case too, the Iran war has expanded and placed pressures on Europe to get involved. I know there's disagreements on directly getting involved with Iran, especially around the Strait of Hormuz. There were some efforts made not too long ago, or at least there was pressure on the U.K., France, et cetera, to send forces to the Strait of Hormuz. That didn't happen, but now there's also the Saudi Arabia situation, where it seems like the British and even the French in particular are very much concerned about that situation.

And that's very linked to the war in Iran. So what's happened there, and how does it factor into this overall growing risk? It seems like there's a lot of aversion, and even Trump, at the beginning of his administration, was supposedly averse to growing Middle East wars. But the Middle East is very much on fire right now and set to get worse. And even the French and the British seem like they are very much looking to, in the case of Yemen and Saudi Arabia, get behind Saudi Arabia.

#Alexander Mercouris

You know, this is the disastrous failure of European policy because the Europeans had a role in the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action, which Iran and the United States negotiated together. The Europeans failed to stand up for the JCPOA with the Americans. When Biden was elected, they should have collectively insisted that Biden carry through his original electoral promise to take the United States back into it. And when it became increasingly obvious last year that the United States was heading towards a conflict with Iran, and all the signs of that were there—we spoke about it on The Duran. We spoke about it here on this program with you. You were talking about it. Everybody could see that a confrontation with Iran was just around the corner.

The Europeans, where were they? Did they go to Washington? Did Olaf Scholz, the German Chancellor, or the various endless numbers of British prime ministers, or Macron, go to Washington and tell Donald Trump, under no circumstances do this thing. We profoundly disagree. If you do this thing, it will have enormous negative repercussions, not just for Europe, but for the entire Western alliance. No, they did absolutely nothing. In fact, they sat back and they allowed this war to happen. And, well, here we are where we are. And because they were ultimately complicit in the war, because if you don't act to stop a war, you are complicit in it happening, they're now being drawn into it themselves.

There's the situation. In Yemen, the whole crisis in Saudi Arabia, which is a key partner for the Europeans, the whole crisis in Saudi Arabia is to a great extent a product of this war. They're having to think about defending Saudi Arabia. Macron is talking about sending French troops there. A terrible idea, by the way. I mean, he wants to send French troops to Ukraine. He's now wanting to send them to fight the Houthis as well. Both the Houthis and the Russians. I mean, truly the Napoleon of today. I mean, that's all I can say about this. But anyway, you can see why, because they didn't take that stand right at the beginning, why they are in this mess today.

#Danny

Yeah, I believe a recent poll this month said that only 18% of the French population, or at least the sampled French population, supports Emmanuel Macron. That's a disastrous number. Donald Trump is facing, I mean, I guess, equivalent, in terms of how the U.S. polls, very disastrous numbers in the low 30s as well. And it's all happening as both are escalating or trying to put out the fires that they started. But, yeah, I mean, I can't imagine it being a good idea, Alexander, for, as these wars continue to escalate—it doesn't seem like Yemen has taken a break. The Yemeni armed forces, the Houthis, aren't taking a break to get what they want against a Saudi regime which has been very brutal. And, you know, the Ukraine front, Russia is not pulling back there. So to expect Europe to get involved in these seems like a suicidal venture, to say the least.

#Alexander Mercouris

Well, indeed, but again, to repeat, European policy has largely brought this about. We ruined our relations with the Russians. I mean, we had lots of opportunities to build a stable, long-term

relationship with the Russians, but we didn't. We are even more to blame here than the Americans are, because we could have always said to the Americans, no. A de Gaulle would have done it. A Helmut Schmidt would have done it. A Willy Brandt would have done it. Jacques Chirac would have done it. None of the leaders of Europe did. And with Iran as well, with the situation in the Middle East, we completely failed in Europe, both in our reaction to what was happening in Gaza, where we became complicit ultimately with the events that were playing out there as well, and with this crisis in the Persian Gulf too.

So obviously Europeans are now paying the price of this. I mean, the economic situation in Europe is very bad. I went to Germany and Belgium in the summer. I visited both countries. I saw clear signs of growing economic distress in Germany in ways that upset me, frankly, because I have family connections to Germany and I have a special fondness for the country. I went to Belgium, to Brussels, a European city I used to know extremely well and used to like very, very much. And I was shocked by the level of economic decay there, which Brussels is spiraling down into. And the reason all of this is happening is because we did not act to safeguard the peace. Europe needs peace, and it didn't preserve peace, either within Europe itself or in the Middle East, which adjoins it.

#Danny

Yeah, what does China often say about Europe? That they should consider strategic autonomy when it comes to their foreign policy. That has not happened at all, to say the least. It's only going in the opposite direction.

#Alexander Mercouris

Well, absolutely.

#Danny

Yeah, yeah. You know, Alexander, my last question on the Middle East before getting into some of the nitty-gritty on Ukraine: how much, you know, with Iran preparing for a doomsday war, the United States seeming to prepare for one either before or after the midterms, how much does this affect the rest of the world in particular, not only with the oil and energy crisis, but when we think about countries like Russia and the growing multipolar world? How much does this impact it, and what's your view on this?

#Alexander Mercouris

I think that, like everything else, this crisis has ultimately accelerated the movement towards multipolarity, by which I mean a situation where the United States is no longer seen as the major economic, military, and political hegemon in the world. However you spin this, its inability to dominate Iran has come as a shock to many people. First and foremost, the Persian Gulf Arab states

themselves, which had built their entire foreign policy and much of their domestic policy too axiomatically on the assumption that the United States is all-powerful and would always be there to rescue them. So America has been shown to be a lot weaker than people believed it to be, and at the same time, a lot more heedless of others' interests than it pretended.

So that inevitably is going to make more and more countries, especially in Asia and places like Africa too, I'm sure, say to themselves, well, this ship, this American ship, is partially listing and it's got an erratic captain. Let's go and clamber onto other ships that look more stable and more seaworthy and better able to navigate us through these very difficult times. So I think that there's going to be a drift, a stronger drift, towards multipolarity. In the meantime, everybody has to deal with the immediate economic consequences of this war, the rise in energy costs, which is affecting everybody. And that inevitably means turning to those who can still provide energy and who are not the United States, which means the Russians, some other countries as well. That too, of course, strengthens the BRICS.

#Danny

Alexander, are we just being lied to when it comes to what's happening in Ukraine right now? Because as you were talking about the connections between the consequences of the Iran war and the multipolar world, and its strengthening out of it, contrary to what probably the U.S. and Israel, et cetera, intended, we're getting reports that Ukraine is regaining territory through Operation Vivaldi. And one thing that's striking is that with the Iran war, it's depleted U.S. munitions, which means it's depleted NATO munitions to such a degree that I would expect that Ukraine would have even less at its disposal. And certainly the constant, every-other-day begging by Zelensky for more Patriots, it seems to indicate this. So what's the truth here? This is the latest political report that Ukraine is on the march. What's actually happening?

#Alexander Mercouris

Yeah, this is Operation Vivaldi, the counteroffensive that Ukraine is conducting in Lyman, in an area of a town called Lyman in Donbas. Now, this is a... This is a front line that is over 1,000 kilometers long. The Russians are advancing in all sorts of places. They're advancing in the south, where they're about to capture a city called Orehov, move on to Zaporozhye. They're advancing in the north, where they've surrounded a Ukrainian force in Kharkiv region. They're advancing in other parts of Donbas, where they've surrounded the Ukrainians in an important town called Dobropillia. So instead of talking about all of these other places, you focus on one, which is what's going on in Lyman. Now, I'm not in Lyman, so I mean, I depend, like everyone else does, on the reports we get from there.

And they are particularly difficult to verify. In all of these other places that we've been talking—I've just been talking about—you have multiple sources. You have lots of video footage. You can compare what the Ukrainians are saying with what the Russians are saying, and you can obtain a

fairly clear picture of what is going on. What is going on in Lyman is much more difficult because both the Russians and the Ukrainians have talked about it very little. Well, yesterday and this morning, we started to get more information, and the Ukrainians claimed that they'd captured a whole series of different places. And I'm not going to name them because they're all very small places, but they're all in the area of this town of Lyman.

And then the Russians released video footage showing their troops still in all of these locations, including the location where all of these prisoners were supposed to have been taken, which is a village called Norve. And just to say, the video footage was clearly real. It was not an AI fake, and it was also clearly contemporaneous as well. So, I mean, this is actual video footage of what is actually happening in these places. So probably there is still a Ukrainian offensive going on. Probably the Ukrainians have gained some ground, but it's looking increasingly unlikely that they gained anywhere near as much as they've claimed, and certainly not as much as the people of Politico think.

That, by the way, has been a recurring story in this war. You remember just a few months ago, Ukraine had wrested the initiative in the war. Things were going well for Ukraine. Putin was on the ropes and all of that. Then a city called Konstantinovka fell. The Russians began their drone offensive. They blockaded Ukraine's Black Sea ports. That narrative then stopped. Now we have again a new story about Ukraine advancing in this particular area. It is going to reverse fairly soon. And the overall picture is definitely of Ukraine being in serious trouble, and that trouble getting worse on the front lines, in the sky, on the sea, and in the economy as well.

#Danny

Yeah, I was watching your coverage recently, Alexander, and you called Kiev now part of the front line of this war. And I wanted to just pull this up because Ukraine is not able to get these air defense systems. I mean, the U.S. always had limited air defense systems, but now even more so, that 50% of them have been drained by the Iran war. And Kiev is receiving daily daytime, nighttime strikes by Russia. Sometimes it's just drones. Sometimes it's a combination of missiles and drones. But it's every day. So how is this affecting things? What's the truth about how much impact this has? Because, of course, just like with the Iran war, Iran's control of the Strait of Hormuz isn't having any effect. Everything is okay. We also get the sense from the mainstream media that, no, Ukraine is humming along, and they're still taking back territory despite the fact that Kiev is getting hit every single day.

#Alexander Mercouris

Well, it is having an effect. And first of all, the first thing to say is it's not just Kiev that is being hit every day. I mean, this is another aspect of the war which has changed. I remember the early days of the war. People would say, "Where's the Russian Air Force? Why aren't the Russians dominating the skies?" And, well, there were all sorts of reasons at that time why the Russians didn't and couldn't dominate the skies. Ukraine had a very effective and efficient air defence system. It no

longer does. That means that the Russians are able not just to conduct strikes on Kiev, which is essentially defenceless, but on Ukrainian cities all across the whole of Ukraine, on the railway lines, which are essential to preserve logistics for the Ukrainian army on the battlefronts, on the industrial systems and the oil storage systems, which the Ukrainian army depends on for its logistics.

So it does have an effect. It makes it much more difficult for Ukraine to prosecute the war, and it ultimately puts a limit to how far Ukraine can conduct offensives of the kind that we've been hearing about in Lima. But it actually goes beyond that, because all of these attacks, these combined attacks, the sea blockade of Ukraine's Black Sea ports, the attacks on the metallurgical and machine-building industries, the attacks on the warehouses that are now taking place systematically across Kiev, the attacks on the data centres, which are affecting businesses which depend on the internet for commerce—what that is doing is, it's undermining the economy, which is already heavily reduced, but which is now obviously in free fall.

That, in turn, is reducing the tax base, which is shrinking. Ukraine is therefore becoming increasingly dependent on the European Union for funding. The European Union is itself going through a major funding crisis, so its ability to keep funding Ukraine is reducing. And of course, the risk you run in a situation where you're having to spend billions, hundreds of billions, to keep the war going, to pay your troops, to sustain your administration, but you're not receiving either donations or taxes, what you're obliged to do at that point is start printing money or generating it electronically. And then that leads you directly into hyperinflation territory. And I think in Ukraine, that is a real risk now.

#Danny

And what do you make of, you know, in the Iran situation, we had Netanyahu rushing to the UAE to—and also gathered, I guess, a bunch of other GCC states—to meet about who knows what. We don't know. But it was controversial. But it marked a kind of interesting moment in Iran, especially in recent days, and how what many call vassals of the United States, how they're behaving in this landscape in the Middle East. But in the Ukraine case, we have just had the Estonian government come out and say that Russia had ordered an August arson attack on one of their defense companies.

And we have, I think, across the board in Europe, especially in the Baltic states, a very hostile position toward Russia, so much so that even Vladimir Putin commented on the Estonian government's behavior. But what do you make of how these forces—which are these Baltic states and much of Europe, for that matter, often seen as just vassals of a larger NATO kind of U.S.-led regime—what do you make of their behavior now, and in particular this incident?

#Alexander Mercouris

I think it's too simple just to call them vassals. I mean, on the one hand, they are extremely dependent on the United States. And that very fact, however, paradoxically gives them a kind of

leverage because they can say to the United States, "If you don't back us 150%, if you don't give us everything we want, if we don't get your unstinting support, then we will go down and you will lose us, because we can't really function unless we have that kind of support from you." And given that no part of the United States government wants to lose allies in that kind of way, you can see how that gives them leverage. And they're using it. They're using it because they have their very understandable long-term hostility to Russia. But they've used this crisis to try to act on that dislike of Russia even further and to use their ability to manipulate the Americans and the other Europeans by deepening this conflict with the Russians.

I understand that at every meeting now that happens within the European Union, if anybody stands up and starts talking about talks with the Russians, the Baltic states' response is actually straightforwardly hysterical. And it is a hysteria that very few people feel able to stand up to, just to say. So, I mean, it does have a very significant effect on European policy altogether. Now, why is there this war panic and war fever in Europe? It's very simple. It's because the war in Ukraine is being lost. If the Ukraine war was being won, we would not be frightened and nervous and talking about war. We would be looking confidently to victory. The fact that we are not talking in that way is a sign that things are going badly, not that they are going well.

#Danny

Yeah, definitely. I really like this conversation too, and this analysis of what it means to be a vassal at this stage because, of course, you are aware of the huge debate of the U.S.-Israel relationship, and is Israel a vassal of the United States or vice versa? Yeah. Ultimately, it seems like it gets far more complicated the longer I think that relationship strengthens on all sides, on the Europe-U.S. side and the U.S.-Israeli side. It gets complicated. And I think this idea of leverage just existing for the fact that, yeah, Europe is a key... There is no war on Russia, or there's no aggression or any kind of hostile policy toward Russia without Europe. No matter how obedient the Baltic states, for example, might be to NATO, ultimately they're the card, right? Without them, you don't really have any forward posture against Russia.

#Alexander Mercouris

Absolutely. That's good. That is absolutely correct. I mean, they are part of the reason why we have this conflict. It's not just a question of the Americans using them. They too are using the Americans, and the one does not exclude the other. And of course, the hardliners in the Baltic states will always find hardliners in Washington and the United States as well, which, of course, increases their leverage within the United States even more. So it plays both ways. As I said, it's not just somebody in Washington giving orders to everybody and everybody standing to attention and doing what Washington says. If it were that simple, then the United States would be able to conduct its foreign policy in very different ways from the ones it is doing.

#Danny

Did you see, Alexander, the—I don't know if she's still the chief editor at RT—Margarita Simonyan? She shared this Sky News clip of—and I won't play the video, I won't play the audio, because sometimes with AI and music, it can get kind of dicey. But anyway, it's a whole—this is a whole scenario supposedly of the UK government being attacked by Russia and then promising a retaliation against it. So, almost like playing at war with Russia. And Russia's response was very harsh. The Russian embassy said any British or NATO military action against Russian territory would be met with a response using all means at Russia's disposal, including nuclear weapons, leading to the tabloids spreading panic, as they love to do. Your thoughts on this, your reaction to this kind of—it's like a dangerous, almost childish way of expressing this kind of desire—but your thoughts on it.

#Alexander Mercouris

Well, it was absolutely appalling. It was a television drama, and various former government ministers participated in it. And the very fact that they were former cabinet ministers appeared to lend weight to the whole thing. I mean, it is part of the level of war psychosis that we have in Britain, which I find extremely, extremely worrying. Perhaps it's worth repeating that Russia has never attacked Britain. We have never had a situation in Britain where we have ever been attacked by the Russians. The same is not true in the opposite direction, by the way. The British have invaded Russia on two occasions. And of course, we are currently assisting the Ukrainians to conduct deep strikes into Russia itself.

Now, going back to that piece about the Estonian minister and him complaining about the potential sabotage of a factory in Estonia. Of course, we now have stories about all of this all over Europe. There is very little interest in finding out the truth in any one of these cases. And I don't know of a Russian link being conclusively proved—when I say conclusively proved, proved in a way that would stand up as evidence in a courtroom—in a single one. But if the Russians, if the Russians were up to some things in Europe, if there was some sabotage in a European weapons factory, well, given that we're conducting—we're helping the Ukrainians to conduct strikes inside Russia itself, why would that be surprising?

Why is the Estonian minister so angry and offended about possible threats to his arms factory, given the role Estonia has been playing in the prosecution of the Ukraine war? One of the great problems we have in Western Europe is that we find it very difficult to understand or imagine how our actions can be interpreted by the other side and how aggressive we must look to them. And if sometimes they take strong reactions, they make reactions—those reactions are unsurprising. And in terms of escalation, well, this television drama about war between Britain and Russia, and about Britain responding to a Russian attack, I can say definitely that there has been no Russian drama about a comparable attack upon Russia by Britain.

#Speaker 1

Hmm.

#Danny

Yeah, yeah. And I think that's so important to highlight constantly. I mean, this is the British, the UK, the United States too. What does Trump always say? He says, well, he just said that, well, if we didn't do this war against Iran, Iran would have attacked the United States directly. I mean, we're constantly being told that these countries, Russia, Iran, they're threats, and yet we only have evidence that it's the United States and Europe attacking these countries in an offensive way. Does this work anymore, Alexander? It seems like, on the one hand, while there is this narrative blitz on Ukraine to frame the war as now a Russian quagmire, the world seems to be moving along in a direction that would indicate that trust in Europe and the United States has diminished quite significantly.

#Alexander Mercouris

Well, I think that's absolutely right. I mean, there is opinion in Europe and opinion in the West, and then there is the opinion of the rest of the world. And the two are completely different. In fact, on the whole Ukraine conflict, they have been completely different from the very beginning, going all the way back to the 2014 crisis, which preceded the current one. So there's never been much agreement in this. I can remember when an Indian diplomat tried to argue with the British—this is years ago, before the special military operation began—"Why are you meddling all the time in this way in Ukraine? Do you not understand how dangerous that is and how provocative it is towards the Russians? Why don't you work instead to make your relations with the Russians better rather than worse?" And the British were outraged.

They were furious that they should be lectured in that way by an Indian diplomat. And they find it impossible to accept that kind of advice. But, you know, it is there. The rest of the world sees this war in a completely different way. The rest of the world has had plenty of experience of American and British Western foreign policies and imperialist policies and colonial policies over many centuries. They don't need very much education in what the West does. And they don't really need very much education in Western doublespeak. You know, the West talking about protecting weak countries, even as it attacks them. The West talking about the wickedness of armed aggression as it commits aggression against a country like Iran. The West talking about the threat of empires, even as it seeks to extend its dominance and has in the past been active in promoting empire.

Most of the world understands this very well and understands completely where the Russians are coming from and why there is this conflict in Ukraine. And they understand it even better about the Middle East. What has changed over the last year is that there are clear signs now that opinion in Europe itself is beginning to change. I don't mean opinion at elite level, but elite opinion at popular level. The economic pressures are causing radicalisation, and the war talk, the constant harping about the need to prepare for war with Russia, is not just frightening people, but it's angering them

and is causing increasing doubts about the entire foreign policy direction that is being followed. And you see this in Germany, but also in France, most of all.

#Danny

Now, Alexander, for a final question, I wanted your impressions of the Trump-Xi summit, in particular, given all that we've talked about with the U.S.-led and in part Israeli-led wars in the Middle East, Iran being the focal one, and Ukraine. What exactly did the Trump-Xi summit tell you about China's position vis-à-vis not just these particular wars and regions, but in the world, you know, in contrast with the United States?

#Alexander Mercouris

Well, what the Americans were trying to do, what Donald Trump was trying to do, was to charm Xi Jinping, to make Xi Jinping so impressed by all the red carpets and the warm welcomes and the nice words and the tours of the White House and all of that, that Xi Jinping would say, you know, I've got to show some goodwill, and I'm going to make all kinds of concessions on all sorts of things. That doesn't work with China. China is not going to be impressed in that way. So the result was that we got a purely performative summit between the Americans and the Chinese. The Chinese understand this perfectly well. If you read their own accounts of the meeting, if you read the readouts of Xi Jinping's discussions with Trump, you could see that the Chinese didn't give an inch, and they're not going to. They, too, have come to conclusions that the Americans are fundamentally hostile to them, and they're making preparations.

#Abbas Araghchi

Hmm.

#Danny

Yeah, well, Alexander, this was a great program. For final words before the show ends, your assessment on, especially in particular, Ukraine—where things are heading and what to look out for.

#Alexander Mercouris

Well, I think if you're talking about Ukraine, there are military developments on the front lines, very different from the ones that Politico is talking about, which are going to change very considerably over the next few months. But also this war in the air, which the Russians have only initiated properly these last few weeks. This is the first time that they've done this, but they show every sign of continuing with it. That too is going to change everything, not just everything in Ukraine, but everything in Europe as well. I mean, we are starting to feel in Europe that really we are up against a colossus, because we know perfectly well in Europe that we cannot match this.

And the Europeans, I should say, I'm sure about this, assumed that the drone offensive that they'd been very complicit in, that Ukraine launched against Russia over the course of the summer, would somehow have big impacts inside Russia itself. And I think they're absolutely crushed that that didn't happen. And they are left genuinely not knowing what to do. But in Europe, we are at a point of very severe crisis. If things begin to go very badly wrong in Ukraine, we have such a panicky, nervous mood in Europe at the moment that there is a real risk that somebody might do something unbelievably stupid, and things could tip over into a much bigger crisis, even than the one we're seeing.

And the same applies to the Middle East. If Trump... and here I think the risks are much greater. If Trump chooses war, which he gives every sign of intending to do, then, as I said, we're in a very, very difficult and very bad place indeed. And if both of these things happen at the same time, well, then I leave it to our viewers to exercise their imagination and wonder what that means. I mean, a crisis for the West on a scale that we have not seen since the end of the Second World War.

#Danny

Alexander, this is a great program. I want to make sure everyone knows that both the Duran YouTube and your individual channel on YouTube are in the video description below. So everyone who has not subscribed and followed your daily updates on geopolitical and military matters, in particular, especially with regard to the Ukraine conflict, should do that. Now, after they get out of here, everyone should hit the like button because that helps boost the show so more people can hear Alexander and my conversation. Everybody, thanks so much for watching. Thanks to all the moderators in the chat. Thanks to all who viewed, all the places to support this channel in the video description below. Tomorrow, I'll be back with our mutual friend, Stanislav Krapivnik. And so be sure to keep an eye out for the notification for September 30th. All right, everybody. Take care. Thanks for watching. Until next time. Bye-bye.