

America's Final War | Dr. Arthur Kachikian

The war that broke the Empire's Neck: Iran is about to become a worse disaster than Vietnam. And the Washington elite has no one to blame but themselves. After tens of millions of deaths around the globe, the US war machine is finally collapsing under its own weight and the crony capitalism that birthed it in the first place. Today I discuss with Arthur Kachikian, political scientist and sharp reader of the South Caucasus, we trace the shockwaves from Armenia and Iran to Washington, Europe, international law, democratic failure, and the fear that the old guardrails are falling away in real time. Links: Arthur Kachikian on Telegram: <https://t.me/artedecco> Neutrality Studies substack: <https://pascallottaz.substack.com> Opt in for Academic Section from your profile settings: <https://pascallottaz.substack.com/s/academic> Merch & Donations: <https://neutralitystudies-shop.fourthwall.com> Timestamps: 00:00:00 Introduction 00:00:23 Armenia and regional fallout 00:03:01 Kurds, proxies and regime change 00:06:46 Chaos as strategy 00:10:14 Liberal order in collapse 00:20:11 Holy war and nuclear spread 00:29:08 World war and great power risk 00:38:23 International law and just war 00:47:40 Democracy captured by power

#Pascal

Welcome everybody back to Neutrality Studies. This is Pascal Lottaz coming to you from Japan, and I'm joined today by Arthur Kachikian. He's a doctor of political science and a good colleague who's been on the show before. Arthur, welcome back. Thanks for having me back. It's a pleasure. Thank you for coming. And maybe let's start with your home region, Armenia, the South Caucasus. It is today, March 9th. We've now been nine days into a war with Iran—an insane war, in my view. What is happening in Armenia and Azerbaijan, in the Southern Caucasus? How is that region currently developing?

#Arthur Kachikian

Well, first, let me say that this is an unprecedented event, even though we were hoping it wouldn't happen. There have been some cases of similar things before, but we were hoping this one could be avoided. It's a pretty unprecedented war that has now engulfed the entire region, with the potential to spread even further. It's happening right on the borders of Armenia and Azerbaijan, close to Georgia. Reportedly, there were attempts to involve Azerbaijan and Turkey in this war. You've seen a drone fall in Nakhichevan, in Azerbaijan, and a missile that was reportedly fired at Turkey. Then Iran said, "We didn't do this," denying responsibility. So it looks like an attempt to drag Turkey and Azerbaijan in.

The first refugees are arriving in Armenia—though not as many as I thought there would be. Today, there was a report that the first nuclear facility was hit, and so far there's no radiation leak. But that's also something to consider. I mean, where should I start? This is a catastrophe at the regional

level. This is a catastrophe at the global level. With your permission, we can start with the region, and then, if you want, I'll share some broader thoughts with you. Just prompt me. So, first, there were some scenarios, right? Number one was that the U.S. was just trying to intimidate Iran to give in to its claims—that didn't happen. The second scenario was the Belgrade–Yugoslavia scenario, that they would bomb Iran until Iran gives in.

That didn't happen either. Then they tried the Syrian scenario—or you could also say Libyan, in a different sense—but probably Syrian, where after the original bombardment, they tried to use ethnic minorities to provoke an ethnic war in Iran. They tried to provoke a civil war, but that didn't work. The hope was probably that after this initial bombing, the opposition would take to the streets. That didn't happen. Then, reportedly, according to some American media outlets, they tried to use the Kurds, and the Kurds refused—wisely—because they'd already been used twice in Syria, and twice they were abandoned. So they learned their lesson. And then there was an attempt to drag—uh, is that?

#Pascal

Are you pretty sure, or is the U.S. still trying to work with the Kurds to get them involved? The latest news you have is that the Kurds aren't really eager to do this.

#Arthur Kachikian

I can only rely on open sources—what I see in Telegram channels—and the best I can do is compare what different people are saying. I know that very authoritative outlets in the U.S., like CNN and some major others, were saying that the U.S. is working with the Kurds, so that part, you know, we can probably say is true. There were some reports that the Kurds had already crossed the border, then those were denied by the Kurds. Then there were reports that they tried, but were shot at and pushed back in Iran. So it's hard to say exactly what's happening, but it's very plausible that an attempt was made to use the Kurds—and it wouldn't be the first time.

And it makes sense that you would try to use an ethnic minority in Iran. Of course, there are other minorities—there's a fifteen-million-strong Azeri minority in the northern regions of Iran, the Baloch minority, the Arab minority. So if the goal is the dismemberment of Iran, the opportunities are there. And it would make sense, because apparently the air campaign, although it was successful—even though Iran managed to respond—uh, it's probably not going to succeed in changing the regime in Iran. Yes, you can bomb Tehran, you can turn it into another Gaza, but it's probably not going to change the regime. So then, at some point, both sides will find themselves in an impasse.

What do you do? Let's say you destroyed all the ballistic missiles in Iran, destroyed all the drones, bombed these people into oblivion, killed another 165 ten-year-old girls—just appalling. What do you do then? How do you change the regime? Well, you've got to put boots on the ground, as they say. Hopefully, it's not going to come to that, because that would be suicidal. But there are some

reports—well, actually, some statements—that the U.S. does not rule it out. They tried to use other people first, the Kurds, probably the Azeris. Now that that hasn't succeeded, they'll probably consider this step, which would be a total catastrophe.

I was just reading and watching some documentaries—just refreshing my memory on the war in Iraq and the war in Afghanistan. And what amazes me is that we refuse to learn. We refuse to learn. When you invade a country, you may be successful in removing its government, changing the power structure of that country. But then you have to understand that the only reason whatever regime you created exists is because you are there. So then, do you stay there indefinitely, supporting this new political architecture, and then suffer 4,000 casualties in Iraq and 2,500 in Afghanistan—and then withdraw because you realize you can't stay there forever?

There's an asymmetry of interest, an asymmetry of resources, and an asymmetry of legitimacy. So eventually you're going to have to withdraw, and whatever you created is going to fall apart spectacularly, like it did in Iraq and Afghanistan. Are you about to repeat the same mistake in Iran? It's a lot bigger, from what I understand, and the population is huge. How are you going to control this country? Are you going to do the same thing again? So Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan weren't tragic enough—now you want another one, another tragedy. It's very hard for me to understand.

#Pascal

Hey, very brief intermission because I was recently banned from YouTube. And although I'm back, this could happen again at any time. So please consider subscribing not only here, but also to my mailing list on Substack—that's pascallottaz.substack.com.

#Arthur Kachikian

The link will be in the description below. And now, back to the video.

#Pascal

I don't know. I know people say these were moments when the United States lost the war, but I keep saying no—they didn't. South Vietnam lost the Vietnam War. The Afghan Republic, or whatever it was called, lost the Afghan War. And Iraq—well, Iraq, too, lost the Iraq War. And even today, their oil proceeds are managed in New York. The government, I mean, the parliament, has already asked the United States to leave several times, and the U.S. just says no. They still control Iraq; they have logistical control and air control over Iraq and, by extension, Israel. So, I mean, also Libya—people keep saying, oh, it's a complete disaster.

Yes, for the Libyans—but not for the Israelis, not for the Americans. For them, you know, if chaos is what you want, then it's actually quite a success. And in my view, the strategy—especially the Israeli strategy in its immediate neighborhood—has been massive amounts of chaos, because it helps you

control the region. So if absolute chaos is what the U.S. and Israel want for Iran, then, you know, carpet bombing and destroying all semblance of normal civilian life—that's exactly what you would do. Of course, it presupposes an extremely vicious goal, but I have no reason at the moment to rule that goal out.

#Arthur Kachikian

Yes, but eventually you would bear the political and moral—if there is such a thing—responsibility for what you did. Because you invaded this country, you disturbed and changed the political balance within it, and now, if you withdraw, you're responsible for the consequences. The Taliban prevailed.

#Pascal

No, that's the point—you're not. How many Americans were hanged from a tree for Afghanistan? How many were hanged for Iraq? How many were hanged for Vietnam? How many presidents were put in prison in The Hague for any of those? These people have no responsibility. They will never bear responsibility.

#Arthur Kachikian

Yes, I'll speak to that and then share an observation with you. Fifty-nine thousand young Americans died in Vietnam, and later on, President Carter said the domino theory was a stretch. That's a crime.

#Pascal

Over a million Vietnamese.

#Arthur Kachikian

Fifty-nine thousand young Americans who were not out on the streets protesting the government back in Washington.

#Pascal

I mean, it's really diabolical, but I do think these people think in those terms. But Arthur, let's continue with your analysis, because I think, overall, the point that this is not a war that can be won is absolutely correct. So where does that leave us?

#Arthur Kachikian

Yes, but just to finish off, 2,500 Americans died in Afghanistan and 4,500 Americans died in Iraq—not to mention hundreds of thousands of people who were killed in both countries, and at least a million and a half Vietnamese killed in Vietnam. And no one was responsible for this. I agree with

you, it's a crime. There's a French saying: if you kill one person, you go to jail; if you kill fifty people, you go to a psychiatrist; and if you kill a million people, you become a hero and get a statue erected in your honor. So why would the U.S. walk into the same trap? Why would they do the same thing? Apparently, well, number one, there are some very dangerous religious overtones coming from Washington.

People are speaking in terms of the Bible, Armageddon, and the return of Jesus Christ. I mean, this is very dangerous. We have a leader, a group that leads the most powerful country in the world—a nuclear power, a superpower—and they're talking in terms of a religious war, like a Christian jihad or a crusade. So what's going to happen next? Are we going to have the next Raymond of Toulouse, or Guillaume of Bouillon, or Richard the Lionheart? I mean, Pete Hegseth—he speaks like a boy. You know, great guy with a very respectable career, but he sounds like a teenager who's enjoying the fight.

I mean, this is pretty dangerous—to frame it in terms of a religious war. What I want to say, Pascal, is that what we're witnessing is an earthquake. This is an international earthquake of global proportions. It's the end of international law, international legitimacy, international public opinion, international organizations, the UN system, the post-1945 world order. In fact, it's the end of any world order. It's the end of the entire idea of equilibrium, common European security, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. It's the end of the entire arms control architecture. We pretty much—well, you know—START was not renewed.

We pretty much now only have the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, which is more or less being respected. The nonproliferation regime is on its way out. The INF Treaty—gone. The ABM Treaty—gone. Conventional Forces in Europe—gone. Open Skies—gone. Am I forgetting anything? There must have been something else. All these treaties have just gone out the window. The entire arms control system has fallen apart. The whole philosophy of sustaining peace through mutual understanding, compromise, and equilibrium—out the door. We've seen the end of liberal democracy, the dream. This is the end of liberalism.

For the last 400 years, English, French, Dutch, American, and other authors have told us that the ideal condition for human society is liberal democracy—that democracies live in peace with each other, they don't attack each other, and it's the ideal form for both internal and external politics. Starting with Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, John Stuart Mill, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Montesquieu, Adam Smith, Voltaire—all these people have now become irrelevant. We've gone back 400 years, 400 years of liberal thought. You have a democracy, a leading democracy, behaving this way for the last 25 years. People tell me, "Arthur, you're exaggerating. It's just one person." It's not one person. England and France are joining. We have the Secretary General of NATO saying, "We are an alliance of democracies. We're going to join this war."

#Pascal

We have a German chancellor who, literally in the Oval Office, pats the back of the President of the United States and says, "No, no, we are with you on this one."

#Arthur Kachikian

Yes, so Mr. Fukuyama can go back to the '90s and write his book again. This is the end—but not the end of history. This is the end of liberal democracy. This is the end of Western liberal democracy, because everything we knew about it is out the window. The free press—finished. The power of public opinion—gone. Uh, liberal values—talk about liberal values—killing 165 children and not even talking about it, gone. Economic interdependence, institutional constraints—all of these elements of liberal theory just fell apart. And we're now walking through a cemetery of world orders and ideals, ideals of how to prevent war. This is what humanity has been thinking about since time immemorial. You know, if we went back—what is it?

13th century BC—the first treaty between Ramses II and the Hittites. I always forget the name. Anyway, it was the 13th century BC. If we took a time machine, like Austin Powers, and went back to the 13th century BC, and they asked us, "People of the future, we want to know—how do we avoid war? Tell us." We would say, "You know, we have learned absolutely nothing. In thousands of years of human history, we have absolutely nothing." We are now walking through a cemetery of world orders. We just have a fresh tomb, which is MAGA—Make America Great Again. That turned out to be a hoax. Right next to it, we have George Bush Sr. with the New World Order. A few steps away, we have Mikhail Gorbachev with his "new thinking."

A couple of steps away, we have another tomb for Woodrow Wilson with his League of Nations. Next to it, we have the Concert of Europe from the 19th century that fell apart. Then we have the tomb of Immanuel Kant with his "Perpetual Peace." And then dozens and dozens of other tombs. We've talked about this before—all the liberal thinkers: Jeremy Bentham, the Assembly of Europe, Saint-Simon, Abbé de Saint-Pierre, the Duke of Sully, the European Federation, the European Council, the League of European Nations. All of it is a cemetery of ideas—humanity trying to control itself, trying to prevent war. All of it has fallen apart. This is a huge cemetery now.

#Pascal

But the thing to understand is that it was taken apart by the liberals themselves. It was taken apart by the apostles of this kind of system. I mean, just look at your own country, Armenia—look at how the EU just treated you. It's the very people who claim they want to defend democracy who go out and support the most blatant authoritarian political movements, as long as those movements fit within their general geopolitical framework.

#Arthur Kachikian

Well, yes, of course. We have our new dictator—our new Saddam Hussein—who is arresting members of our church, the clergy, the opposition, the journalists. And he's supported by Europe. Would France, or England, or Germany tolerate a lawyer being thrown to the ground in front of a courthouse because he wrote something on Facebook? Would they tolerate the Archbishop of Canterbury being pursued, with criminal charges initiated against him? Or any archbishop in France or Germany being arrested simply because he disagrees with the government? The hypocrisy of it is really hard to bear. It's these double standards. I'm a big liberal—you know this.

I believe in this. I told you, when I was a teenager in the USSR, I used my grandma's old shortwave radio at night. I'd wake up at 2 a.m. to listen to, you know, Radio Free Europe, or Radio Liberty, or the BBC. I was very pro-Western, pro-liberal, and for me to realize that everything I believed in turned out to be a hoax is pretty painful. Because everything we call democracy now has basically turned into the art of manipulating public opinion through social media. And in a democracy, you see that the government, instead of being accountable to its voters, is accountable to lobbyists, private interest groups, and donors. It's a complete corruption of democracy.

#Pascal

I must say, it's parliamentary democracy that we're talking about. It's kind of easy to capture the elite version of capitalism instead of actually empowering the masses. And I must say, if you go to Switzerland and look at how the political process works there, we still have more of that liberal dream alive—although, I must say, it's packaged very, very differently. But it's parliamentary democracy that ends up being captured by the interests of certain groups, which all answer to certain capitalist frameworks.

#Arthur Kachikian

Yes, it's the English model, going back to the model parliament of the 13th century. Sadly, it seems to have been corrupted. And you're, of course, from the country of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, who believed in direct referendums and the *volonté générale*. Of course, it's a different model. But we really have to rethink the way we manage ourselves, because democracy has gone out the window. Look at what's happening with the leading democracy in the world. This is an enormous moral blow to all the ideals we've been cherishing for the last 400 years.

#Pascal

True, although the thing is, these ideals were never universally rolled out, right? I mean, women were not really part of it from the get-go. And let's not forget that the leading democracy in the world—the United States—was built on the graveyard of an entire civilization on the North American continent, right? The genocide of the Indigenous Americans was a prerequisite for the modern United States to exist. So it was never a project for everybody; it was always a project for a group.

And then the discussion was always, should it apply to this or that minority, or not? And we're again at that point, right?

#Arthur Kachikian

But then it became a project for everyone, because democracies decided they had to spread democracy—since the democratic peace theory says democracies don't fight each other. Look at what's happening now. So, if you want to live in a peaceful world, you have to start a war to prevent a war. You have to start fighting to impose your democratic system on other countries, and then you'll live in peace. And it's also a big tragedy for American foreign policy, because the U.S.—this virgin republic that was established 300 years ago—believed it had its own path. The founders of the United States believed, as you know, that the U.S. should not get involved in the wicked old ways of Europe, the old wars of Europe.

We should stay clear of that—no entangling alliances. We have our new mission. Our mission is democracy and the pursuit of happiness—life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. And now the U.S. is behaving like every other empire before it. It's really very frustrating to have the leader of the United States—I mean, this is a country that had John Kennedy, Franklin Delano Roosevelt, and, dare I say, Ronald Reagan. Your audience is going to attack me, of course. But the country that gave us these leaders and others—now we have a person who behaves like he's a Roman emperor. He's punishing countries for disagreeing with him. The prime minister of Spain—kudos to him—he had the cojones to say, "We're not going to participate in this, and we don't approve of this."

We learned our lesson. And then the emperor of the world tells him he's going to be punished for it. When did this happen? I mean, imagine if Russia behaved this way, or China behaved this way. Christiane Amanpour, Anderson Cooper, and Piers Morgan from the BBC—they'd be foaming at the mouth. They'd talk about it so much that foam would come out of their mouths like a dishwasher. If you use regular detergent—I did it once—don't do it, because the foam comes out a lot. They'd be foaming at the mouth if any other country spoke like this. Now we have the leader of the United States speaking like he's the Holy Roman Emperor, speaking on behalf of the world and invoking the Bible, invoking Armageddon. Do you understand where we've arrived?

#Pascal

Did he already invoke it himself, too?

#Arthur Kachikian

Well, his group has. I'm not sure that he has, but the people around him certainly have.

#Pascal

I know his group has, and I made a show about that just last week—actually, the last talk with Pascal Lottaz was also about that. I mean, it's scary how many evangelicals are in leadership positions right around him, and in the military—through and through, through the ranks—they're still there. And these people look at this as a holy war. That would explain why this war looks utterly insane—because it is. Because it's designed to be insane. But that kind of, you know, makes the whole thing even more scary, because we couldn't even approach it with a rationalist analysis about, you know, Clausewitz's "war is the continuation of politics by other means."

#Arthur Kachikian

No, this is completely irrational, especially given the experience of Afghanistan, Iraq, and even Vietnam. It's, you know, thousands and thousands of American boys—young American men and women—who have to die because of these incredibly unwise decisions. You know, as I was studying the history of Iraq and Afghanistan, I was watching some documentaries. What amazes me is that the people making the decisions in their capitals, thousands of miles away, have no idea. They don't have the slightest idea what's actually happening on the ground. This detachment of the decision-makers from the people who are actually in the situation—the people of the situation, as they say in French.

They know it, but they're unable to communicate the information to the decision-making center. And the decision-making center operates on the basis of false assumptions, personal biases, personal opinions. I mean, look at this whole idea of counterinsurgency—winning hearts and minds in Afghanistan and Iraq. Total disaster. But the decision-makers didn't know, or perhaps they knew but preferred not to believe it. Or take the idea of going into a country and destroying its entire political system. I mean, this isn't difficult: if I walk into somebody's house and destroy the walls, I have to hold up the roof—otherwise, it's going to come down.

And then people are going to ask me, "Arthur, how long are you planning to stay here? Are you going to hold it for an hour, for a day, for twenty years? I mean, are you sure you're going to stay here and sustain the system?" Because when you withdraw, it's really very, very simple: the system you create by military intervention only exists because you are part of it. You became part of it. So the configuration of power has changed because of your intervention. Therefore, the moment you withdraw, it's going to fall apart, because it only existed because of you. Then you're going to have the Afghan army fall apart because of corruption and all these ghost soldiers.

And then you're going to have a civil war in Iraq between the Shia and the Sunni. Is it difficult? Is it complicated to imagine this? It's not complicated. I'm beginning to sound like Julia Roberts in **Erin Brockovich**. It's not complicated. You go in there and you destroy a society. And then you're not planning to stay there, because there's an asymmetry of interest, an asymmetry of resources, and an asymmetry of legitimacy. The Afghan and Iraqi people are not going to think of you the same way they think of the Taliban, the Shia, and the Sunni. You have to understand that. How difficult is it to understand?

#Pascal

Of course. But I mean, honestly, I think they do understand it. The Lindsey Grahams and so on—they know that, but they don't care, because it's fine. It's fine. Again, they make a lot of money. They're safe between two big, fat oceans. They're as safe, as cozy, and as happy as can be, and it works, and it makes money for them and everybody else. I mean, for them, life is getting better and better and better. Millions of people die, but they couldn't care less, because they have a narrative to explain it to themselves. And they literally say, "These people are better dead than alive, because that's freedom," and so on.

So it works, and it works because it works. It's like evolution—it doesn't work because it wants to get us somewhere, because it wants to create humans. Humans exist because that's just how things worked out in the end, and it works for them. So the system of warfare that the United States built—and Europe is an essential part of it, integrated into it—it works. So the only question is, is it going to work us to the point of a black swan event, where these nuclear missiles are going to fly and it will stop working? But at that point, it'll be too late.

#Arthur Kachikian

Well, yes, and as to your last point, what we see is the end of the nonproliferation regime, because now many countries are going to scratch their heads and say, "Well, it looks like the only way to be safe..." By the way, there were negotiations going on when the attack happened, so you can't even trust negotiations. Ali Khamenei was in his office with his grandchild—who I understand was about a year old—with his family, and they destroyed him while the negotiations were going on the second time. So how are you going to trust this? Now many countries are going to say, "You know, the only way to be safe is really to have nuclear weapons—to go North Korea, to follow the North Korean model."

#Pascal

North Korea has been vindicated on all accounts. I mean, who would have thought that we'd all bow our heads before the superior wisdom, the superior reasoning, of North Korea—because they were absolutely right. Obviously, the only thing that keeps the Americans from invading you, if you're not on the same page with them, is nuclear weapons.

#Arthur Kachikian

But that also has its downsides—its drawbacks. Very serious drawbacks, because then other countries will start acquiring nuclear weapons. If Iran goes nuclear, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Egypt are probably going to follow suit. Nuclear weapons will start spreading in the region. You see Macron now saying he's going to increase his nuclear potential, not even saying how many warheads he has.

So now we have the NPT out the window. I just went through a whole list of treaties that went right out the window—this is another one. So, Dan, what's the danger with that? My wonderful professor—one of the best instructors I've had in the U.S. By the way, the U.S. has some of the best IR experts in the world; I admire them. But why is there such a mismatch? We talked about this the first time.

Between the expertise of the IR community in the U.S. and the foreign policy of its government, I'll never understand this. Anyway, he counted more than 160 cases, I think. I may be wrong about the numbers, but over a hundred cases of accidental nuclear war—situations where accidental nuclear war was possible during the Cold War. Computer mistakes, human error—a bear climbing a fence in Minnesota that sent nuclear bombers into the air because the wires were connected the wrong way. The signal was sent that the U.S. was being attacked. A tape loaded into a computer with an imitation of a nuclear game that was taken for real. A Norwegian missile launched into the atmosphere—a scientific missile—that Russian radar took as a nuclear launch. A flock of birds flying over a radar in Turkey that was mistaken for a Soviet nuclear attack.

There are over a hundred cases. Multiply that by the number of countries that are going to be involved. Consider the fact that they may not have the perfect—or even near-perfect—organizational safeguards that the USSR and the U.S. had during the Cold War. Then consider that their flight time now is going to be much shorter because the territories are closer. During the Cold War, it was, from what I understand, between 15 and 20, maybe 25 minutes of flight time. Now you're lucky if you get three minutes, because these countries are going to be very close. Now we have supersonic missiles. Now we have certain missile defense systems that may give one of the sides the illusion of being able to launch first with impunity. So this is not the stability of the Cold War. This is an extremely unstable situation.

If nuclear weapons start spreading, do you people understand what you're doing? This is an international earthquake. This is an international earthquake. Oh, we didn't talk about one small detail: we're doing away with the entire post-1945 situation—international system, international institutions. We have the president of the U.S. bypassing the United Nations. I think there are over 30 organizations related to the U.N., and now the U.S. is withdrawing from them. So this is an earthquake, and everything we had and everything we knew about IR has fallen apart. And then, to your other point—Is this a world war? Well, let's think about this calmly, because everybody's saying "world war, world war." What is a world war?

It's a war where most or all great powers are involved, taking place on more than one continent or in more than one major region of the world. So really, if you look at what's happening now in Ukraine, these are World War I figures. This is such a tragedy. Over a million young Ukrainians, Russians, and others—boys of different nationalities—are now dead. It's a crime. It's a crime. It's a problem that could have been solved peacefully within the common security network in Europe, providing security guarantees to Ukraine, guaranteeing the territory of Ukraine, and reaching some understanding with Russia that would not threaten Russia's security. What is your job? You people go to college for what purpose?

You call yourselves diplomats. This is your job—to negotiate disagreements before a million and a half young people are killed. This is your job, and you failed at it. So there's a war in Ukraine now. We have the Middle Eastern war, we have, uh, you know, certain sounds coming now from China—with reference to Japan, with reference to Taiwan. All we need is for China to get involved. Once China gets involved, you have almost all the great powers engaged in a war that takes place in more than one region. The only thing that prevents an all-out war is nuclear deterrence, which is why we may have a proxy form of world war—meaning the war will take place at the periphery between great powers.

Although one day they may try to do something like what happened, I think, last year or a couple of years ago, when Ukrainian forces attacked one of the components of Russia's nuclear triad. Apparently, that made the Russians very, very angry, because this is the kind of thing that can provoke a nuclear war. So we're walking at the edge of a precipice, Pascal. And it amazes me what kind of leaders we have. We talked about this during our first interview—the level of leadership in the world. Just forget it. You can't compare these people to those who led the world during the Cold War. I mean, I already mentioned some names. Maybe we should dig up Khrushchev and John Kennedy, and they can tell us the lessons of the Cuban Missile Crisis again, because apparently we've forgotten all about it.

#Pascal

It's such a bizarre moment. It's also so bizarre to see how, if the United States goes haywire with Donald Trump, Europe follows it. It's like—how, you know? Because I think one of the mistakes we make is thinking within the framework of the national good. We've still got too much of this idea—maybe also the realist paradigm—that states do what's best, what's in their interest, and so on. They weigh the options, and then you have the balance or the hedge and blah, blah, blah—all the lovely things we've developed in international relations to make sense of a 19th-century world, which is what most of these theorists used to make sense of it.

Maybe they also went back a little bit to Rome whenever they ran out of cases in the 19th century. But the thing is, it doesn't operate like that. You cannot understand the actions of the United States if you don't look at the interests of Israel and the interconnection of these two systems. It's not one country, two systems; it's two countries, one system, because of the influence they have on each other in the political process. John Mearsheimer told us, right, about the Israel lobby and so on. I mean, it's not just that this lobby has influence, but it's the entire lobbying system, which also gives the military-industrial complex its say, the healthcare complex its say, and so on.

And that, together with a transatlantic elite that's buddy-buddy and almost literally in bed with each other—if you look at what we learned from the Epstein files, right? The highest echelons are all intermingled. Look at the files, look at the names. All the Europeans are in there. There's hardly a Japanese name, hardly a Chinese name, hardly an African name from people inside the actual

African continent. This is a transatlantic kind of blob elite that works together and moves the entire elitocracy in certain directions. So we're not operating under national frameworks anymore, and that's just really hard to wrap our heads around, I believe.

#Arthur Kachikian

No, it's very disappointing. Yes, democracy has been hijacked. America has been hijacked. I'm a U.S. citizen; I go back to the States. Like I told you, it's a shadow of what it used to be 20 years ago when I was young. The country has been hijacked by these global elites. And, you know, I jokingly said that Vladimir Lenin came to me in my dreams and told me, "Remember what I taught you in school? The capitalist world—the financial and industrial elites—are going to unite. Then you're going to have these transnational corporations that will put their governments in their pockets, and they'll start fighting for the distribution of resources and colonies."

Of course, this is not exactly what he said 120 years ago, but it's pretty close. The formation of these elites that have their own interests at heart—profits, controlling the entire world, and controlling the government—this is what I mean by the end of democracy. It appears that the lobbying groups, the donors, the private interest groups—and I don't just mean the Israeli lobby; there are many other lobbies—have more power to sway the U.S. government than the U.S. electorate, or those thousands of boys and girls, men and women, who are supposed to die for these people. And then time will pass, and people like Hillary Clinton and Barack Obama are going to say the war in Iraq was a mistake.

Well, bring back the 5,000 people who died for it—and the hundreds of thousands of Iraqis. Can you do that? Go to prison. Just show that you actually take some responsibility. Yeah, you killed all these people. Take responsibility for your decisions. But they won't. They'll say, "I was given the wrong information." I was just watching a documentary about the Iraq War. It's pretty amazing how the decision-makers pressured some people at the CIA to produce the evidence they needed, and how the U.S. Secretary of Defense said, "I need references, I need proof." And instead of that, they told him, "Just take our word for it."

And that's when they fabricated those pictures of secret labs and planes spraying anthrax that didn't even exist. The footage was shot years earlier. And that famous thing with—well, I don't know how to say it in English—the little thing, you know? Yes, yes, the flask with anthrax that he was shaking. It's pretty shameful. The consequences are enormous, and the people who make these decisions seem to think it's okay to make mistakes like that. If I make a mistake and, God forbid, one of my students gets hurt, I'll be sued. It would be a very long lawsuit, and it would end badly for me. But when you kill hundreds of thousands of people, you can just walk away. It's pretty sad.

#Pascal

I mean, this is the machinery of government, right? It's what allows you to do all of this in the first place, because you know you won't face any negative consequences. But, you know, that's the other thing—we were thinking in a national framework for too long. Now we're finding that there are all these things that also, by the way, vindicate the constructivists who are saying, "Look, it's the ideas that matter, right?" It's really not just democracy, not just raw power, but the fact that you have, like, the capitalist ideology that asserts power—and the system that reinforces it. And then there are the others, the evangelicals, the religious fanatics who actually want to bring about Armageddon.

And that they have considerable sway, and that they actually guide the foreign policy actions of the United States. Then the structure created around this kind of model—this ideal of "we, the liberal West"—drags everybody else along with it. And the German chancellor is standing, or sitting, next to the U.S. president, saying, "No, no, we are with you in a war of aggression." And the Brits go with it, and the French go with it, and now everybody in our mass media—that ugly beast—is basically trying to whitewash this blatant war of aggression, right? I mean, there's nothing else. You know, the Russian war against Ukraine pales in the shadow of what the Iran war now is. But they still manage to somehow put lipstick on this pig. It's quite fascinating, isn't it?

#Arthur Kachikian

Well, yes. And the problem is that when you break the rules, you know that someone else is going to break the rules—which is what Bernie Sanders said when there was a discussion on Iraq twenty-some years ago. He said, if we do this, then other countries are going to follow suit. When you bomb Yugoslavia and bypass the United Nations—even though, yes, there were reasons to intervene: there was ethnic cleansing, there were barbaric killings, Srebrenica and Goražde—it was horrible. And the international community had to get involved. But when you do it this way, by bypassing the UN, you set a precedent that the UN is no longer relevant, that you can use force unilaterally. Then you do it in Libya. Then you do it in Iraq.

Then you do it in Afghanistan. Then you start the Arab Spring. Then other countries are going to say, "Oh, okay, well, we're going to do the same thing." Because, you know, the road to World War I was paved, as you know, by the Moroccan crisis, the Italian intervention in Libya, the Balkan Wars—because the world community kind of looked around and said, "Oh, it's okay to attack each other, apparently, because it's happening right now." So that paved the way to World War I. And by the same token, the Japanese intervention in Manchuria, the Soviet-Finnish War, the Italian war of aggression against Abyssinia—Ethiopia—and the German seizure of the Sudetenland paved the way to World War II, because again, it showed that the League of Nations was irrelevant.

There is no rule of law. But now, I don't think we've ever had a leader of a democratic nation openly say that there is no international law anymore. I don't think we ever had that. I'm trying to remember—did we ever have a U.S. president or his entourage, people who openly said, "Who cares about international law? It doesn't exist. It's the law of the jungle. Might makes right." In fact, this is

precisely a quote from Prime Minister Baldwin, the British Prime Minister, when he said in a speech, "We cannot agree to a world system where might makes right." And now you have the leader of the United States announcing this as a principle of his foreign policy. Very dangerous.

#Pascal

No, you're right. We were never in a moment when a U.S. president or any kind of leader of a democratic country would actually put it into those words. They would do it, but they would always try to put the international law lipstick on the pig. Right? Even in the Iraq War—the whole reason he held up that flask at the Security Council was because they were building the international law case for a preemptive or preventive war. And, you know, the entire 2003 saga actually kickstarted, in our field, a year-long discussion about just war theory, right?

It was the revival of war theory. Yes. I mean, none of that is happening right now because they're not trying to do that. They're arguing that it's not applicable. And even the Germans right now—if you watch German TV, it's horrible—Armin Laschet, one of the main guys in the CDU, actually said something like, "Iran cannot hide behind international law. They've been breaking international law all the time, so now they cannot hide behind it. It doesn't apply to them because they've broken it before."

#Pascal

These people—it's quite amazing what they do, as if the law didn't apply to a murderer or a thief just because they broke it.

#Arthur Kachikian

That's exactly the analogy I use. That's true.

#Pascal

I'm not saying that's true with Iran, but even if the allegation were true, the analogy still wouldn't hold, because obviously either the law applies universally or it doesn't. And they're now making the case that it doesn't.

#Arthur Kachikian

No, no, that's exactly the analogy I'm using—that you can't say, "I'm breaking the law because somebody else broke the law," because that leads to major escalation, and that leads to a world war. Then other countries are going to do the same thing. We're talking about just war theory. You

know, I love history. It's really amazing that this tradition goes back to the Middle Ages. We had this tradition starting then: proportionality in the use of force, not killing noncombatants, having clear war objectives, and exhausting all peaceful means before resorting to violence.

And then another thing I looked up before talking to you today—this whole thing about the “imminent threat”—it’s just not true. If you look at the international precedent that was used for this notion of an imminent threat, it was the incident with the *Caroline*, the ship—the *Caroline* precedent. The Brits, I think, seized an American ship because they thought it was about to attack them, and the U.S. Secretary of State, Webster, said that for it to be recognized as an imminent threat, you have to demonstrate that you had no time to consider any other option.

The threat had to be truly imminent, with no other way to prevent it. I just looked up the exact quotation—it’ll come to me. Basically, it has to be a clear and present danger. It’s happening right now, and you have no time to consider any other options, no other way to address it. But the negotiations were still going on. You can’t say that, you can’t make that argument. If you want to live in a world with no law, then just abolish the police in Japan or in Armenia and see how you like it—see what you’d have to provide for yourself. Absolutely.

#Pascal

Absolutely. And, you know, just for the IR—or international law—nerds among our listeners, in just war theory there’s this distinction between a preemptive war and a preventive war. The only thing that’s allowed is preemptive, because that means the other side is basically already aiming the weapons at you—just hasn’t pulled the trigger yet. The weapons are aimed and locked and loaded, as the U.S. president would say, right? Only in those circumstances can you build a case for a preemptive strike. Everything else is considered preventive, and preventive strikes, even by just war theory standards of the Middle Ages, are not admissible.

#Arthur Kachikian

I have the quote: “Necessity of self-defense, instant, overwhelming, leaving no choice of means and no moment of deliberation.” That’s from a 19th-century precedent. And it’s a little bit similar to self-defense laws in many countries. I’m not a lawyer, but the principles are similar. When somebody enters your home—unless you live in Texas—you can’t just shoot them. You have to show that you tried to remove yourself from the situation or resolve it by some other means, and that there was a clear and present danger to your life. Then maybe you can argue it was self-defense. So this is clearly a big stretch. The international institutions and principles are compromised. The whole institution of negotiations is compromised.

How will Iran negotiate now, and what guarantee does it have that in six months there won’t be another attack? This is going the Gaza route—the Gaza scenario, or maybe the Houthi scenario—because it’s not going to be Syria or Libya. It’s heading in that direction. Hopefully, we won’t see

much more devastation or more civilian and military personnel being killed. And hopefully, in a few weeks, the countries can reach out to some intermediary states. Maybe a mediator will step in and allow them to save face and exit this situation, where the U.S. will claim victory because it pummeled the Iranians, and the Iranians will claim they won because they didn't give in.

So maybe something like this can be negotiated. But it's a huge problem. And the root of this problem is in the mid-1990s, when world leaders decided to abandon the idea of collective security—to abandon the wisdom of centuries of international thought. The only way to be secure is when you cooperate with everyone else and consider everybody else's interests. This is the only way to do it, and the only successful example is the Concert of Europe, which worked for 40 years precisely for that purpose. But in the mid-1990s, a decision was made—"you know, screw the Russians, we're going to do what we want." And that's when you have, because when you have action on one end, you have counteraction on the other.

When you build alliances on this side, you'll have counter-alliances on that side. When you start intervening and changing governments in your region of the world, you're going to have other countries do the same—intervene and change governments on the other side. It's the law of escalation, the law of action and reaction, the law of the security dilemma. We discussed all of it. Sometimes I feel like I should get a refund on my college tuition. I don't even know why I'm teaching IR. You're an IR instructor, you know—what's the point if the decision-makers don't have the faintest idea how international relations work or what the fundamental principles are? Maybe you and I should go design some app that makes people look sexy on TikTok. We'd make more money.

#Pascal

No, no. You know, the thing is, cancer kills patients whether or not the doctor understands it, right? I mean, getting frustrated at cancer winning isn't a reason to stop trying to understand how it works. It's sad as it is, but we're not at the end of times. I mean, we're just another iteration of people who, for hundreds—if not thousands—of years, have tried to understand why goddamn war keeps killing so many people. And still, after thousands of years, we haven't managed to fix the system. We're not at the endpoint; we're somewhere in the middle. It's a great point. The thing is, what I believe we've done as a species is we've been somehow successful at managing violence—even mass violence—on the nation-state level.

I mean, on the smaller unit level—right. And I said that in a different episode, but it takes quite something to come up with the idea of separation of powers, of checks and balances, of a system where central power is controlled in a way that keeps society stable. If you look at descriptions of England 400 years ago, or Europe, or even other places, life was pretty brutal and harshly short. So we managed that, and we did that successfully, and we're more or less good at that level. But when it comes to the macro level, we're still within anarchy. We have no proper international system. I mean, the best idea in the last hundred years that we've had—and we tried to implement it twice—is to create a global policeman.

#Arthur Kachikian

Yes, yes, but the global policeman idea doesn't work with great powers.

#Pascal

Compare that to the idea of separation of powers, the judiciary, and so on—an intricate system of population management. And then we just came up with, "Let's make a club and push it down." It's just not good enough yet.

#Arthur Kachikian

You're raising some amazing points. With your permission, I'll just take a couple of minutes. First of all, the world policeman—it's a great idea, except it doesn't work when the great powers disagree, like in the UN, or when they don't have the will to fight, like the League of Nations. You raised the idea of internal domestic politics. If you look at England—I'm not an expert on English history, even though I love it—I think it's an amazing country, and I love its culture, language, and literature, etc. But what was the whole evolution of the British political system? No tyranny.

There will be no tyranny. We're going to create a balance to the king's power—from Magna Carta to the Provisions of Oxford to the Glorious Revolution, and so on. The idea was equilibrium. There has to be an equilibrium: no tyranny, no domination of one power. Equilibrium. But look at what's happening internationally—it's tyranny, the tyranny of the hegemon on the international stage. So it's exactly the opposite of what was done domestically. Now, regarding the world orders we talked about last time—1648. What was the reason for the war? Intervention, religious wars. What do we do?

We establish sovereign states—no intervention. In theory, of course, it happens again. So we have sovereign states, territoriality, independence, autonomy—and that's supposed to, you know, rule out wars. No, no, it happens again. Then we have the Treaty of Utrecht: equilibrium. What's important is to maintain the equilibrium of Europe, right? 1713—*ad conservandum in Europa equilibrium*—we have to preserve the balance in Europe. Doesn't work. We have the Napoleonic Wars, 1815. What's the reason for wars? Revolution. What do we do? The Holy Alliance—suppress revolutions, don't let them spread. Austria walks into Italy.

Russia walks into Hungary. In Piedmont, in Naples, revolutions are suppressed. We have the Concert of Europe—the Concert of Europe. The idea is that you can rationally manage the equilibrium of power, so no single country should become too powerful, because that's going to hurt the others, and in the end, it's going to hurt that country as well. So you have this almost mathematical management of the balance of power in Europe for forty years, until the Crimean War, until the

German and Italian reunifications. Then you have World War I, and then you have the recipe. What's the reason for World War I? Secret treaties, balance-of-power wars, entangling alliances. What do you do? You say—we say—no to balance-of-power wars.

We're going to rely on the power of public opinion and on what's moral and ethical. And then Edward Carr makes fun of it. Then the League of Nations falls apart. So every single time we try to build something—this is, you know, it's so sad, because you mentioned this during our first interview—the Helsinki process, the Helsinki process, mid-70s, the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. I feel like I lived my life backwards, like somebody pressed rewind on my remote control. My life is going backwards—in the mid-70s. Look at the society of the mid-70s, not the early 80s, but the mid-80s: arms control, equilibrium, common European values, new thinking. This would be the case for constructivism. And look what happened.

I'm glad you mentioned constructivism, by the way. I'll mention my book, et cetera, et cetera. So, in the mid-'70s, we knew this. We started the Helsinki process. We started talking about a common European security system. And then that, too, was abandoned again and again. You know, you mentioned constructivism, right? What do constructivists say, for those who are interested? The way you see the world is going to change the world. If you think of anarchy not as something that leads to violence but as something that gives you an opportunity to cooperate, you can change the world by thinking of it differently. What we just saw right now shows exactly the opposite. When you have a certain power distribution—it's my theory. I still have to prove it.

When you have a certain power distribution and one country becomes so powerful that it can do whatever it wants, a certain type of people and certain views about the world begin to prevail. "If we can do whatever we want, oh, then I have a lot of ideas—we're going to change governments, we're going to interfere, we're going to intervene in these regions and in other regions." These kinds of people, it creates an opportunity for them to come to power. We've cited this before: power corrupts, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. The U.S. didn't behave this way during the—well, in some regions it did, but not globally. The U.S. spoke out; it condemned the Soviet aggression in Afghanistan. Remember, they even boycotted the Olympic Games in Moscow.

#Pascal

I would argue that there's still a bit of a liberal tint to your...

#Arthur Kachikian

Yes, there is.

#Pascal

Because I had a discussion with David Gibbs, who says, "Look, the Americans made the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan all but inevitable. This was very much part and parcel of how they goaded the Soviets into invading."

#Arthur Kachikian

Well, yes. Yes, Brzezinski said that. He admitted it in his interview. They asked him, "What about tens of thousands of dead Afghans?" And he said, "What are you talking about? We ended the Cold War. Wasn't it worth it?" He said it was a trap set for the Soviet Union.

#Pascal

It was. So, in a sense, the U.S. system never behaved differently—or at least not after the Second World War—because before the Second World War, you had that thing where they said, "No involvement in Europe." Right. Even in the First World War, they went, but then they pulled back again. Right. So it hasn't changed dramatically since '45, but the system—especially the one that's built up with all these security agencies, what used to be the OSS and is now the CIA—has evolved. We haven't accounted, in our theories, for the impact of psychopathic individuals and how they can manage to infiltrate the system.

And we haven't really accounted for the idea of a state within a state—the CIA and so on—unaccountable, unauditible, black boxes that we don't understand. The only thing we can be sure of is that they have very, very powerful control. And if some of the elites don't play along, then, well, you're a Martin Luther King, a Malcolm X, a John F. Kennedy, or an RFK, for that matter. That's how the system manages itself. And we don't have a proper way to account for that, or a strategy to deal with it.

#Arthur Kachikian

Yes, yeah. It's like the Bolsheviks condemning imperialist wars all over the world, and then they initiate their own wars. It's human nature. It's the nature of human beings and of our society. There is no ideal formula. And you're right—I still have a little bit of that liberal tint. I don't want to give up my faith in the liberal world, in the United States, in the West. But sadly, reality just punches me in the face every day, including personally, because this terrible government we have in Armenia, with the support of the West, is now basically sanctioning and oppressing everyone who tries to criticize it. And I'm one of them. So it's a joke. I became a victim of my own ideals.

#Pascal

It's so funny—well, funny in a very unfunny way. It's actually very depressing. But you know, at the end of the day, we're all—no, no, I mean, we're victims of our own, um, of our own actions, or of

our own systems. I don't know how to put it. It's like, how many people share this frustration? We don't want this, and we live in the West or whatnot, right? A large part of my audience is in the United States.

#Arthur Kachikian

We all understand we don't want it to work like this, but it does. And it feels so horrible. That's what IR theory will tell you—it doesn't depend on what you want. If you want, Pascal, sometimes just to get inspired, go watch some footage from the ceremony with Chancellor Kohl, the German reunification ceremony, the big prayer they had. Go watch the meetings between Gorbachev and Reagan and Margaret Thatcher. God forbid I said her name—oh my God, please don't kill me. Look, oh my God, your audience, you're a bunch of commies! Anyway, go watch that footage. Watch that footage—you're like, oh my God, that's fraternity.

"Alle Menschen würden Brüder," right? There's this kind of idea—we're all going to be brothers. Look at this: our leaders are talking to each other, they're bringing down the Berlin Wall, they're cutting up all these missiles, destroying chemical weapons, destroying nuclear weapons. They're talking about a common European house. What happened? What happened? What happened? This is the late '80s. Go look at that footage. I want to go back and live in the time of my youth, because we were so much more rational. Our leaders were rational. Maybe we just lost the wisdom of World War II. Maybe the generation of World War II is gone, and now we're back to this madness.

#Pascal

Or, Arthur, maybe we were just young. We were just gullible. Because, you know, if I remember correctly, Beethoven was a big fan of Napoleon—he thought Napoleon would finally bring rationality to Europe, and equality and fraternity and so on.

#Arthur Kachikian

And then he crowned himself emperor. Yeah.

#Pascal

1804. 1804. And Beethoven was devastated. He was like, "How can he?" It happens time and time again. And you remember what he did—you remember what he did.

#Arthur Kachikian

He renamed his symphony. His third symphony was supposed to be dedicated to Napoleon. When he heard in 1804 that Napoleon was going to crown himself, he crossed it out and said, no, it's just going to be a heroic symphony. Napoleon, the child of the French Revolution—liberté, fraternité,

égalité—turns into a new emperor. Six million people, Europe drowned in blood. Look at the human creatures. Look at our condition. Look at our society. We know nothing about the world. I'm beginning to sound like Ricky Gervais—we know nothing about the world.

#Pascal

No, but the fix we need to apply is the fix to this eternal turning around of everything, right? Going from destruction to buildup, back to destruction, back to buildup. We're kind of in this horrible, almost Buddhist eternal circle of violence, caught in it. And I don't know how to get out of it. Any Buddhists out there—if you have ideas, the Western ideas clearly fail. Christianity doesn't work when it comes to approaching international violence.

#Arthur Kachikian

No, no. And sadly, there will be no rebound after a nuclear war. Maybe World War Two was our last big lesson, and we learned it for a few decades. But now, apparently, we have to learn it again. Sadly, a nuclear war—if it happens, God forbid—is not going to give us second chances. We're not all going to move to Latin America and wear masks to protect ourselves from radioactive substances coming down from the atmosphere. It's not going to be fun. So yes, we seem to go through these cycles.

Sadly, we lost the wisdom we once had and the lessons we learned from World War II. Remember President Eisenhower? He was a war hero during World War II, and he was the one warning us about these private interest groups, about the military-industrial complex. He was right. And sadly, here we are. I just hope this madness will end and that these leaders will finally come to understand there's no other way to ensure security except through collective security, collective discussion.

#Pascal

It's not the leaders. It's the system. I'm still convinced it's a complexity problem. Eight billion people—we're a species not good at managing eight billion. We can't do it, and we end up killing our own. We can't manage the complexity of eight billion, because in the end, Donald Trump—he's the outcome, he's a symptom of something much, much deeper. This war is a symptom of something much, much deeper, and we haven't properly figured out how to manage things on that level, with how many people we are currently.

#Arthur Kachikian

Well, yes, it's a big crisis. It's a big crisis of governance. We have to research why people like this come to power. Why is it that democratic institutions fail to constrain them? Because part of the

democratic peace theory is that democratic institutions are supposed to prevent a leader like this from declaring war. And instead, Congress approved it. You saw it, right? A few days ago there was a vote, and they approved the war.

#Pascal

So, one more strike against democratic peace theory. They didn't approve the war; they approved Donald Trump's right to do that, which is a breach of the Constitution. I mean, you're dissolving the entire idea of internal constraints, right? So...

#Arthur Kachikian

It's a big crisis. It's a big philosophical, conceptual crisis. What do we do with private interest groups? What do we do with lobbyists? What do we do with donors? Maybe there's a way to organize elections so you don't need a lot of money to run for office. I don't know how to do it. Then you'd become less dependent on lobbying. And lobbying is a big problem—an evil that needs to be rooted out. Elected representatives should be accountable to their voters, not to private interests. It should be banned. There are over 1,500 lobbying firms in Washington—over 1,500. This is not a democracy. This is the rule of money. This is the rule of oligarchs.

#Pascal

Good, my friends. It's another one of those depressing moments when we have to admit that we just don't know how to continue, how to move forward, and that all of us who study for many, many years still end up in the same boat—baffled by the violence our systems are still able to unleash on others. Arthur, people would like to follow you and read more of your analysis and your thinking. Where should they go?

#Arthur Kachikian

With your permission, I'll send you my Telegram channel. I told you I finished the first volume of my book, and now I'm working on the second. I'd be happy to share it with anyone who'd like it—it'll be my gift. I'm sharing it with my students here in Armenia and in some other countries of the former Soviet Union. I find consolation in history. I love reading international history because when you see people struggling with the same problems, with the same madness for centuries, making the same mistakes and seeing the same results, it gives you a sense of detachment.

I mean, as a human species, we're only, what—Homo sapiens is about 300,000 years old. And the first, you know, absolutely, you know, Lucy and all that—what is it, six million years? So it's relatively recent. What do you want? We need... we need to evolve. Our society needs to evolve. History helps me approach this in a calmer manner. And I really hope that this crisis will get resolved. I'll send you the link to my Telegram channel, and then your readers—I'd be happy to answer their questions.

#Pascal

Send them to me right after this; I'll put them in the description box below. Arthur Kachikian, thank you very much for your time today. Thanks, Pascal, and cheer up.

#Arthur Kachikian

You too. Okay, okay. Bye-bye.