

Iran's Unbeatable Discipline VS USrael

Panik | Jacques Baud

The strategic discipline of Iran's military and governance structure is defeating the US/Israeli mass-bombing campaign. Iran establishes that no level of decapitation strikes can in fact degrade its ability to strike against targets in the region. With every passing day, the air-war of attrition tilts in favour of Tehran—albeit at a terrible human cost due to the intentional targeting of civilians by the Western powers. My guest, Colonel Jacques Baud, was a Colonel in the Swiss army, and, for many years, an intelligence officer. His analysis is everything the US missed before launching this insane folly. Support us on Substack: <https://pascallottaz.substack.com> Shop and Donations: <https://neutralitystudies-shop.fourthwall.com>

#Pascal

Welcome back, everybody. My name is Pascal Lottaz. We are here on Neutrality Studies, and we're talking again today to my countryman and colleague, Colonel Jacques Beau. Jacques, welcome back.

#Jacques Baud

Thank you very much for having me back on your show. I really appreciate your support, because I know you've been backing my case for a long time. And thank you for inviting me again.

#Pascal

Yeah, we actually want to discuss Iran, and Iran is going to come up in a few minutes. But first, please, can you give us an update on your case? For anyone who doesn't know, you're sanctioned by the European Union. While you're living inside the European Union, you have no bank account, no access to your funds, you're not allowed to buy or sell things, and you're not even allowed to leave Belgium, where you live. That's just a very short rundown. This has been going on since December 15, and now, as we speak today, on March 17, where are you with your case?

#Jacques Baud

Well, I'm still, as Judge Napolitano recently said, the most famous sanctioned person in the world. This is exactly as you explained. The thing that has changed since our last program is that my lawyers have been able to file an application for annulment of the sanction last week with the European Court of Justice. This is not a usual appeal, as we do in a normal court process, because the decision that was taken against me is not a judicial decision. It's an extrajudicial decision. It is a political decision made by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the European Union. In essence, my

sanctions are a foreign policy measure and not a legal measure. It's very important to say that, because people may think I have done something wrong or something like that.

No, I didn't breach any law whatsoever in Europe or anywhere in the world. In fact, I'm just exercising my right to free speech. I don't make propaganda. The Europeans may interpret it that way, but that's not what I intend to do—that's exactly what I try to avoid. I was invited many times by Russian media, and I refused, precisely because I wanted to keep an academic, analytical view of the conflict, not a political one. And that's basically the situation I'm in. If I were living in Switzerland, outside the European Union, I wouldn't be affected so much by the sanctions. I'd still be sanctioned in the same way, but in Switzerland my bank account would be accessible, and I'd have some freedom of movement.

I can't leave Switzerland, since it's surrounded by the European Union and I'm, in theory, not allowed to enter EU territory. But the problem is that I live in the EU, and therefore I'm affected 100% by these sanctions. That's the difference from other sanctioned people, who mostly live outside the European Union, mainly in Russia. They don't experience the full extent of the sanctions. They still have no access to bank accounts in Europe and things like that, but some of them probably don't even have bank accounts in Europe and may not need to travel there. In my case, I'm in Europe, and as you rightly said, my freedom of movement is heavily restricted. I can't visit my family, I can't visit my daughter—I just can't travel. I can't even go to my home country, Switzerland.

#Pascal

And if I were—you're forbidden from traveling across internal EU borders, right? You're not allowed to leave. That's correct. That's correct.

#Jacques Baud

In fact, I could apply for a travel authorization. I could apply to the Belgian government, the French government, or the Luxembourg government to get permission to go through their territory. But then, if I reach Switzerland, I might not be able to come back home. That's why the whole situation is Kafkaesque in a way. And it's a unique case—well, a half-unique case—because there are some similar ones in Europe. But every case is different, since all the sanction regimes are different, and the rationale behind them varies too. So the implications for each government are also different. Fortunately, the Belgian government is rather accommodating in my situation, but other governments may see it differently. In Germany, for instance, they might be tougher than in my case. So yes, every situation is different. It's a very peculiar situation—let's put it that way.

#Pascal

The EU sanctions regime is quite scary, also in the sense that it's brand new, and it seems there's some experimenting going on with what the individual member states are doing. To my knowledge,

there's really only one other person in a similar position, because under the Russia sanctions regime—you're under the Russian sanctions, right? That's the one you're targeted with. There's one more citizen inside the EU, Hussein Dogru, a German citizen in Germany, who's also in a similar situation. All others, as far as I know, are outside the EU, including our compatriot Nathalie Jamp, who's stuck on the African continent and can't go back to Switzerland. But, you know, EU citizens in the EU—or people inside the EU—I think it's two at the moment.

#Jacques Baud

Yes, I think there are two. Again, I don't want to discuss the case of the German-Turkish journalist, because all cases are so different, and there are other issues related to Dogru than to my case. So I don't want to discuss that, because you can only add confusion when you talk about cases you don't really know. I mean, I'm talking to myself here, of course, and therefore I won't discuss it. The fact of the matter is that these sanctions were originally designed to address countries—or, let's say, state entities like Gazprom or things like that. The new development in the EU is to sanction individuals.

And again, when you sanction terrorists, okay, you may have grounds to do that—although the word “terrorist” still needs to be defined, and that's another issue the West hasn't been able to solve in the last hundred years or so. In any case, if you sanction, let's say, people involved in organized crime, money laundering, pedophilia, or whatever, you can say, okay, that's understandable. But the problem with the European Union is that now they resort to sanctioning the speech of individuals. And that's an evolution that's extremely dangerous. It's dangerous in two ways. First of all, because it shows that Europe is afraid of free speech.

The essence of democracy is precisely accepting free speech. So when you're afraid of free speech, that means you're no longer in a democratic process. Because even if you have people who are against democracy, they should have the right to express that. And democracy assumes that you're able to counter the arguments of those who are against it. It's a kind of Darwinian process. When you're not able to counter the argument, then you have to forbid people to speak—and that's where we are. That means the EU doesn't have enough arguments to counter the speech it doesn't like. That's basically the point, and that's what makes it so troubling.

And the second thing that's quite concerning is that when you start sanctioning people inside the EU, and not just those living outside the EU, it means you're placing yourself above the law. I think you once did a program devoted to explaining this extra-legality, or extrajudicial nature, of such sanctions. When something is extrajudicial, it means it's outside the law—you're no longer operating under the rule of law. The rule of law means the state itself is governed by law. When you have an extrajudicial decision, you're outside that framework. So when you're not ruled by law, it means you're in a dictatorship.

#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.

#Jacques Baud

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

#Pascal

Because, you know, the only thing I disagree with in what you said is when you said you can sanction organized crime or pedophilia or so on. We don't sanction that—we have laws against it. Those are criminal acts; they're criminalized. The thing is, you didn't do anything criminal. You didn't. You didn't. You're explicitly allowed to. And that's why they have to use extrajudicial, extra-legal measures to get around their own process in order to grab you and hurt you.

#Jacques Baud

You know, you're totally right. I used the example of terrorism because I thought, well, OK, it would make sense since the U.S. does that. But you're absolutely right—this is exactly the problem we're in, and that's a very dangerous phase for democracy.

#Pascal

Extremely dangerous. But Europe, in general, is in a very precarious moment, even within its own logic. Maybe let's use this as a segue to move to the main topic, which is Iran—and also how Europe approaches Iran. You are, of course, a former colonel in the Swiss Army. You're a military man, with a lot of training, and you're looking at this through that lens. You give brilliant analysis, which is one of the reasons they sanctioned you. But if we follow the logic you outlined earlier, we're actually seeing a similar kind of reasoning applied to the Iran war. In Germany, I think it was either the chancellor, Friedrich Merz, or Armin Laschet—one of the state ministers—who actually said...

I think it was Merz who said that because Iran broke international law in the past, it can no longer hide behind international law. So international law doesn't protect Iran. And to me, that's ridiculous, because if we applied that to any thief or lawbreaker in a state, it would mean nobody is protected by law. What do you make of such rationalizations in Europe toward this clearly, utterly illegal act of aggression and attack on Iran?

#Jacques Baud

Well, that's something we've already seen in the case of Palestine, for instance. People said, "The Israelis are bombing civilians," and the reply was, "Yes, but Hamas attacked on the 7th of October."

That means you're trying to justify one crime with another. And you can't justify a crime with another crime. That's not possible. Otherwise, our countries would just be the Wild West, really—everyone taking justice into their own hands. If you can justify a crime because somebody did something wrong, then you're basically saying it's fine to kill them or whatever. That's not acceptable.

So we have here, I think, a drift in the Western mentality, which is quite concerning. I mean, even when asked about the U.S.-Israeli attack on Iran, the Belgian defense minister said, "Well, it's legitimate." You know, that's where we see that our leadership is, in fact—and that's not completely new—that's the difference between the international law-based order and the international rules-based order. The law is the law. It's written. It's the UN Charter. It's everything that's written in there, and you know exactly what it says. Therefore, you know when you breach the law. And that's the same in our countries.

That's why we have the rule of law. The law defines the way you rule. The law is written. Everybody is supposed to know it, and you know when you breach it. The problem with the rules-based order is that the rules are not defined—or, better said, they're defined by some people, but they're not written anywhere. They're simply adjusted depending on the situation. You decide that Iran did this, or you decide it's justified to attack, you decide it's legitimate to attack, and you attack. One of the examples most often mentioned when it comes to Iran is the repression they had in January during the demonstrations and protests. I wasn't there.

I don't know exactly what happened. What I see is that nobody knows exactly what happened. We just have figures hanging in the air. You might have some French minister talking about 50,000 victims, Ursula von der Leyen saying 17. I mean, nobody knows exactly what happened. But based on our ignorance, we say, well, Iran used very harsh repression against protests, and therefore it's legitimate to attack it or to change the regime. And that's again—let's assume Iran was guilty of using force, even exaggerated force, against those protesters—this is still not a justification to attack the country. It's not a justification to bomb the country.

And in fact, what you have today in Iran, just as an example, is that you have women who were protesting in January who are now siding with the government against the U.S. So that shows exactly the illegitimacy of this approach that says, well, because they did something wrong in the past, we're allowed to do anything today. And that brings us to the declaration by Friedrich Merz, who said that Iran should not be protected by international law. What is that? I mean, this is, as you rightly said, totally absurd. Why would you deprive anyone—even in a country like Germany, for example—of protection under the law? That's a discretionary decision, first of all.

#Pascal

That's why I think it's so similar to what's happening to you. You know, the rationale is the same: because the other side did something I disapprove of, now all the structures we built to protect people don't apply anymore.

#Jacques Baud

Exactly, yes. The same underlying rationale. Absolutely, I completely agree with you. And this is something very dangerous. It all comes from the fact that we have a very weak decision-making process, in fact, in most countries, for everything. You can talk about Iran, you can talk about Venezuela, you can talk about Palestine. We don't have solid decision-making. In fact, we're deciding with our stomach rather than with our brain. That's the problem. And therefore, all the decisions are emotional. They're not thoroughly studied, evaluated, or elaborated.

As a result, we end up making mostly short-term decisions, with no real understanding of what the future implications will be. We see that right now with the whole issue of energy, for instance. Today, Europeans are thinking about going back to Russia for some energy sources because they realize they made a mistake—they decided hastily in 2022, and so on. So we see this extremely weak decision-making. We decide like teenagers, no longer like governments, like people who have intelligence. I come from the intelligence world.

That was my previous occupation. And in intelligence, the idea is that you analyze things regardless of what the political power decides. I mean, whether they agree or not is not the issue. In intelligence, you're not there to please the politician; you're there to explain the situation—whatever it is. You may come to an explanation or a picture of the situation that doesn't please the politician, but it's up to them to make the decision that fits the picture. The problem now is that we tend to have politicians who try to fit the picture to their decision.

#Pascal

When... when do you think this started? Because this is absolutely crucial. We're seeing right now how one side operates like this—the political West, as Richard Sakwa would call it: Europe and, of course, the United States—making very haphazard decisions based on very poor intelligence, a very poor understanding of what's going on. And now we have the other side. We have the Russians, who have been, for four years—well, at least for three years—methodically implementing the war of attrition, the second phase that came after the first kind of shock-and-awe moment, where the strategy was different. But the last three years have been quite deliberate and meticulous in how they've tried to achieve their goals.

And we see the same now in Iran. We see how Iran is fighting a war meticulously, with a clear strategy and a clear plan for how to make life for the United States and Israel quite difficult in the Gulf region. They're implementing that based on plans they made many years ago. So what does

that leave us with now, in this international environment where violence is, unfortunately, once again a way of communicating? What kinds of strategies are being used—or not used—on the Western side?

#Jacques Baud

Well, if you allow me to take this intelligence perspective, I'd say that since the early '90s, this has changed, in fact. During the Cold War, intelligence was based on that bipolar rivalry between the communist system—Marxist, you could call it in different ways—and the Western world. We had NATO and the Warsaw Pact facing each other. And, of course, there were diverging political issues, but in essence, when it came to the strategic threat, both sides had very similar rationales. I mean, the Soviet army used tanks just like the U.S. army, and the tanks had the same purpose: speed on the ground, almost the same characteristics, their guns firing at the same rate or distance, and things like that.

So there were a lot of commonalities, which made it easier to understand and to have a clear picture of the threat, because you could rely on your own experience to build that picture. After the fall of the Warsaw Pact and the end of the Cold War, we started to put emphasis on other kinds of threats. The first focus was organized crime, and then it very quickly shifted to terrorism and so on. The problem with those kinds of threats is that, first of all, people don't have much experience with them. I mean, you can approach it from a police point of view, and police intelligence can identify individual criminals and so on.

But strategically, how do you address organized criminality? The strategic thinking was lacking an intelligence picture, if you will, at the strategic level. And that became even more complicated with terrorism, especially Islamic terrorism, because then you can no longer assess the picture based on your own experience or Western culture. You're facing individuals—maybe not even organizations, but individuals—who are reacting according to their own culture, their own standards, their own cultural references, and things like that.

And that becomes very difficult to understand. I've written several books on this, because the way we reacted to terrorism, in fact, has just increased terrorism, since we never really understood what it was. In the mid-90s—and that was also acknowledged, by the way, by the then director of the CIA—I don't remember his name, maybe Gates, but I could be wrong on that. In any case, he also realized, and that's something I noticed as well in the intelligence community in Europe, that the analytical side of intelligence was no longer as effective as it used to be.

And to understand that, when we talk about intelligence, most people think intelligence is about collecting information. It's very important to understand that an intelligence organization is basically built on two pillars, very schematically: you collect information, and then you analyze it. The analysis is, in fact, the product of your organization. That means you need to collect information, definitely, but more importantly, you have to make sense of what you collect. Now, with threats that are

scattered across different organizations and things like that, you gather a lot of information, but it becomes more and more difficult to make sense of it in a strategic, coherent picture.

And that's where the difficulty started. I don't think any real intelligence organization has truly coped with this issue, at least in Europe, as far as I know. The result is that we believe collecting more information will improve the quality of the outcome. But in reality, it's the opposite. The more information you have—some of it may be useful at the police level and so on—but when it comes to the strategic assessment of a situation, you may have too much information, and the tree ends up hiding the forest. That's exactly what's happening. Therefore, the analytical capabilities of these services remain extremely weak. It's a general trend observed across all intelligence services: the analytical side of intelligence is weakening.

And that leads to other issues, because when you talk about Iran, we see exactly the same thing. Russia, Iran, Palestine—the mess we're in now is the consequence of a bad assessment of the enemy, if you will. We always underestimate the capabilities of our adversaries. It may be Russia, it may be Iran, it may be Palestine, it may be others. We always underestimate them because we don't base our judgments on facts; we rely on intuitive and emotional assessments, since we don't have the expertise to evaluate the threat as it really is. And that's exactly what we're seeing at play with Iran. Despite three operations against Iran before in 2024 and two in 2025, we still haven't understood Iran's capabilities, even though Iran made every effort to show Israel and the U.S. how capable it was of responding to any provocation.

#Pascal

May I ask two things about this? They're not exactly linked, but a little bit. First, how important is the normative framing—or how strong is normative thinking—within these intelligence communities that you know? If you start with a certain outlook on the world and then build your analytical framework around that, you can only find what fits into that world, right? I mean, the difference between asking "Where's the next threat coming from?" versus "Where is world peace going to come from?"—depending on which one you ask, you'll find completely different things, right? So it's not just the analysis; it's the approach to the analysis.

How strong is that approach? And secondly, it seems to me that with Iran—and to a good extent also with Russia—we're actually seeing how intelligence communities, and even entire political systems, are falling for the narratives they tell themselves about the other, instead of really trying to figure out how the other works. Which is why, you know, even in the German-speaking part of Europe, the idea of a **Putin-versteher**—somebody who understands Putin—is an insult, right? So we've kind of tabooed the approach, the attempt at understanding the other.

I remember very clearly, four years ago when the Russian war started, I talked to American Russia experts—people who studied Russia academically—who complained that the level of expertise in the West, among Russologists or Sovietologists, had drastically decreased. So there's no longer a proper

understanding of how the other side actually works. And that, in turn, feeds into these very poor stereotypes on which decisions are then based. Sorry, that's a long-winded way of asking about these two things: the impact of normative frameworks, and the impact of the West believing its own misguided narratives about the other.

#Jacques Baud

Well, I think the two are linked, actually—and thank you for the question. It's a fascinating one, because it should inform the way we address crises. The issue of the normative question is that when you start assessing a conventional threat, such as the Soviet Union during the Cold War, you're in a framework where, of course, the Soviets had different thinking, different doctrines, different political objectives, and so on, than the West. But by and large, it was still a very similar culture.

So you may have some commonalities that help your analysis stay anchored on a kind of, let's say, cultural common ground—if I can put it that way—that gives you a sort of normative framework to analyze the adversary. Even if there are slight differences, you can easily adjust to those. The problem is when you address, for instance, if you talk about Iranians—they are Muslims, obviously—the idea of victory for a Muslim is not exactly the same as for a Westerner. For us, as we've learned in military schools, victory is defined by the way you destroy your enemy. For a Muslim, generally speaking, victory is defined by the way you accept to fight—your determination to fight.

Victory is not over the enemy; victory is over yourself. And that completely changes the perspective, because in the Western mind, you're constrained by reaching an objective—your victory is the objective. I mean, the objective of destruction is clearly defined. But for a Muslim, the objective is within yourself. You can't demand that someone defeat a more powerful enemy. If the enemy is stronger, well, what can you do? But what you must have is the determination to fight. Therefore, victory is not about destroying the enemy; your victory is that you didn't give up in the face of the enemy.

And that explains why Ali Khamenei was killed in his office—because he didn't want to give in to the fear of an attack. He went to his office as usual, doing his job, doing what he was tasked to do, and not hiding. And that's also why, when you arrest terrorists and so on, they tend to confess to more crimes than they actually committed—because that shows, yes, absolutely, their determination. In fact, you have those famous cases—I don't remember his name now—this guy, Sheikh Mohammed, it slips my mind. But when the FBI arrested him, he was supposed to be the operations chief for Bin Laden, or something like that.

And when the FBI arrested him, I mean, the FBI decided to remove some accusations Mohammed made against himself, because they knew he couldn't have done that. He was physically not in a position to commit the crime he accused himself of. And that's very common, because the idea is that you have to show the determination to fight. And even if you read—well, that's a topic in itself—but we're talking about terrorists, of course. And it's not to assume that Iran is terrorist; I refuse this

type of categorization. But it explains that when you read the texts of those who established the theory of armed terrorism—because the jihadi accept the idea of being a terrorist—they accept this idea.

They say terrorism is a method, and we agree with this idea—that we are terrorists. That's something nobody in the West would do. They would try to escape the designation of "terrorist," but in the jihadist view, no. They said, well, it's a method. We use that method for this or that reason, and therefore we accept it. But in those theories of terror, it's not the number of casualties that matters. In fact, it's even recommended not to cause too many casualties. The idea isn't to kill a lot of people; the idea is to show that you're determined to fight. Right. So that's very important to understand.

We have a completely different... That's the reason why it's easy. When I was involved myself—because in Sudan we were threatened by terrorists—I was tasked by the head of the mission to do everything possible to avoid those threats. This was in 2006, because of the caricatures of Mohammed. We were targeted because we had Danish and Norwegian officers in the mission. I had contact with some extremist movements because I was the head of intelligence, and I discussed with those people. I was asked to do so. I went, and we talked with those extremists. And after we discussed, I asked, "Well, now, should I fear your threat?"

Are we getting bombed or something? He said, no, we talked. That's fine, that's all right with us. We talked about the topic—no problem. I didn't give a single dollar, I didn't give them anything. We just talked, and that was it. He could explain his purpose, explain his rationale. I explained mine—I mean ours, because it was the UN. He said, that's fine. And we had no attack whatsoever. So, it's very important to understand the mindset of people. And I think—I assume, again, don't take me wrong here—I'm not saying that Iran is terrorist. I completely reject that idea. But the mindset is very similar, because it's driven by the same culture.

#Pascal

Yeah, no, I mean, this is very, very important. It's not just culture. It's also this—what you just described—terrorism as a method is, of course, the application of force, of violence as a method. And that's really nothing different from what Clausewitz taught us about war being the continuation of politics by other means. It's just applied to a different scenario, especially a highly asymmetric one. And that's why all of these likenings, or these kinds of unfair approaches, come up—to say, like, "Oh, Iran is behaving like a terrorist." Well, they are the weaker party. They definitely are.

But you're the ones who are using violence in the first place, and they're using violence back. What we're in is actually a form of negotiation about the political future of these regions—a region. And while the Western side, the Americans and Israelis, are highly interested, highly brutal in their approach, trying to steamroll over everything, the Iranians tend to be very methodical in what they're attacking. Maybe we can use this to talk a little bit about that. What does their methodology of

implementing the war, of using violence, tell us about how they're approaching this? It's a huge power. It's not as huge as we thought, but it is a huge power.

#Jacques Baud

Well, you see, if you look at what happened in the different operations, there were, as I said, three previous attacks by the Israelis and the U.S. against Iran in 2024, 2025, and then obviously the fourth this year. But if you look at Iran's reaction—when the Israelis attacked each time, even if they tried to target some Hamas leaders or things like that—they caused a lot of casualties. The Iranians replied, and they caused almost none. In 2024, they responded by firing missiles that went through the Iron Dome and all of Israel's air defenses. They struck Israeli military bases but caused no deaths. And what we see today, for instance, in the Iranian response, is that they've caused very few casualties in Israel.

They don't target individuals. They try to avoid that. I mean, you certainly have some casualties in Israel—it's not that there are none, that's not what I mean—but they don't target individuals. They try to keep themselves within a very tight targeting discipline. They target military objectives as much as they can. Again, you may have civilian casualties—that's what's called collateral damage. That means those people weren't targeted but were affected simply because they were close to the initial objective. But we see that the Iranians are extremely careful to avoid civilian casualties. When you look at the Israeli and U.S. attacks that started two weeks ago, already on the first day there were hundreds of civilian victims.

So we see that there is a different approach. The idea—and that's exactly what I explained with those terrorist examples—is that, in the Muslim mind, it's not about making a lot of casualties. It's very interesting, by the way, that in Western conventional wisdom you often hear that the Iranians understand only force, or the Palestinians understand only force or violence. That's totally wrong. You could achieve much better results by not addressing the issue with violence. But that's something we don't accept, because in our culture we have this idea that victory can't be achieved without crushing your enemy. Yeah.

#Pascal

Well, it's projection. It's a typical kind of thing—because you know that you yourself would only stand down if you were defeated, you assume the other side reacts the same way. So you justify it that way. It's classic projection.

#Jacques Baud

Yes, it is. It is. And that's the problem we have with Iran—as with other countries, in fact. From that point of view, there hasn't been a single war we've fought in the last 25 years or so that was justified in any sense, even if you might consider that someone like Saddam Hussein may have

represented some kind of threat. Because—and that’s my experience, since I’ve been in those regions, involved in smaller conflicts and things like that—I understood that if you really try to understand your adversary, you can negotiate with him. And negotiate doesn’t mean you have to give something away. That’s exactly what happened with the example I just gave about the terrorists.

You don’t have to give them anything. You just have to listen to them, and that’s fine. That’s okay. You don’t need to pay them or give them an advantage. You know, the thing is—and that’s also the reason why some people don’t expect it—for instance, we’re talking about a possible assault on the island of Kharg in Iran, and I’m convinced that if the Americans do that, the Iranians are ready to destroy the whole thing, including all the oil installations, refineries, and so on, just to destroy the enemy. They don’t care about destroying it, because that’s something I also learned when I was in Africa. It’s not obvious for a Westerner, but a person told me, “You know, we are born naked, and we’ll die naked.”

#Pascal

All of these aspects are now leading, again, to an asymmetric war that is, with every passing day, tilted more and more in favor of Iran actually achieving some of its goals. They’ve defined them, for instance, as expelling the Americans from the region and forcing them to withdraw all their war-making assets so that a new attack cannot happen. Some other demands include reparations and so on, but especially expelling them from the region. It no longer seems like a lunatic idea that they might get close to that—not least because they make a point of saying, “By the way, Gulf states, if you harbor any of this material or these people, then you’re a target too.” So, in a sense, they are, in my view, sending a very clear signal that what they want is a neutral region—not an ally of the United States, not necessarily an ally of Iran, but not an ally of the U.S. either. Do you also see it like that?

#Jacques Baud

Well, in fact, there was—I think it was a personality from the UAE, a billionaire or something like that—who made a public comment. I think it was even an open letter to the U.S., or something along those lines. I may be wrong about that, but at least what he said, in substance, was that the U.S. had dragged them into a war they never agreed to. And that’s exactly the problem. When you have those bases scattered around the Middle East with the clear aim of targeting Iran, it means that, somehow, you’re part of the plot when you accept those bases. And that’s exactly what Iran is trying to explain.

And the Prime Minister, Araghchi—and I think Larijani also said this—told the Middle Eastern, the Arab countries, “We have nothing against you. We’re trying to get rid of the threat from the U.S. that’s based on your territory. The problem is that it’s on your territory, but we’re not targeting you.” And that’s also something, if you read the rhetoric of the West—if you look at the communiqué issued by

the Europeans, the E3, the UK, Germany, and France on the 1st of March—they said Iran is targeting Middle Eastern countries. That's not exactly true, because Iran specified that they weren't targeting the countries themselves.

They target the U.S. bases. The same applies to Cyprus. You can see that in the recent rhetoric—the French foreign minister, Jean-Noël Barrault, said that Iran targeted Cyprus, EU countries. No, that's not true. In fact, the targets were on British territory, because the bases on Cyprus are sovereign territory of the UK. It's not the territory of Cyprus. So we play with words to make it look like Iran tried to escalate the conflict and target a lot of countries. In fact, Iran has been extremely disciplined, extremely consistent in its response, and has targeted only those sites related to territories that belong, in some way, to the U.S. and the UK.

#Pascal

Yeah. And Ali Larijani, two or three days ago, put out a tweet saying there are rumors that a false flag attempt might be made in the United States to attack civilian infrastructure and blame Iran. He just preemptively said, "We would not do something like that. This is not in our interest. We are not at war with the people of the United States anymore. We were at war with the military of the United States, not with the people." So he just put that out there. And it's the same logic of saying, no, no, no—this is a military-to-military affair. Whatever you do, if you target our civilians, we are not doing that on your side. We are not trying to fight the U.S. people; we're just fighting those installations that attack us.

#Jacques Baud

Exactly. So it's not an escalation. And that's something you hear in the European rhetoric—that Iran is escalating the conflict. No, it's not. It's just fighting the countries that attacked it. The problem is that the U.S. and the U.K. are in fact using these Middle Eastern countries and Cyprus as so-called sanctuaries to fight Iran. And this is exactly what you had in the '60s with the Viet Cong using Laos as a sanctuary. They made a raid against the U.S. in Vietnam and then withdrew very quickly into sanctuaries in Laos. And that's exactly the same thing we have here. The U.S. is using those sanctuaries in the Middle East and Arab countries.

#Pascal

What frustrates me so much is that all of this dynamic is very well understood. This is exactly why the international law of neutrality says that if you want to be neutral, you cannot have bases, you cannot harbor these soldiers unless they surrender and you keep them under custody, and so on. I mean, basically defang everything, right? And that is well understood because that's exactly what you would expect. That's exactly what happened in the 18th century, in the 19th century. This isn't rocket science. This is nothing new. So the fact that now these countries complain and the Europeans go, "How could they attack a sovereign state—Qatar and Dubai?"

#Jacques Baud

It's utter madness to me. Well, that's exactly what they want to replicate with Ukraine. Right, it's exactly the same thing. So we understand the logic, because we would do exactly the same if we were in the same situation. The problem is, again, we're back to the beginning of our discussion: we are no longer under international law or the international law-based order. We're in the rule-based order. We define the rules, and the rules apply as we want. When we decide that Iran should not be protected by international law, then we just decide so.

That's exactly the difference. International law is international law, period. And attacking Iran—regardless of how good or bad the government is, or whoever is in charge—attacking Iran is attacking Iran, period. Destroying civilians is destroying civilians. Using disproportionate force against civilians is using disproportionate force against civilians. There are no good reasons to kill children. There are no good reasons to kill civilians, unprotected civilians. There's no good reason, period. There is no Hamas, Hezbollah, whatever—period. There is no good reason to kill these unarmed civilians.

#Pascal

Ambassador Chas Freeman made that observation about a year ago in an essay, and then he talked about it on this channel. The big difference, he said, is that what we all want is the rule of law. What the West is implementing with this rules-based order is rule by law—having some vague kind of principles that you apply here but not there, and certainly not to yourself. And by doing that, you try to rule over everybody, right? That's the approach that seems to be failing now. So my hope is that we'll somehow realize that, shift back, and say, "No, okay, fine. These rules—the universal rules—apply to us too. Let's get back to the original idea of the UN, and not this bastardized kind of behavior we're seeing at the moment."

#Jacques Baud

Well, the thing is, you know, all these wars we decide to fight—because all the wars started in the last 30 years or so, the last quarter century—are in fact wars of choice. Yes. The problem is, you look at what's at stake in the world today. We're talking about China coming up with AI and things like that—sorry, I mixed that up before. AI. What you see in Europe and in the West at large is that we're very much behind when it comes to new technologies and all that, because we spend so much energy, time, and money waging war—useless wars around the world. We destabilize countries that could be our partners, that could be trade partners, but we destabilize them completely.

The result is that people in those countries—namely in Europe, the Middle East, take Syria, Iraq, and so on—it's become so impossible to live there that those people are coming as migrants to our country. I know we have a problem here because some people are struggling against migration and

all that, but we created the situation. So we spend money for nothing, basically, with no return on investment—zero return. We just had people killed there. We killed people, and we had our own people killed. We didn't gain anything. We spent money that could have been used instead to develop the technologies we need now. China hasn't engaged in any war.

As a result, they could develop technology—their research and development and all that. Now we're behind because we took part in all that. And today, what are we doing? We're trying to portray a future war in Europe that's absolutely baseless when you look at the facts on the ground. Instead of investing in something useful for the future of our children and grandchildren, we invest in things that will be useless, that will just keep increasing tensions. And we won't even be able to cope with the technological competition coming from countries like China and, tomorrow, maybe India. We're not even able to do that. Yep.

#Pascal

Fools—just foolish approaches, pure foolishness. But look, Jacques, I'm very glad that you give us such a sober analysis, even as one of the few sanctioned people inside the EU. Thank you for doing all of that. I mean, great job—great job and great service, actually, to everybody, because it helps, it gives clarity. For people who want to find your analysis, is there a place they should go to read what you produce?

#Jacques Baud

Well, mostly my book—and the very last one I have is right behind me. It's **Peace in Ukraine**, which describes the whole peace process, or rather the various peace processes that were initiated and never ended, or never achieved their objective in Ukraine. It's about the rationale for peace, and it's not a book about war—it's a book about peace in Ukraine. It's the latest one, just published last week. And these books are, of course, now forbidden in the European Union—well, no, they're not forbidden, not at all. You're just not allowed to earn anything from them. Well, I'm not allowed... I mean, of course, I receive—well, my publisher holds the royalties for me.

He can't give the royalties to me, so he keeps them in an account. But the books are not forbidden at all, despite the fact that in France there's a bookstore chain called FNAC that decided, on their own initiative—because there's no legal obligation—to withdraw all my books from the shelves. But the honest bookstores, the independent bookshops, still sell my books. The Dissonance ones don't. So don't go to the Dissonance ones. And you'll find them on Amazon, of course.

#Pascal

Everybody, don't go to FNAC, but please do buy Jacques Baud's book **Peace in Ukraine**. It's now an act of resistance to do so. Absolutely. Thank you very much for your time today. Thank you.