

Next US Crime Against Humanity: Caribbean Mass-Slaughter | Dr. Richard Byron-Cox

Not just Cuba, but the entire Caribbean region is under intense US threat from blockade, hunger, bombing, and old colonial habits dressed up as foreign policy. Today, I speak with Dr. Richard Byron-Cox, a Caribbean-born author with a PhD in public international law, about Cuba's deep crisis, Haiti's long suffering, and the wider struggle of small states facing raw power. The discussion moves from the history of the Monroe Doctrine and the Cuban Revolution to present claims about sanctions, energy shortages, intervention, and fear across Caribbean waters. I also push the question of whether change can come from law, diplomacy, public pressure, or reform inside the West itself. The result is a hard exchange on justice, sovereignty, resistance, and the future of shared human life. Dr. Byron-Cox's Links: Were Mama's Tears in Vain?: <https://www.abebooks.com/9781969368486/Mama%E2%80%99s-Tears-Vain-Byron-Cox-Richard-1969368489/plp> Living in wisdom – an examination of human nature: <https://www.abebooks.com/9781970749342/Living-wisdom-examination-human-nature-1970749342/plp> The Story of Paulene Bramble: Book One: <https://www.amazon.com/Story-Paulene-Bramble-Springs-Blossoms-ebook/dp/B0DDVN4JJ9> 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 Cuba under blockade 00:01:07 Caribbean politics and US pressure 00:08:30 Conditions inside Cuba 00:11:00 Haiti and Caribbean neocolonialism 00:20:13 Resistance history and African roots 00:31:51 Regional alliances and coercion 00:38:29 Reform power and imperial decline 00:52:09 Common humanity and final reflections

#Pascal

While the world is focused on the Iran war that the United States and Israel started a month ago, a different crime against humanity is largely being ignored. The U.S. is also starving Cuba to death with a medieval-style sea blockade. In general, the many crimes in the Caribbean are heavily underreported. We want to change that today, and it's my great pleasure to welcome Dr. Richard Byron Cox, a Caribbean-born author with a PhD in public international law. Dr. Byron Cox, welcome. Welcome.

#Richard Byron-Cox

Good. Professor Pascal Lottaz, it's an honor and a pleasure to be here. Thank you so very much for having me. But more importantly, thank you for giving the Caribbean the chance to share our side of the story as well. That's really important to us.

#Pascal

It is. And, you know, I wouldn't have had the idea if you hadn't written me an email and pointed that out. And you're completely right—the Caribbean should not be ignored. We actually just had a situation over there with Venezuela, but we're having one right now with Cuba. Can we maybe start with that? I mean, how is the entire Caribbean politically developing at the moment? And what's the impact of the United States' new, kind of insane, version of coerciveness?

#Richard Byron-Cox

Yes. Well, as you're aware, as a student of history, after the War of 1812 between the United States and its former bosses—so to speak, England—eleven years later there was what was called the Monroe Doctrine, by James Monroe, who was then president of the United States. And it was sort of the idea that, look, you know, this is the Americas, and you Europeans should settle down now—colonialism is over. However, that did not apply to the English-speaking Caribbean, okay? We still maintained, until quite recently, our colonial relationship. However, as regards Cuba, as you know, Cuba's independence came about after what was called the Spanish-American War. And you're aware of that.

Now, however, after Cuba gained its independence at the beginning of the 20th century, it really became a colony of the United States in many ways. Everything was owned and run by the Americans and so on, until an upstart called Fidel Castro came on the scene. On the 1st of January, 1959, Fidel led a revolution. That was the first socialist revolution, in general terms a military one, in our Caribbean. And, of course, the Americans never liked that. Fidel only wanted the best for his people, for that island, and he set about changing the economic system. Practically everything in Cuba at the time was owned by the Americans.

And so, um, the Americans didn't like this. You might have heard—I'm sure you know—about what was called the Bay of Pigs invasion, in the early '60s. They decided to overthrow Fidel, but Fidel humbled them, and that wasn't good. At that time, as you know, John F. Kennedy was president of the United States of America. A year later, in 1962, we had what was called the Cuban Missile Crisis, when there was a man named Khrushchev, who was then president of what was then the Soviet Union, and, to protect Cuba, he decided to put some missiles down there. And that led to what was called the Cuban Missile Crisis. It was the first time, actually, that the world came close to what is called a nuclear war.

As you know, in 1947, the Board of Atomic Scientists announced the establishment of what is called the Doomsday Clock. It's not a real clock; it's an imaginary one that shows how close we are to midnight, you know? And every year, around the 20th of January, they set it to show how close we are to midnight. That was the closest we had come to midnight until now. I think we're pretty close to midnight now—I think you'd agree with that—but that's another discussion. Let's get back to Cuba. The Cubans humbled the Americans at the Bay of Pigs, you know, and the Americans couldn't swallow that. They couldn't accept it. So what happened? They established what was called an economic blockade of Cuba, and that blockade continues to this day. Basically, the idea was to starve Cuba into submission.

#Pascal

Yeah, but it's gotten worse recently, right? I mean, on the one hand, you had the blockade, but now it includes even more, and it's being enforced much more strictly than before.

#Richard Byron-Cox

Yes. Well, two things happened there that saved Cuba. First, there was the Soviet Union at the time, as you know, and the Soviet Union established strong trade with Cuba and the other socialist countries. As a matter of fact, there were, you could say, two Europes—Eastern Europe and Western Europe. Even Germany was divided by the Berlin Wall in 1960, as you know. So Cuba's survival was more or less guaranteed. Then the Soviet Union collapsed at the end of the 1980s, and Cuba faced serious economic challenges. But they survived.

They fought, and they survived. Now, what's happened is this: the new government in the United States, which came into power about a year ago, decided that, um, "we're going to starve them to death." So every single thing, you know, is being done to ensure—without using guns, without using bullets, at present, okay—that these people starve to death. Now, what you're seeing here—I don't know if you're aware of this—but more than 60%, around 60%, of Cuba's energy comes from abroad. It only provides about 40% of its own energy. The rest comes from abroad. And the Americans have determined that, look, you're not going to get any energy.

Now, let's be practical and real here in our discussion. From water systems that need energy to pump water around the country, to the production of bread in a bakery that needs energy—okay?—what you're looking at here, in real terms, is an attempt to starve a people into submission. Now, let's understand two basic things. First, each country has the right to have its political system as it sees fit. That's the first thing. But second, even if you disagree with their political system, even if you hate their political leaders, does that give you the right to starve innocent children to death?

I mean, you know, like I know, you can't run a hospital without energy. You can't run a hospital without water, which has to be pumped from somewhere. You can't run a school without water. This

is a humanitarian crisis. People think it's only Iran—and I don't mean any disrespect to the people of Iran. I love the people of Iran, like I love all people. And they have a right to fight for their existence. But the existential crisis is not just in Iran; it's in Cuba, and it's real, you know. And Cuba is part of our Caribbean.

#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. The link's going to be in the description below. And now, back to the video. Excuse me, have you been there? Do you know what the situation on the ground is like at the moment? Or are you in contact with people there? Because you're on a different island. So is it still possible to actually talk to people in Cuba and keep those connections?

#Richard Byron-Cox

Yes, I do have some connections. I have personal friends there, and I write to them—we have exchanges. Even earlier today, I had some exchanges, and they explained to me in real terms that the situation is dire. You understand? It's a serious situation, such that, believe it or not, I'm so disturbed that I'm sorry if my face shows some kind of emotion, because one is not supposed to be too emotional about these things. But people who needed ventilators to survive, and so on, are dead. That is what has happened. In some cases, they use mobile phones—the lights from mobile phones—to do emergency operations, which have to be done because they're emergencies, and there's no other light. You understand? This is where we are. This is a humanitarian crisis.

This is evil being done to innocent children, you understand, on a scale never imagined before. And as I said, I haven't been to Cuba recently because, in fact, I've been trying to get a flight down there so I can personally take things with me. That's how close I am to some people. I haven't been able to do that so far, but I'm still trying. Even though my friends tell me what's happening, I'd like to go and see it myself. The reality we face in Cuba is that everything—from education to health, to basic needs like food—is affected in the country today. What we're looking at is a humanitarian crisis that the world seems all too willing to ignore.

#Pascal

You know, Cuba has been a victim of this kind of economic strangulation for over 60 years, and the entire United Nations basically agrees that it should stop. Cuba also didn't collapse in the 1990s, you know, when the Soviet Union and then Yugoslavia left the scene of the socialist bloc, right? Cuba and North Korea both showed that they are not the children of the same political developments. They maintained their stability, just like Iran did, in terms of governance structure.

At the same time, another Caribbean nation that has been suffering for over 300 years—Haiti—is being economically strangled, and even more so in a very, very vicious way. Meanwhile, its direct neighbor, the Dominican Republic, has basically given in to the fate of being just a holiday destination for rich white people from the north. They're doing fine. Can you maybe put the different Caribbean nations into perspective and compare them with each other, just to give us a sense of how this Caribbean neocolonial way of managing the region is working?

#Richard Byron-Cox

Yes, well, as you know, the Caribbean had various colonial masters. We had the Dutch, the British, the French, and the Spanish. That's why you have Caribbean islands that speak French, islands that speak Spanish, and so on. All of these powers brought their own culture and their own approach to managing their Caribbean territories. What has happened is this: in particular, Cuba and parts of the English-speaking Caribbean have been brave enough to stand up and say, "We are independent people, okay? And even though we are small, we will not be dictated to." I don't know if you know that.

I was born in Barbados, which is just next door to St. Vincent, where I live. My mom is Vincentian, right? So I've lived here all my life, basically. The first Prime Minister of Barbados was a man named Errol Walton Barrow. And Mr. Barrow, in 1966, when he went to negotiate the independence of Barbados, said, "Listen, I want this done today because I have a meeting in Canada. And by six o'clock this afternoon, I will not be found loitering on the doorsteps of colonialism." When Barbados finally became independent, this is what he said: "We are friends of all and satellites of none." You understand?

#Pascal

Can you repeat that? "Friends of all and satellites of none"? Yes, that's what he said. You know who said a very similar sentence—very similar? Thucydides, 2,400 years ago. His description of Melos, or how he depicts the Melians, was "friends to all and foes to none," or something like that. Yes, exactly. So is this a reference to him, or is it just a coincidence that he used it?

#Richard Byron-Cox

No, I think this was just Mr. Barrow, who was a lawyer—Mr. Barrow's original thought, you know. But then what happened is that in 1959, as I said, on the 1st of January, Fidel ran this revolution, you know, and it was a declaration that, look, the Monroe Doctrine, you understand, does not apply to us. We are independent people. This is Cuba. This is not the United States of America. And that became an example to many. I don't know if you know, but in 1979 you had a revolution in Nicaragua, led by the Sandinistas. You had a revolution in a very small place called Grenada, where my father was born, you understand, in 1979—which is 20 years after Fidel's 1959 revolution. And America saw this as, look, these are upstarts, and we have to deal with them.

But Cuba went a little further. I don't know if the audience is aware of this, but Cuba then sent soldiers to Angola to confront the Portuguese imperialists and the racist South Africans. And these battles were fought. Now, I want to tell you something very important to understand. The Caribbean—the English-speaking Caribbean—has only suffered one terrorist attack, and that happened in Barbados, where I was born. Most people don't know this, but the Cuban airline, which was called Cubana at the time—I think it's still called that, right?—to fly to Angola, they had to refuel somewhere. And so Errol Walton Barrow, the first prime minister of Barbados, agreed that the Cuban planes could refuel in Barbados and then go on to Angola.

And the CIA—they've admitted this—put a bomb on one of those planes, and it exploded the moment it left what is now the Grantley Adams International Airport in Barbados. As I said, I was born on this island. So what you see here is a small people. As you know, because this is your field, in international relations nations must have one of four things, or some combination of them: military might, economic might, financial and technological might, and a large population—or a mix of these. So you can take the United States, which has all of them. It has 330 million people. It has technology.

It has money. Or you take India, which has quite a lot. Or you take China—you know what I mean? The Caribbean has none of these things. We don't have any economic power, globally speaking. We don't have any technology, globally speaking. Our populations are very small, and so on and so forth. So what do we have? All we have is our pride and our dignity. We have nothing else. And because we understand this, we understand that justice—as a German philosopher, Immanuel Kant, once said, and I'm paraphrasing—if justice perishes, human life on this planet means nothing.

And we understand that for our independence to be protected, we must operate within the four walls of international law. That's why I became a lawyer, and in particular, I studied international law—because the independence of the Caribbean cannot be guaranteed without it. But there's something else. We have always been guided not only by international law but also by international morality. You understand? The sense of right and wrong, and therefore the sense that you need to act ethically. The greatest artist to come out of the Caribbean is a man named Robert Nestor Marley.

You know him as Bob Marley, because Bob is just short for Robert. He sang a song called "War," you know, and it's really him putting the words of Haile Selassie—you understand, who was the emperor of Ethiopia—into music. At the end of that speech, he says these words: "We Africans will fight, and we know we shall win, because we are confident in the victory of good over evil." You see? And so, therefore, the Caribbean understanding has always been an understanding of justice as prescribed by international law, but also of international morality—a sense of right and wrong.

#Pascal

And, you know, international law is, of course, an exercise in trying to protect the smaller and weaker from the larger and more powerful. And we actually, intuitively, all of us subscribe to that.

We all know that, right? Even the United States, back in '45, when they said, "OK, let's do the United Nations"—Roosevelt and also his wife, Eleanor, with human rights and so on—I mean, we agree this is intuitively how we would like society to run, the global society. But it's not how it runs in actuality. And we are confronted with this issue of how to actualize and realize something that, I would say, 80 to 90 percent of the global population actually wants—that we are fair and decent and so on.

And then you have a minority of people who try to exploit the system and laugh in the face of poverty, weakness, and misery, right? People like Pete Hexer, people like Marco Rubio, who really take joy in the strangulation and mass murder of others. But they're a minority. So the question is how to—how to get to the point where this international law is also actualized the way we would like it to be. Now, the Caribbean is also interesting because the resistance movement, even though the islands are so small and the populations are small, has been there for hundreds of years. And I think especially Haiti—it resisted, had the first slave revolt, threw out the whites, threw out their masters, and has been punished ever since.

The Cubans have thrown out the colonizers from the north, especially from the United States, and they've suffered ever since for it. What is it, then, that inspires this so much? And maybe one more question—since the Caribbean has a large part of its population ethnically connected to the slave trade and brought here from Africa—do you think there's still, as you quoted Bob Marley, who quoted Haile Selassie, an African connection? Do you still feel connected to the African continent in the Caribbean?

#Richard Byron-Cox

Well, the Caribbean does not exist without Africa because, as you correctly said, a significant part of the Caribbean population came here in chains, you know, as slaves. And we do not exist without our history. There was a great Jamaican leader—you must have heard of him—his name is Marcus Mosiah Garvey. And Garvey said that if you don't know your past, you're destined to fail, because you have to know where you come from in order to understand where you want to go. There's a poet from St. Vincent—no one really knows him—his name is Danny Williams. He wrote a poem called **We're the Cenotaph**, and in that poem he says this: "Only the future is ours to desecrate. The past is the mischief of our fathers." I repeat that: the past is the mischief of our fathers, and only the future is ours to desecrate.

What am I trying to tell you? The Caribbean people understand that we come from a past that's quite mischievous, you know, and much has been done to us. But the future—only we can determine that. And we know, I think you know very well, that, for example, during the Second World War, all the Japanese who lived in the United States were rounded up and put into concentration camps. The same thing didn't happen to the Germans because the Germans were white. The Japanese were Asian, and guess what happened? Once Japan got back on its economic feet, the Americans had to pay reparations. From the 17th century until now—even before the 17th century—the Black people of the Americas have been enslaved. We have been terrorized,

stigmatized, brutalized, enslaved, and subjected to genocide. Not a dollar has been paid in reparation to this day. Not a dollar.

#Pascal

And just this week, there was a vote at the United Nations about justice.

#Richard Byron-Cox

The worst crime in human history.

#Pascal

And, making it the worst crime against humanity, there were only three states that voted against it. Only three.

#Richard Byron-Cox

Interestingly, one of them was the United States of America.

#Pascal

Of course—the United States, Israel, and Argentina. All right, all right, you proud white colonization nations. But okay, that's just a side note. Thank you.

#Richard Byron-Cox

Yeah, but the point is this—let's get to what you really asked me. The point is that we do not exist in a vacuum. We exist based on our history, where we came from as a people. And the Caribbean people today have always been aware of these terrible injustices that have, you know, been visited—so to speak—on the Caribbean people. And we don't hold any hate or grudges, because the Caribbean is a mixture of people. We have whites, Blacks, Indians, Arabs, and so on. And we understand that for us to move forward together, we all belong here. You know what I mean?

And so, therefore, we have to build a new community. There was a man called Frantz Fanon—I don't know if you've ever read him. He was from Martinique, right? And he wrote a book called **The Wretched of the Earth.** He was a doctor, a psychologist. I think many people have read this book and understand a lot of what he says, but the fundamental point is at the end of the book. He says that in decolonization we must create a new man, a man who is different from the European man. And that new man must be based on what? What should he understand? That justice is essential, that morality has a place.

Now, you and I are talking about the Caribbean, and you began this discussion with Cuba. I think you know very well—because I know you follow these things—that the current president of the United States said, “I will take Cuba, and I will do what I want with it.” That’s what he said. It’s not me saying that; I’m not making up a story here. Do you understand what that really means? It’s not just a disrespect for international law and international morality. It’s a disrespect for the very dignity of the Caribbean—for the dignity of the Caribbean people, not just Cuba, the Caribbean people.

#Pascal

And you all understood it that way, I suppose. It's not just the Cubans. It's like everybody in the region understands this man has no respect—and no, I mean, the insult that comes through these words is quite profound, isn't it?

#Richard Byron-Cox

Yes, and we have learned for a long time now that might is not right. You understand? Justice is not what I want or what he wants, but what should be—based on objective reality. And therefore, as I said earlier, as Kant said, if justice perishes, what happens? And what we see now is that justice is perishing. A lot of people seem to think that because we are small, because we are tiny, we don't matter. I'm sure—I know you're not a medical doctor, you're a specialist in neutrality studies—but I'm sure you've heard of the stapes. The stapes are the smallest bones in the human body, in the ear. They're so tiny, and you think, oh, they're not important. But once these things are broken, your balance is disturbed.

You understand? And so, to think that the Caribbean doesn't matter simply because we're small—we're like the stapes. You destroy that, and the balance is disturbed. But let's take it just a little further, just a little further. You and I know that the bee—you know, the bee—is a very tiny animal. But about 33% of our food is thanks to something called pollination, which these tiny little animals are responsible for. We destroy them, and the system will change. The great Einstein, Albert Einstein, once said that if humans disappeared from this planet, much wouldn't change. But if the bees disappeared, everything would change—and it would mean the end of man. You see, we are the microcosm. And what is happening to Cuba and to our Caribbean?

Because up to now, we've only spoken about Cuba. What is happening to our Caribbean? You know, I don't remember his name, but you would. There was this German priest—Nordheimer, I think? I don't quite remember. But he said, when the fascists came for the communists, I didn't say anything. When they came for the socialists, I said nothing. And when they came for whoever else, I said nothing. And by the time they came for me, there was no one left to say anything. You see, we have to understand that, yes, this crisis—because that’s what it is, the crisis the world is in right now—the epicenter is the Strait of Hormuz. It’s the choke point, as we know, for oil and salt. But that’s just the epicenter. Once you drop anything in the water, it spreads out.

#Pascal

Of course. And the ripples are going all around the globe. The whole of South America—maybe with the exception of Argentina—is not on board with what’s happening. I mean, Colombia is definitely not on board with what’s happening. In Venezuela, the Americans basically had to fly in, kidnap the president and his wife, and kill a bunch of people along the way as a show of force, right? And then they were gloating about it, laughing, showing off—like, “Look how great we are, look what we can do.” And the whole Western press corps basically goes, “We’re so surprised that this is happening.”

But look, Maduro is here in chains and all that. And, you know, it’s again a moment when this collective West really shows its face—that, at the end of the day, they’re still happy when might wins over right, when might can overpower international law. And this is, of course, hugely troubling to a lot of people. Overall, there are differences now from how things used to run before. I mean, what about the inter-Caribbean and also inter-South-South relationships—Caribbean with South America? Do you see more cooperation starting now?

#Richard Byron-Cox

Well, yes, and I’m glad you got there, because what we have to understand is that with this hegemon being overactive, you know, things like ALBA—which is the Bolivarian Alliance for the Peoples of Our America—things like PetroCaribe, where Venezuela provided oil because, generally speaking, the Caribbean is an energy-starved place... We’ve now discovered some more in Guyana and so on, but generally speaking, it’s still limited. And things like PetroCaribe, the ALBA relations, and the ALBA Bank, which provided some support for many parts of the Caribbean, are no more, because the hegemon has decided, “No, no, no, this is not going to work. We’re going to go down to Venezuela and take out whatever,” and so on.

And so, therefore, the Caribbean suffers greatly because of that. We have different organizations. The English-speaking Caribbean and Haiti have what is called CARICOM, the Caribbean Community. We also have the Association of Caribbean States. There are different circles of interrelation. But the fact is, we all face a hegemon that tends to think there are no limits to its power. Even though Korea in 1915 showed that, even though Vietnam showed that, even Afghanistan has shown that, there’s a limit to this thing. You understand? But in their toolbox, the only tool they have—they don’t have diplomacy, they don’t have international morality, they don’t have law—the only thing they have in their toolbox is force.

#Pascal

It’s violence.

#Richard Byron-Cox

You understand? And that's the only thing the Caribbean does not have in our toolbox. We have everything else, you understand? Except violence. And because of that, what you're facing now is a situation where you have a set of people called Caribbean people who are willing to use diplomacy, who are willing to use international morality, who are willing to use international law, you understand, but have to deal with a hegemon that doesn't understand any of this whatsoever.

#Pascal

And unfortunately, that hegemon also doesn't shy away from, I mean, again, the use of force. A blockade is an act of war. What's happening to Cuba right now is, under international law, recognized as an act of war. The United States has intervened several times in Haiti and just flown presidents out of the country. Other states are under constant threat. But at the same time, just as you're saying right now, the people of the Caribbean are obviously unhappy about this. I mean, that's the one thing the United States can't really change.

#Richard Byron-Cox

Well, the truth is, in St. Vincent—next door to St. Vincent is a place called St. Lucia, right? You'd say in Spanish, Santa Lucia, okay? And actually, it's the only nation on the face of the earth named after a woman, by the way, right? And the Americans just came down and dropped some bombs on some fishing boats. And that was it. As you know, they've been bombing the Caribbean waters, and more than a hundred people have died. What you have now is fishermen afraid to go out to fish because you don't know when the Americans are going to bomb you and claim that you're trading in drugs. You understand? Now, what does that do to a place like St. Vincent or St. Lucia? It seriously hampers what we call the blue economy.

You understand? It seriously damages our food security, because fish is part of that. But more than that—more than that—you know, there are very few countries in this world where capital punishment, in other words, sentencing you to death, is given if you're found guilty of drug trafficking. And nowhere in the Americas, as far as I know—and I'm a lawyer by training—is there a country that says if you're guilty of drug trafficking, you're going to be hanged or killed. You understand? What the hegemon is doing is this: you see a boat sailing out there in the water, and you don't know what kind of boat it is.

But even if you suspect it's a drug boat, what you do is drop a bomb on that boat and kill everybody. They haven't been taken to court. They haven't been given a chance to defend themselves. And you have no evidence whatsoever that they're trafficking in drugs. But even if you had that evidence, as I just said, there's no country in the Americas that says you should be punished with capital punishment, you understand, for having traded in drugs. So what I'm trying to tell you is this: the hegemon is breaking every single rule, you understand, as regards law and order. But beyond that, the hegemon has no understanding whatsoever of international morality.

#Pascal

No, it doesn't. It doesn't. Yet it's unfortunately able to do that because nobody stops it—from the outside or from the inside. I mean, these acts of violence should be, or are, illegal even under the U.S. Constitution. And we've seen how the U.S. political establishment has been able to break its own laws. I mean, that Donald Trump just started a war—well, an act of war—against Cuba, and an all-out kinetic war against Iran, is illegal under the Constitution. It's only Congress, under the U.S. Constitution, that should be able to do that. Yet these people reign with impunity, and then they bring all this death and destruction also to the people of the—so the question is, how do we incentivize them to stop that? How can we get to a place where their own system would stop this kind of transgression?

#Richard Byron-Cox

Well, you see, you are a professor. That's who you are. You're an intellect, and therefore you're governed by rationale and by reason. You're governed by logic, right? Because that's who you are—that's the nature of the person that you are, right? Now, when you have raw power, overwhelming power, which is not educated by learning, which is not cultured by reason, and which is not restrained by decency, morality, and humanity—what do you have? What do you have? Think about that.

#Pascal

What do you have?

#Richard Byron-Cox

You see? And what we need to point out is this. Let me give you— I mean, there's so much we can talk about regarding the Caribbean and the hegemon. One of the things the hegemon is doing now is taking all of its rejects, its criminals, and so on, and forcing the Caribbean governments to keep them. You understand?

#Pascal

I thought they were exporting them to South America. They're exporting them to the Caribbean? Yes.

#Richard Byron-Cox

Yes, that's what they're doing now. But what they fail to understand is that it's going to come back to haunt them. The Caribbean doesn't have the resources to deal with such criminals, you understand? These are high-tech people. You put some in Dominica, some in St. Vincent, some in Barbados—wherever you put them—they're going to come together, you understand? And the

Caribbean doesn't have the economic wherewithal to give them the kind of money and wealth they want. So they'll come together, and guess what they'll do? Go straight back to America.

#Pascal

Guess what's going to happen?

#Richard Byron-Cox

And America doesn't understand that it's in their own interest to make sure these people aren't exported to the Caribbean. It's not we who say we're America's backyard—they're the ones who say that, that this is their backyard. And you know, Professor, imagine you have garbage in your house, right? Garbage, a lot of garbage. And you know what you do? You say, "I'm going to get rid of it," and you put it just outside in your backyard.

#Pascal

Now, isn't that nonsensical and foolish? It is—nonsensical and foolish. You see, so therefore... therefore...

#Richard Byron-Cox

In an ordinary circumstance, a person like yourself can be brought to reason. I'm sure you've read Plato's **Republic**, and his argument there is that the state should be governed by the philosopher king. That's his argument—the fundamental argument. People like you can be the philosopher king; you can be brought to reason. But when power is not educated, when it's not cultured, when it's not constrained, what can you do? It's a serious, serious question.

#Pascal

Yeah, it is. It is. But then again, you wouldn't want me as the philosopher king over the Caribbean, right? I mean, the people in the Caribbean know best what's good for them. So it should be up to each and everyone to have one say, one vote, in the future of their countries. But if all of your political processes and all of your economies and so on are constantly undermined and strangled to death—just as Cuba is being strangled to death—then there's really no point in that exercise. So the question to me is really how to convince, or how to bring about the change, maybe inside the West—I think, you know, the political West, as Richard Sakwa calls it—that includes Europe, which to this day, to this very day, and I had that discussion just yesterday, they have no political appreciation and no conscious intuition for just how horrible not only the colonialism of the past was, but the colonialism of the present.

Yeah, they think colonialism is over, that it was about communism in the Cold War, and now it's just about economic incentives and autocracy and whatnot. They don't see that it's still about colonialism. My people in Switzerland—no appreciation for that. They all say, "Colonialism is over." Even the lefties, even the left-leaning people, think, "Oh no, at the end of the day, we need to do something against autocratic regimes." It's such a stupid discourse. So how do we bring back that appreciation for just how insanely damaging this form of dominance—one group over another—is to the human species?

#Richard Byron-Cox

Well, you see, Chairman Mao Zedong, who led the Chinese Revolution in 1949, once said that power ultimately flows from the barrel of a gun.

#Pascal

Well, that's a conclusion I don't like, because I'd like to find a pacifist way of getting there. Can we not have it at the barrel of a whiskey?

#Richard Byron-Cox

No, I said that to say this: as a student of neutrality studies, I've learned that history has shown me—and we can go back to 1949 if you want—that hegemonies like this only understand greater power. You can't bring them to reason. You know, the Vietnam War began after France couldn't handle Vietnam, so they handed it over to America, and that was it. The Americans only stopped when the body bags started coming home. When they came back in the body bags in thousands, that's when they stopped.

They ran away from Afghanistan. Do you know that? They left all their high tech and whatever, right? And they ran away. The people they came to put out of power are still in power now. And the same thing is happening right now, as you and I speak, in Iraq. You understand? As we speak, the Americans are packing up and leaving Iraq for good. You know what I mean? And it's the same thing that's coming to the Strait of Hormuz—Israel and America attacking Iran. The only thing they understand is power, violence. You and I can sit down here and reasonably agree that...

#Richard Byron-Cox

Or agree to disagree reasonably, you understand? There is no reason in such a hegemon. There is no understanding of justice, no understanding of morality, no understanding of right and wrong. There is only an understanding of my power. Do you know that...

#Pascal

There must be a problem with the system, because America—the United States—has fantastic universities, fantastic thinkers: Jeffrey Sachs, John Mearsheimer, and so on. So many good and kind-hearted people. But once the system starts working, once it integrates on top of itself, it produces war after war after war, despite having a lot of good people. So somehow this needs—well, I refute the idea that people are bad. It's what the system produces.

#Richard Byron-Cox

I don't want to be abstract in this discussion. I want to be real, because there are Vincentians, there are Cubans, there are Jamaicans suffering as we speak. So I want to be real. However, I'm sure you may have read Karl Marx's **Theses on Feuerbach**. And in the last of those eleven, he said, "I haven't really done anything special. Philosophers have only interpreted the world; the challenge is to change it."

#Pascal

Yes.

#Richard Byron-Cox

You understand? The challenge is to change it. And therefore, what you're asking me is whether or not there's a formula for changing this. There is a way to change it. And to be honest with you, all I've seen over time—the only thing that has made America and Europe and so on bend—is when they meet a force equal to theirs or greater than theirs. History has shown me that. I'd be a fool to ignore what hundreds of years of history have taught me. That's true. And the idea that we can bring these people to reason—I happen not to believe that. Actually, I have no belief in the spirit of science. I either know, or I don't.

And what I don't know, I need to know. I try to find out, but I have absolutely no belief whatsoever. So therefore, what I think is this: new structures—this is my understanding, though I could be very wrong—but I'm telling you my understanding. New structures are coming into place that will create a counterbalance to this force. You know of BRICS and what that means. I don't have to tell you. You know, for example, that Iran has said, "OK, fine, those of you who want to use this strength for now, those of you whom we are going to allow to use it, you will have to pay for your oil not in American dollars, but in yuan."

So you know this, okay? You know for a fact that as we speak, as we discuss now, social movements around the world—including your own podcast and others—are building up support across the globe to say, "Look, what you have in Israel is a terrorist state." You understand? It's a terrorist state, and this terrorism has to cease. You understand? This terrorism has to cease. I'm sure you're aware—very sure you're aware—that two or three years ago, the kind of force we're seeing now demanding that this behavior stop is much greater than it was five years ago.

#Pascal

It's a fact.

#Richard Byron-Cox

You know, and so this is the hope. This is what I think, and this is why I'm here talking to you—because I'm just another voice adding to all of this and saying that this is the way. Because we do not have the force. But people like you and I, even if we had the force, we wouldn't really want to use it, because we know that no one wins in a war, you understand? But as a diplomat—as a trained diplomat—one of the first things I learned in diplomacy is that there comes a time when you have to dispense with diplomacy. That's why countries go to war. Iran has no choice, and I think you would agree with me on that. You simply have no choice.

#Pascal

I hate the idea of organized violence, but you're right that ignoring the lessons of the past is only the path of fools, right? Armed resistance is a right, even under the United Nations, against colonialism—and it's a right for a reason. The reason is that the peoples of the Global South managed to tell the peoples of the North, "Look, we have a right to struggle for our independence," and they had to acknowledge it. The fact that this is being brought up again and again is actually a sign of hope.

I still have to hope that it might be possible, at some point, to federate—to ally—with the suppressed and oppressed people inside the United States, because they are in the tens of millions: the poor and repressed, who also come from very similar backgrounds. In New Orleans, in the entire South, you know, there's hope in reform—reform from inside the hegemon—in order to make the hegemon a normal country, one that would interact with St. Vincent the way St. Vincent interacts with Barbados and with Cuba. I mean, that would be the goal, right? Yeah.

#Richard Byron-Cox

Well, I must say that I admire your hope. You remind me of Martin Luther King Jr., who was a very hopeful man, you know. There are two things—though I could use many other examples—that I always come back to. In his famous speech at the March on Washington, he said, "I have a dream that one day I will live in a society where my four little children will be judged not by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character." He also once said, "The arc of the moral universe is long, but it bends toward justice." You know? And those things give you hope.

One of his greatest books is called **Strength to Love**. When I read it, I was a sixteen- or seventeen-year-old boy—a child, really. You know? And what you saw in it was hope. Hope. There was a man called Chico Mendes—Chico Alvarez Mendes. He was Brazilian, a rubber tapper. You know, you go to the rubber trees, you cut the bark, and you get the rubber, and so on. And he was murdered—finally

murdered—by those who wanted the land. But before he died, he said this: when I started this struggle, I thought I was trying to save my job, because that was his job.

#Pascal

You know?

#Richard Byron-Cox

And then I thought I was trying to save my community. And then I thought I was trying to save the Amazon. And now I know—I'm trying to save the world. I'm trying to save humanity. What? Why am I telling you that? You see, the issue here—this is what I've been driving at all along—the issue here is not the colonized people or the people of the South and how much we suffer and so on. That's not the issue. The issue is that until we come to the point of something called our common humanity—whether you're Swiss or Barbadian or Vincentian—this world belongs to us all. Until we come to the understanding that what is in front of us now is not just saving life on this planet, it's saving the life of the planet itself.

#Pascal

Yes.

#Richard Byron-Cox

Because we are closer than we ever were to a nuclear war.

#Pascal

Yes, we are.

#Richard Byron-Cox

Yes, we understand. And I'm sure if the Board of Atomic Scientists were to set the Doomsday Clock, they would set it now at probably fifteen seconds to midnight. So until we come to that point, this is not merely about the Third World, about the Caribbean, about Cuba. This is a question of our common humanity. We're not just arguing about saving life on the planet—the question is saving the life of the planet.

#Pascal

Yes.

#Richard Byron-Cox

And we haven't come to that understanding yet.

#Pascal

No, we haven't. And a large part of the problem is that there are people who think they live in a garden. Josep Borrell literally said so. And the people in the garden don't understand that the garden is actually just the inner ward of an asylum for the insane. And somehow we need to teach the insane how to integrate into the larger garden. Yeah. So how to do it—the methodology, how to get there—that's the big question. But that's something we can try to figure out together, through collective thinking. So I thank you. I thank you for this exercise in collective thinking. Dr. Brian Cox, where should people go if they'd like to read more from you?

#Richard Byron-Cox

Well, actually, unlike you and the others, I don't do podcasts or anything like that, but I'm a writer. I write books. So you can always go to Google, type in my name—Richard Byron Cox Books—and you'll see some of my work. I'm currently writing more literature and philosophy than anything else. But no, I don't do podcasts or things like that. I think, you know, I was born in Barbados, as I said. It's something I learned. I don't know if you've ever looked up Barbados—it's a fantastically organized island, very, very well organized. And Barbadians have always believed that they couldn't be an island of prosperity in an ocean of desperation. That's nonsense.

And I've tried to explain this to Belgians, but they don't listen. You cannot build an island of prosperity in an ocean of desperation. So you have these Europeans who believe we are the golden billion, and that we can make the rest of the planet desperate while we walk on the streets of gold. It's a nonsensical and foolish pursuit—an illusion to be chased but never attained. You better believe that, because it's real, and time has proven it. So my task is basically to do what I'm doing now. And I really want to thank you on behalf of the Cuban people, on behalf of the Caribbean people, on behalf of St. Vincent and Barbados, and on behalf of humanity for having me.

#Pascal

Thank you very much, Richard. We'll have you again, and we'll continue this discussion, because at the end of the day, I'm convinced we'll figure it out. We're eight billion people on this planet—it's not possible that we can't collectively figure out how to stop constantly killing and raping and murdering each other. We'll get there; it just might take a little more time. Richard Byron Cox, thank you very much for your time today.

#Richard Byron-Cox

Thank you for having me. It was wonderful to be here. Thank you.

