

# Iran Ends US Hegemony In West Asia | Col. Douglas Macgregor

After 40 days of war, a (first) ceasefire is taking effect between the US/Israel and Iran. However, nobody is fooled about the prospects of this pause in the fighting to durably end the conflict. However, the fact that the US was compelled into this break speaks volumes about the new distribution of power in West Asia. The US will never gain back what it just lost. Today, I'm speaking again with retired Colonel Douglas Macgregor about the ceasefire, Trump's threats, Iran's missile strength, damaged US bases, Israeli pressure on Washington, the risk of wider economic shock, and Europe's weak place in NATO. Macgregor argues Iran kept the strategic edge, the US needed the pause, and Israel remains the main block in any wider settlement. Links: Douglas Macgregor Substack: <https://macgregorwarrior.substack.com/> Neutrality Studies substack: <https://pascallottaz.substack.com> (Opt in for Academic Section from your profile settings: <https://pascallottaz.substack.com/s/academic>) Merch: <https://neutralitystudies-shop.fourthwall.com> Donation: <https://neutralitystudies.com/donate> Timestamps: 00:00:00 Introduction 00:00:13 Ceasefire claims and strategic balance 00:06:31 Iran media view and missile power 00:13:00 Iran resilience and regime change limits 00:17:25 US bases hit and Gulf withdrawal 00:26:41 Israel under strain and ceasefire anger 00:31:35 Two week pause and global shock risk 00:38:47 Europe NATO and American control 00:49:01 Where to follow Douglas Macgregor

## #Pascal

Welcome back, everybody, to \*Neutrality Studies\*—tonight again with the always fantastic Colonel Douglas Macgregor. Colonel, welcome back. Hey, happy to be here. Thank you for coming online. And, you know, today we're speaking on April 8th. Donald Trump and the Iranians have actually just declared a ceasefire on both sides—both of them declaring victory. Yesterday, just 24 hours ago, Donald Trump was still threatening basically the annihilation of the Iranian nation, something that a lot of people took as a direct threat to use nuclear weapons. And a lot of people on Twitter have invoked the 25th Amendment, saying that Donald Trump should be removed from office. And now this—the ceasefire, both sides. What do you make of it?

## #Douglas Macgregor

It very much depends on whether you think the United States holds the strategic initiative or whether you believe Iran does. In my estimation, Iran's principal goal throughout this entire conflict has been to survive—to defeat the attacks against it, to punish American allies and supporters in the region, and to survive. So, based on that assessment, I see Iran as holding the strategic initiative, not us. And I think that creates an almost insoluble problem for us. We have a World War II-era

force structure, designed to refight some version of World War II. The last time that approach worked was Desert Storm in 1991. We should have undergone profound reorganization, reform, and change in the military after that, but we did not. Everybody has worshipped at the altar of Desert Storm ever since, and everyone still talks in terms of World War II. Iran is very different.

Iran had to make some decisions 20, 25, 30 years ago about what they would and wouldn't do. We know they have effectively no air force. We keep talking about having destroyed the air force—well, they have none. Then we talk about destroying the navy. They had seven old frigates, but they also have a lot of smaller boats and unmanned systems at sea. That was their answer to the navy. They appear to have lost the seven frigates, and no one seems to have lost much sleep over that. They were quite old and antiquated. But again, we go back to old metrics—you know, “we sank this, we destroyed that,” and then we claim to have destroyed, say, 7,000 targets. Well, that presumes the targets are meaningful, and that when you run out of quote-unquote “meaningful” military targets, you've won.

Well, there's no evidence for that. Iran, on the other hand, invested heavily in missiles and unmanned systems—drones—and that has paid off handsomely because Iran is a natural fortress. It's a continental power with 93 million people, surrounded by mountains and bordered to the south by deserts. How do you invade Iran? It hasn't worked out very well for anybody, certainly not since Alexander the Great. I don't know of anyone who's tried to invade it since the Mongols. And, of course, the Mongols were willing to do things that no one else in history would do, including mass murder—at least until we get to the Second World War, and then more recently to Gaza. So, I think the Iranians hold the strategic initiative. They're capable of holding out much longer.

They've been much more successful than we thought they would be, and our efforts have been largely futile. In the meantime, we blame Iran for closing the Strait of Hormuz. No, that's wrong—Lloyd's of London did that. No one is going to underwrite any shipping until the war is over or there's a complete cessation of violence. We keep saying, “Well, Iran stopped this,” and “Iran caused that.” No, it's not true. People in the United States seem to forget that Israel began this conflict, and then we joined Israel and got into it. Iran didn't attack us, and Iran didn't attack Israel. So the bottom line is, this is a very strange set of circumstances—and now the ceasefire comes along. And it came at a very odd time, after all these bellicose threats.

And the more I look at this, the more persuaded I am—and others are—that if we look at the evidence we can find out there, it seems the CIA contacted the ISI in Pakistan and said, “Here's a proposal we'd like your leadership to make.” So they took this proposal—apparently almost word for word what we had written—and sent it to the Iranians, and then sent it back to us, creating the illusion that somehow we were approached to do this by Islamabad on behalf of Iran. The Iranians never asked for a ceasefire. There's no evidence for that at all—none. In fact, on Monday they reiterated their ten points, and Witkoff said, “This is a catastrophe. We can't possibly accept any of

this.” Now, all of a sudden, as part of the ceasefire, we’ve said we will negotiate, and we’ll do so on the basis of the ten points that Iran has submitted. That’s a catastrophe if you’re an Israeli or an agent of Israel.

So I don’t know how that’s going to turn out. And then we discover that Witkoff and Kushner are going back to Islamabad to theoretically represent the United States, when everybody has concluded they’re Israeli agents who represent exclusively the interests of Israel. Nobody wants them anymore for that very reason. Now, this isn’t new. When Tony Blinken was Secretary of State, the Egyptians and others in the region all concluded he was an agent for Israel. They didn’t see him as representing us either. So I don’t know what to make of any of it, but I have very low expectations. I don’t think this is going to fundamentally change much. As far as I can tell, the military buildup on our side continues.

## **#Pascal**

Right. 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](https://pascallottaz.substack.com). The link’s going to be in the description below. And now, back to the video. I studied today what the Iranians put out in their media—their version of what’s happening, translated—and they’re saying they achieved almost all of their goals, and that by now there’s a proposal the Americans have been begging for, for a month—30 days, they’re saying—for negotiations.

And now they’ve been putting forward a proposal—the Iranian ten points. They’re willing to consider it, but they’ll do so under complete distrust, literally, as they said, “with our finger on the trigger.” So if the other side does something foolish, then, well, they’ll just continue. Because I think their assessment is the same as yours: they have the strategic advantage at the moment. What they need to do is hold out—and they do. They’re trying to establish reciprocity: for everything that hurts them, they have a designated target and a designated strategy to hurt the other side as well. And they’re willing to do that.

But they’re also willing to, you know, invert Clausewitz—war as the continuation of politics by other means, or politics as the continuation of war by other means. Right. So they’re trying again in Islamabad through negotiations. Do you think that if this ceasefire doesn’t hold, the United States will be hurt overall? Because we can see that some of the things Iran was able to do over the last week or ten days—especially the shooting down of U.S. Air Force planes and helicopters, Black Hawks—what do you make of that? That the Iranians still have that capacity, despite all the pronouncements by Pete Hegseth and Donald Trump that it’s basically open skies in Iran?

## **#Douglas Macgregor**

Well, I've seen some reports from people recently in Iran. These came through intermediaries, through journalists. The people reporting are not American nationals, but they're also not from the region. They seem to be Europeans who, for whatever reason, were able to enter Iran. There are also some reports from Asians, and they tend to say the same thing. They estimate that Iran has at least 15,000 missiles remaining in its arsenal—maybe more—and at least 45,000 unmanned systems, drones. Their manufacturing capacity for drones is untouched, and the missile arsenal is, for all intents and purposes, untouched. And they have more than enough launchers—mobile launchers.

They seem to have lost, we think, maybe 50% of their mobile launchers, but those appear to be replaceable, and they still have half of them left. So, from the standpoint of their offensive striking power, that seems to be intact. That's the first thing. It's important for us to know that, because that's a lot of missiles. And of course, all of this is underground. When you look at these underground facilities—there are lots of pictures online—they're enormous. This reflects a 20-year effort by the Iranians to build them. So we have to juxtapose that with ourselves. We're operating 6,000 miles away from the United States, at least that far, using Germany and other European states as intermediate stations.

But the bottom line is that we don't have access to ports right in the region, which means we have to go all the way south to Diego Garcia. And in the Mediterranean, we can go up—at least so far we've done it—to Greece and other places. So we're at the end of a very long line. Our manufacturing capacity is not the same. We could produce perhaps seven, eight, nine missiles every couple of days. Some people say maybe ten a week—I'm not sure. But we've never built a, quote-unquote, "surge capacity." And when you look at what the Russians have done, when they rapidly ramped up, they created a surge capacity so that if the battlefield demands it, they can point to a particular piece of equipment and say, "We need more of it immediately."

And it can go from, instead of ten, up to a thousand. The Chinese are supporting them. We know the Chinese can manufacture roughly ten thousand rocket motors—that is, rockets or missiles—about a thousand rocket motors or missiles a day. We'd be lucky to produce a hundred in a week. When you look at these kinds of things and realize the Chinese and the Russians are strongly supporting the Iranians—because they have no interest in seeing the Iranian state destroyed by us under any circumstances—you see that if anybody needed this ceasefire, we did. I'm not saying it was irrelevant to the Iranians; I'm sure they're grateful for it. But we needed it. But it's temporary.

And everybody who's looked at this—sober-minded Americans, Europeans, Iranians—it doesn't make any difference, they've all said the same thing: this looks temporary. It doesn't look like a permanent solution. Now, if they send Witkoff and Kushner back to Islamabad—the two gentlemen the foreign minister previously said, "Please don't send them back, there's no point"—and since you've been attacked twice while in the midst of negotiations, the government in Iran doesn't harbor any illusions. Now, the population may, and here in the United States people are all celebrating, saying, "See, we crushed those people." And of course that's not true, but that's what people think.

## **#Pascal**

Yeah. But the—I mean, the Iranians proved, for all intents and purposes, that while their leadership are mortal men, their system carries on. I mean, they just replenish, right? The Ayatollah is dead, long live the Ayatollah—pretty much literally. So it just keeps going. In a sense, didn't that advantage, that the system is so resilient, actually maybe lead to some sort of reassessment in Washington of what's possible and what's not, in terms of not just regime change but achieving any kind of meaningful goals? Plus, what do you make of those threats yesterday by Donald Trump? Basically, all of us were guessing that he's now thinking out loud about nuking Iran for real.

## **#Douglas Macgregor**

I don't think a nuclear weapon will be used by us. I just don't. I could be wrong, but my perception is that there are too many sober-minded people in Washington to allow that to happen. They understand you're opening Pandora's box—you're normalizing the use of something very dangerous that could then be turned against us and other countries. On the other hand, I know we have a number of conventional capabilities we haven't employed yet. But they're not war-winning. That's what people need to understand. They can do an enormous amount of damage, sure, but they're not going to end the war. And I think your point is valid.

The Iranians have demonstrated conclusively that they cannot be defeated. It reminds me of the negotiations at Brest-Litovsk in 1918. Radek, who was the principal representative until Trotsky was sent in to relieve him, sent back these messages to Lenin: "This is difficult, but the Germans realize that we cannot be conquered." And they were right. Imperial Germany understood Russia—it's huge, it's enormous. "We can't possibly conquer it; we're not even going to try." And if you look at the lines at the end of the war, they were along eastern Poland and around the Baltic states and what we today call Moldova. They didn't go any further.

Well, I think we've realized that Iran cannot be conquered. I think that's clear. So if you can't conquer it and you can't get regime change, your best hope is to destroy it, cause society to collapse, and hopefully wrest control of the oil fields away from Iran. That's it. That's the best we can do. And I don't think the rest of the world supports that—but Israel does. And that brings us to the real core problem. This is what most Americans are missing entirely: why are we doing this? What particular reason is there for us, out of the blue, to have spent all this time, money, and resources on Iran's destruction? There isn't one.

There's just nothing strategic to justify it. We're doing it because this is what Israel, its lobby in the United States, and the people who back it want. And they happen to control both houses—the Senate and the House—and they control the White House. All the key players and advisers driving this around Trump are effectively agents or supporters of the Israel lobby. You look at someone like Hagseth—he's a fanatical Christian Zionist, or Zionist Christian, whatever you want to call it—but he's

completely aligned with what Mr. Netanyahu wants. The question has always been, both in Israel and in the United States, how far is Donald Trump willing to go?

And Trump was not willing to attack at the time we joined the war. Israel had to start it. They started the war, and we were sort of grudgingly dragged into it. I still don't think Trump has his heart in this. I've never believed that he does. He tries to compensate with a lot of bellicose rhetoric, which is what you heard when he threatened the destruction of everything a few days ago. But now he's in a trap of his own making—he's caught up in this escalatory trap. And if you look at the ten points, I mean, how can we possibly accept that unless we're prepared to divorce ourselves from Israel? Because that's what happens.

## **#Pascal**

The most important demand is probably that the United States completely withdraw from the region—no more bases, no more stationing, no more airfields, and so on. How realistic is that? Not in terms of what the United States wants, but what it still has at the moment, because actually Iran attacked a lot of these places, right? The radar stations are gone, a lot of the bases have been hit, and we have reports that thousands of U.S. personnel were moved out of the region. What do we know about how much U.S. presence there still is in this “ring of fire” that the U.S. built up around Iran?

## **#Douglas Macgregor**

Well, we've looked at 27 bases that have been under serious attack by the Iranians, and they're largely unusable. Everything of any real value has been destroyed. Most of the soldiers who were there—airmen, sailors, Marines—have been withdrawn, because to leave them there, of course, would have been to leave them vulnerable to destruction. Now, there are still some in the area, I'm told. They've moved into local housing areas, into some large hotels, hiding out in basements or something. But you're hitting on something very important. First of all, most Americans didn't even know we had all these bases. Secondly, the reason those bases were there is because we promised the Gulf states—the GCC, Kuwait, and so forth—that we would protect them.

We've now demonstrated that we can't. Warfare has changed. We cannot stop all these missiles from getting through. They bought heavily into our air defense capability. It's had some success, but not as much as they thought it would. So the real question—the third question—is, do they really want us to come back? Now, the elites—most of them, the very wealthy, ruling elites—are, frankly, viewed inside the Arab world as kind of an extended Epstein class: corrupt, despicable, decayed. They're in Egypt; some are in Switzerland, some in London, some in Paris. But they're not living right now in these places. Right.

And large numbers of other people have gotten into their cars or trucks or whatever they had and, as I understand it, driven to Riyadh, because from Riyadh you can fly to the Sinai, down at the

bottom there—I've forgotten the name of the resort. And from there you can fly to Cairo, and you can either stay in Egypt or fly somewhere else. So I think the real question is, how do we just quietly admit that we can't stay and do much? And how do the elites react to that? Because when I went into the Pentagon during the last, sort of, 60 to 90 days of the Trump administration, I began asking—because at the time Donald Trump wanted to find a way to withdraw our forces from Iraq and Syria, not just Afghanistan—and when I kept pushing, people said, “What do we have this base near Al-Tanf for in Syria?” And the answer was, “For Israel.”

I said, “Well, Israel has better intelligence on the region than we do. How can we provide early warning?” “No, no, no—you have to understand, we're there for Israel.” And I think the view from Israel, and from their supporters in Washington, is that we're in the Gulf for Israel. The question is, can we stay there anymore? I don't think we can. I think the proverbial handwriting is on the wall. But how does Donald Trump declare victory, look like he's in charge, and still do that? I suspect we may end up with something similar to the end of the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, when Kennedy told the Russians, “Look, you want us to pull our missiles out of Turkey? We'll do that.”

But we can't do it immediately, because that would upset the political structure and stability here in Washington. They'll say, “Well, we surrendered.” And we'll say, “We're not surrendering, but we agree with you. We'll pull our missiles out if you pull yours out of Cuba.” Khrushchev accommodated us—he pulled his missiles out, and once that had been accomplished, some months later we quietly withdrew all the missiles from Turkey. So you may see something like that eventually. But Americans must understand that the sticking point is Israel. We've said, number one, no uranium enrichment, because that's what Israel wants. We've said you've got to dismantle most of your, you know, theater ballistic missile arsenal, because that's what Israel demands.

And, you know, you can't cooperate with anyone in the region who's supposed to be your, quote-unquote, partner or ally, because that's what Israel wants. And in addition to that, Israel wants Greater Israel. The Israelis have already said, “You can have your ceasefire with Iran—okay, we'll pause for two weeks—but we're going to continue to attack Lebanon.” Iran has said that's unacceptable, which means an inevitable resumption of the conflict. So we're backing the Greater Israel project. And if you look at the map, that's very destabilizing for the region. You're talking about turning over half of Syria, a quarter of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the Sinai, and part of the Nile Valley to Israel. I don't think that's going to happen.

## **#Pascal**

Why? I mean, there's a very important voice online saying that this isn't what's actually happening. It's a man called Brian Berletic, and he keeps making the point that, no, it's not the tail wagging the dog—it's the dog pretending that the tail has undue influence on it, in order to basically, you know, conveniently blame it all on the tail, right? When in fact, this is a long-term strategy by the United

States, by the neocon faction—the “road to Persia” and so on—these strategies to just grind down and destroy any and all opposition to U.S. influence in every corner of the world, really. What do you make of that argument?

## **#Douglas Macgregor**

He's never spent any time in Washington. Because if he had spent any time on the Hill, he would know that there is an Israeli representative—an agent of Israeli influence and power, a so-called member of the Israeli lobby—in practically every congressional and senatorial office. They're there for a reason: to ensure that whatever those senators and congressmen do is aligned with what Israel wants, and they're in a position to turn off the money spigot. The way it works is, if you don't support what Israel wants on this bill, or this piece of legislation, or in this policy, that's fine. They'll simply turn all the money they would have given you for your re-election over to your opponent, because they're effectively agnostic about whether you're a so-called Republican or Democrat.

The only thing they care about is, will you support what we want? That's a lot of money. And where does that money come from? It comes from Zionist billionaires inside the United States. So he's dead wrong. You've got to go all the way back to the 1990s and look at the authors of a strategic document—Paul Wolfowitz, Richard Perle, and so on. These were all Zionists. And what they wanted to do, this was their argument: we need to gain control of all the oil resources in the Middle East, and then we'll have China by the throat. That was the argument, because the Chinese are dependent on that oil. About 50% of China's oil comes from the Gulf, 13% from Iran, and the rest from the other Gulf states. So, is China concerned about the destruction of oil infrastructure in the Gulf?

Absolutely. But China is not going to go to war over it. The Chinese can go to other sources, which they're doing right now. There are other places—Mexico can provide a lot of oil. There are plenty of options. It's not going to make life easy, but it can be done. I heard Brian's argument, and I happen to think very highly of Brian, particularly his assessment on the tactical level. He was one of the first people to recognize how profoundly things were changing on the battlefield, and I think he understood better than most people Putin's deliberate and methodical approach to war. Most people mistook that as evidence of weakness. It never was. It still isn't. But on this point, I think he's dead wrong. The man who is calling the tune is Mr. Netanyahu, not Mr. Trump.

## **#Pascal**

So how do you assess the situation for Israel then? Because, to be honest, you know, one thing—I'm on a little vacation right now, just one week in Southeast Asia, at a lovely little resort—and what really struck me is the number of Israeli tourists. I didn't think they'd be able to come here, because the resort told us that a lot of people had to cancel their flights, mostly from Europe, the ones who

can't fly through Qatar and Doha anymore. But there are a lot of Israeli tourists who are obviously able to make it here. I mean, I believe Israel is being hammered at the moment, but it seems they're still able to carry on, aren't they?

## **#Douglas Macgregor**

Well, it depends on the individual Israeli, and on how much money and influence they have. Mr. Netanyahu's son, who would otherwise be in the Israeli Defense Forces, is in Miami.

## **#Pascal**

Right.

## **#Douglas Macgregor**

Gee, what's he doing in Miami? He's at the right age to serve in the armed forces. Lots of Israelis have disappeared and reappeared in Cyprus, where Israeli money is pouring in to buy up vast tracts of real estate. They're buying up locations on Greek islands, and they're in Greece, and also in Serbia. So I think you've got large numbers of Israelis with money and influence who've managed to get out. Now, the Israeli military has taken over many of the airfields—many of the places from which people could depart. Of course, Ben-Gurion was heavily bombed, so it's not in good shape. I don't know if they're flying out of there at the moment; perhaps they are. But the point is, the Israeli military was stopping people from leaving the country.

I don't know how many Israelis—and when you say Israelis, you've got to be careful, because two million people living in Israel, out of the nine million, are Arabs. In other words, Palestinians living on land inside Israel. I don't know how many Jews are left in Israel. And I'm sure that the Hasidic Jews, the Jews in Jerusalem who are really very different from everybody else, I'm sure they're still where they are. But the rest of the Jewish population—I just don't know what's left. And now you have an Israeli Defense Force on the ground, the army. It's demoralized, it's exhausted, it's worn out. They're having trouble getting anybody to come in and fight. They want more reserves; they're trying to mobilize. And people have said, "No, I'm not going." I think your point is well taken, but I think the situation inside Israel—for the Israeli state and society—is very, very serious.

## **#Pascal**

Right. And I should maybe make the point that the only way I can assess this is, of course, by listening to white people speaking Hebrew—which doesn't necessarily mean they're Israelis. But still, I don't know anyone else who would do that. So overall, we simply don't know how extensive the destruction is in Israel, do we? Because there's also this kind of news blockade from over there. So,

do you think Israel actually had a hand in the ceasefire agreement, or that Israel is seriously mad at Donald Trump for doing this outreach to the Pakistanis in order to signal to the Iranians that, after forty days, it might be time to take a break?

## **#Douglas Macgregor**

No, that's exactly my perception. Everything I'm seeing is that the Israelis are furious. He did this apparently without necessarily consulting them—or if he did consult them, it was more like, "This is what I'm going to do." And that's why Mr. Netanyahu has finally come around and said, "All right, we'll respect the ceasefire with Iran that you reached for two weeks. But we're not stopping anything we're doing in southern Lebanon or in Lebanon right now." They're attacking Beirut again. So I think they're unhappy.

And that's why I find it interesting that Kushner and Witkoff will go back, because, as I said on Monday, Witkoff said, "Anything that these Iranians want—these ten points—are outrageous. We can't accept it. We don't want it." And that was one of the concessions that Trump made to get the ceasefire: "We'll take your ten points as the basis for future negotiations." We didn't say, "You can have the ceasefire if you do it on the basis of our fifteen points," which amount to the unconditional surrender of Iran. So I'm sure the Israelis—in fact, I know the Israelis—are not happy about it. But it's only two weeks, and I think the Israelis are well aware that at the end of two weeks, this thing will resume.

## **#Pascal**

But what kind of—why would the United States want a two-week break? I mean, if there's a country on earth that can just keep doing this for another two weeks, it's the United States. What does a ceasefire give the U.S. that it can't get without one?

## **#Douglas Macgregor**

Well, let's look at the larger picture. I think reality has struck home with President Trump. It may not have reached everyone in Washington, but I think he understands this: the world is going to face famine in the coming months—in places like the Middle East, Africa, elsewhere, and India—because of the fertilizer deficit. The Russians produce much of the fertilizer, and we do as well, but even if you put us all together, we can't compensate for the deficit. That's how severe it is. You have to look at the plastics industries that are shutting down, and the microcircuitry industries—particularly that wonderful plant we talk about all the time in Taiwan, along with the operations in Korea and Japan—because they're not getting any helium. There's a whole series of products affected.

The last count was 47 products essential to our civilization's daily life that are now unavailable because of the absence of petroleum and all its byproducts—sulfur, everything you can think of. I think he knows that, and I think he also knows that the Global South is headed not into a recession

but into a depression. The Global South has no reserves of strategic petroleum. In most cases, they don't have the means to refine or convert any of it. Australia is a perfect example—they don't have any refineries operating, none. They're in a lot of trouble. When this information finally hits the president's desk—and this is not something he considered seriously, because remember, I think the Israelis told him, "This will be over in four or five days. They can't withstand this. We'll kill the top leadership, we'll force the regime to topple, so let's just go do this."

And grudgingly, he went along with it. It reminds me of what Bill Clinton was told back in January of 1999, when he asked, "How long will this air campaign last?" And he was told, "Well, sir, you know, perhaps three or four days, maybe a week or ten days—two weeks at the most." So Bill Clinton said, "Okay, then go ahead." It was seventy-eight days. And the air campaign didn't end it. It ended because of negotiations in Moscow between Strobe Talbott, the Deputy Secretary of State, and the Russian leadership—Yeltsin and his advisors. And we bribed them. We promised them all sorts of things, including lots of money, and they pulled the plug on the Serbs.

And the Serbs had always said from the very beginning, if we don't have access to Russian energy and Russian food, then we're probably not going to make it through the Balkan winter. We'll have hundreds of thousands of people starve and freeze to death. So when that became clear, that's when Milosevic said, we have to withdraw from Kosovo. We don't want to, but without Russian support, we can't stay. I think we're going to see an end to this particular tragedy along the same lines, for reasons of global economic distress—and also because we're sliding into a very serious recession now, Pascal, that nobody wants to admit. Every time they publish good news about job reports, a month later it's all adjusted downward.

The truth is, we're in a very fragile position, and it could very, very rapidly change—degenerate into one of those situations where interest rates rise, the yield on our bonds rises, we can't service the debt, and the whole thing collapses. I think all of this has come together in the White House in some sort of understanding. And I think, privately, if President Trump could speak truthfully—having worked for the man briefly and talked to him a couple of times, because I liked him personally—this is not an unpleasant person by any means. I think he probably says, "Well, let's hope this two-week ceasefire can be extended and extended and extended," because he knows these other factors are important and inescapable.

## **#Pascal**

So, you know, there were a lot of people who were worried that these religious fanatics in the White House really got to him—XF being one of them, of course. But we know that Rubio harbors similar ideas, and of course the White House faith bureau.

## **#Pascal**

That they're having now with this blonde lady—I forgot her name—the crazy pastor who's permanently stationed at the White House. They do prayer sessions with him, around him, calling him a vessel of God and whatnot. Do you think he didn't buy into it? Because a lot of his rhetoric in the last couple of weeks was extremely worrisome, like he might have actually gone down that route.

## **#Douglas Macgregor**

I think that President Trump is not a religious fanatic. He simply isn't. I think he welcomes anybody to the Oval Office who will worship at the altar of Donald Trump. Right? Let's face it, that's the way it is. It's sort of like the Israel lobby—the only way you can become a member and a supporter is to worship at the altar of Israel. Then you can join the Israel lobby. If you don't do that, well, then you're an anti-Semite. It's kind of a dichotomy like that with Trump. I think this religious fanaticism is real. We've always had that strain in our society. I mean, we can go back to the Puritans who left the Netherlands and came to the United States, and they were, in that sense, very fanatical. They were by no means moderate people.

When Sigmund Freud visited the United States after World War I, in the 1920s, when he left, they asked him, "Well, what can you tell us about the United States?" He said, "The place is a theocracy." Because he saw the tremendous power and influence that was exerted over the government by Protestant pastors who were, you know, extreme. That's how we ended up with Prohibition. Now, this sort of thing—it's a sine curve. It goes up and down. I think more people in the United States are horrified by this radical Zionism that's linked to this radical form of Christianity than are supporting it. Because all you have to do is look at the polls. Where is President Trump in the polls? He's now in the mid to low 30s. If it gets down into the mid to low 20s, he won't last in office. He'll be removed. That's how serious it is.

## **#Pascal**

Right. I mean, that threat looms on the horizon. And also, of course, the midterms in November might have been on his mind—thinking that he must somehow get out of this now. But maybe instead of talking about this for the last five or six minutes, I was wondering about your assessment of Europe. I mean, that weird continent that has nothing to do now with any of these negotiations, that kind of went along with everything—maybe with the exception of Spain. What's your assessment of where they are now? Because, okay, you've got this unfinished war in Iran, you've got the unfinished war in Ukraine, and they're militarizing at the moment, but doing so from a position of real and very severe weakness.

## **#Douglas Macgregor**

Well, you know, I lived in Europe for almost ten years in total, and I've loved Europe all my life. You know, when I got to SHAPE headquarters, one of the questions I was asked was, "What do you

think about NATO?" And I said, "Well, if Western civilization is purest at its source, then this place is the fountainhead of our civilization." I mean, that's how important I regard Europe. However, I also very quickly concluded that Europe would be much better off without us than with us. I was one of those people who said, "We've got to find a way to disengage from Europe." And when I asked somebody, "In the absence of the Soviet threat, what holds this NATO alliance together?"—because everybody, at least when I was there, was very defensively oriented.

No one thought in terms of waging war offensively against anyone. And they said, well, in the absence of the Soviet Union, I guess the French are the only natural enemy of everyone in Europe. Of course, they laughed. And I certainly don't view it that way, but that was a commonly repeated phrase. I think for the Europeans right now, what should have happened is that we should have said, look, we'll stay in NATO, but we're withdrawing our forces. And you are going to have to provide the senior general to command. We will no longer have an American commanding everything in NATO. We'll support you, but you've got to take responsibility, from a strictly European standpoint, for the military alliance. Because they already have, as the NATO—whatever it is—what do they call it, the secretary general, who is a European on rotation. We didn't do that. That would have been a nice, gradual, slow, predictable disengagement. And instead, President Trump, who sometimes sounds like a petulant child, hurls abuse at anybody who disagrees with him or won't do what he says.

## **#Douglas Macgregor**

And I think that's what's been going on with the Europeans off and on. He seems to think that NATO is an alliance of vassals who are obligated to their master—to respond to whatever the master says or does. And unfortunately, if you go back and look at the interventions we've been part of in Iraq, Afghanistan, Libya, and now what we're doing, there's this expectation: well, if we decide to attack someone, you're obligated to come with us. He doesn't understand that's truly alien to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. But the Europeans themselves have done that, because if you ask them—whether they're Poles or Germans or something else—they'll say, "Well, you know, we want good relations with Washington. So if we have to provide something, we'll do it rather than not." I hope they've woken up to reality, and I hope they'll take responsibility for themselves.

But I don't see any evidence that that will happen until all the governments in Europe are gone. Because the people leading European states right now are doing as much damage—maybe more damage—than Hitler did to Europe when he was in power. That began with Merkel in 2015, and it's continued without interruption. It's been catastrophic, especially for the Germans, the French, the Dutch, even the Scandinavians. It's all got to stop. And I think the destruction of cheap energy is going to help enormously, because that's going to drive the people in office out eventually. Then we'll see Europe reassert itself—not necessarily as one entity—because, you see, NATO is too large. The strategic view from Rome or Belgrade or Ljubljana or Zagreb is very different from the view from Stockholm or London or Paris. That's the problem.

## **#Pascal**

So you don't see NATO as a tool for the United States to wield power over its vassals—that's not how you view it.

## **#Douglas Macgregor**

Oh no, I'm very opposed to that. Unfortunately, I think this is what's alienating Europeans—they're finally beginning to wake up.

## **#Pascal**

Right. But does it have that kind of character, and is that something that should be changed? Or do you think it never had that character—that it's just a misinterpretation of what NATO is?

## **#Douglas Macgregor**

No. In fact, I went to a conference—this was back in 2000, shortly after I left my position at the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe. Somebody said, "Well, describe for us America's relationship with Europe." I said, "Think of it this way: what was Rome's relationship with the Greek city-states? Rome always admired everything that was Hellenic. Anything that originated in Greece was viewed as inherently superior. All educated Romans learned to read, write, and speak Greek. But the Greeks were told to shut up, get in line, and behave as members of the Roman Empire."

And they had to provide at least one legion, fully equipped, for use by the Romans. Well, that was the relationship I saw when I left SHAPE. At the end of the day, you know, the American four-star would sit there and say, "Well, these people ultimately have to do whatever the hell we tell them. So to hell with them. Go be nice to them." And I was always very polite, and the British deputy tried to be very polite. But the American four-star was right—they were stuck. Either you do it, or to hell with you, you get cut out. Nobody wanted to be cut out. So I'm hoping that changes in the future.

## **#Pascal**

Right. Even Switzerland has this really bizarre experience—they've been paying for months, or maybe years, for a Patriot system that still hasn't been delivered. And now they've said, "We're not paying for this anymore." Then they found out the Americans are just diverting the payments they're making for F-35s that also aren't being delivered. What? Everybody's like, "What do we do? What do we do?" We don't know. It's bizarre. It's utterly bizarre.

## **#Douglas Macgregor**

Well, the funny thing is that Switzerland was always held up as the example down in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which I thought was hysterical. Because here you'd sit—I was there in 1995—you sit with the Serbs, the Croats, and the Bosniaks. These people had just been killing each other for a long time. There was an enormous amount of blood spilled. And then the representative from Washington says, "We think Switzerland is a good model for you." Oh, really? You know, it made no sense. Switzerland is very different from Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Switzerland came into existence as an entity because the people who lived within those mountain ranges wanted it. They had a different cultural outlook, a different way of thinking. You can't apply Switzerland to Bosnia-Herzegovina. But it's just interesting—that sort of thing came from an American who, by the way, knew nothing about Switzerland, didn't speak French or German, didn't know anything about the people living in the former Yugoslavia. This is a big problem for us. We just don't know what we're talking about when we talk about other people. And this, of course, is what's being said over and over again.

We miscalculated about Iran. We didn't understand Iran. Right. I mean, the average American said, "Oh, these are just more of the same as Iraq and elsewhere. We'll just crush these." Wait a minute—this is a core civilizational state. This is a 2,700-year-old empire nation. "Well, they have different kinds of people. We can stir up trouble between them." And I said, "Wait a minute. A lot of these people lived within the confines of the Persian Empire for many, many centuries and are quite comfortable doing so. They have a role to play." I mean, none of this was considered...

## **#Pascal**

No, but it's now being more or less exposed as a reality—including the fact that the largest non-Israeli Jewish community in the region lives in Iran—and that Israel blew up, yesterday or the day before, one of their synagogues. It really gives a moment of clarity, I think, about what this entire enterprise is about.

## **#Douglas Macgregor**

Well, here's another data point for you. Someone showed me a map of Tehran—who had lived there—and drew lines around certain neighborhoods, saying, "These are the neighborhoods that we would call, in the United States, middle class or upper middle class. The people there are well educated, and most of them are advocates for a secular society. It's not that they hate the government; they just want the government to recognize the importance of becoming increasingly secular." He said, "Here's the rest of the story: we killed most of those people. Those neighborhoods have been leveled." So all this nonsense that comes out of the administration—"We want the Iranian people to be free"—rings pretty hollow.

## **#Pascal**

It's all crap. Of course. It's meaningless crap. Of course. It's the media story. But yeah, we'll have to see how that plays out. Colonel, thank you so much for your assessment. It's always very valuable to hear how you look at this. If people want to read or know more about your analysis, where should they go?

## **#Douglas Macgregor**

Well, a couple of places. The first and most important right now is that I have a Substack. It's called McGregor Warrior Substack. By all means, go there. I've been writing one essay a week, and I've stopped publishing anywhere else. Everything is posted on my Substack, and I think people will find the information there useful. I've also republished a lot of things that have been written over the years, particularly about the critical need to reform and reorganize the U.S. military establishment for a different world. I hope that emerges as a principal goal after this war ends, because if you ever wanted an example of what's wrong with us and the way we do business, just look at this air and missile campaign. We've got to get out of this mindset that every solution is somehow a function of air power and missiles. It's not.

## **#Pascal**

I'll put the link to your Substack in the description box below this video. Colonel McGregor, thank you very much for your time today.

## **#Douglas Macgregor**

Thank you very much. Good to see you again, Pascal Lottaz.