Chas Freeman: Political Crisis & Trump's Nuclear Gamble Against Iran

Ambassador Chas Freeman was a former Assistant Secretary of Defense, earning the highest public service awards of the Department of Defense for his roles in designing a NATO-centred post-Cold War European security system and in reestablishing defence and military relations with China. He served as U. S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia during operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm. Read Chas Freeman's Substack: https://substack.com/@chasfreeman662157 Books by Prof. Glenn Diesen: https://www.amazon.com/stores/author/B09FPQ4MDL Follow Prof. Glenn Diesen: Substack: https://glenndiesen.substack.com/ X/Twitter: https://x.com/Glenn_Diesen Patreon: https://www.patreon.com/glenndiesen Support the research by Prof. Glenn Diesen: PayPal: https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/glenndiesen Buy me a Coffee: buymeacoffee.com/gdieseng Go Fund Me: https://gofund.me/09ea012f Buy Diesen merchandise: https://diesen-shop.fourthwall.com/en-nok 00:00 The midterms as a referendum on Trump 04:32 Nuclear threats against Iran and the danger of proliferation 09:06 What a Democratic gain could mean for US wars 13:34 Democrats, Russia policy, and the Abu Dhabi talks 16:30 Conflicting US signals on Ukraine and Iran 25:12 Diplomatic prospects and Europe’s divided positions 29:49 Israel’s election, Netanyahu, and changing US support 36:52 Economic warning signs and declining US prestige 45:10 What an anti-Trump vote does and does not mean

#Glenn

Welcome back, everyone. We are joined today by Ambassador Chas Freeman, a former U.S. ambassador to Saudi Arabia and also a former U.S. Assistant Secretary of Defense. Thank you for coming back on. Very glad to be with you. I wanted to ask you today about the midterms and also their significance now, as we seem to be facing a bit of a crisis of American power. Again, there are many things you can point to, such as the failed war against Iran and Russia. We see U.S. allies becoming weakened and alienated, often unnecessarily so.

Also, I would argue there's a crisis of political legitimacy in which institutions and moral principles, which used to lay the foundation for stability, seem to be shaken. And all of these crises, of course, are interconnected. And now we have the midterms. Many people would interpret this as a referendum on Trump as well. And again, we don't know the results, but the Democrats will likely come out strengthened. So I guess the big question is, what is the significance of these midterms?

#Chas Freeman

Well, you're right. They are a referendum on Donald Trump and his stewardship of the country. The country is in a state of dysphoria. That is the opposite of euphoria. And people are very upset about

the direction of events. So the common expectation is—and the polling data supports this—that there will be a Democratic blue wave. I'm not sure about that. I mean, at this point, we don't know. The polls are open. My wife and I have voted. We voted by mail. We're not sure the post office actually delivered our ballots, given the Trump administration's efforts to stop that.

But it is now, what is it, a little after 1 o'clock in the afternoon, U.S. Eastern Time, and we are off daylight saving time, so we're five hours off GMT. And the polls in Alaska will not close until 1 o'clock tomorrow morning, our time. I think Hawaii closes at 10 or 11 o'clock. But Alaska is a crucial state in this election for many reasons. I think there's a consensus that the Democrats will have at least a 20-seat majority in the House of Representatives, but the Senate is less certain. The polls show victories for Democrats in many contested states, but we've just seen, in the case of the Israeli elections, that the polls were not accurate.

That was a referendum on the leadership of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. He won a majority of the Jewish voters. He clearly does not consider the 19 seats held by the Palestinian Arabs in the Knesset as legitimate or worthy of consideration. But we very likely face an interregnum in the United States. Today, November 3rd, is two months away from January 3rd, when the newly elected members of the House and Senate will take their seats. In those two months, all sorts of things could happen. The Republicans will still have a majority.

We don't know to what extent those Republicans will retain their loyalty to Donald Trump if the projected political defeat occurs. They may well break with him. Some have already, on a variety of issues. But we're all going to watch this with great interest. I think one factor that needs to be mentioned up front is that Donald Trump is talking very much as though he wants to use nuclear weapons against Iran. We've heard from Tucker Carlson and others that there is a basis for fearing that he might do that. When he says, "I can solve this problem, stop this war in an hour," what he's talking about is clearly a nuclear strike on the mountain where the major concealed Iranian nuclear facilities are supposedly in place.

He's also, quite delusionally, said in the same vein, "If I had been in charge, I could have ended the war in Vietnam in a week," which is very offensive to people who were involved with the Vietnam War. I don't imagine they enjoyed hearing that in Hanoi, but a lot of Americans served in that war and understand very clearly how delusional such a statement is. I don't believe that a nuclear strike on Pickaxe Mountain, as it's called in English, would bring Iran to its knees. But it would eliminate the nuclear taboo and produce a raft of new nuclear states through accelerated proliferation.

And it would certainly end any restraint on Iranian development of a nuclear weapon. President Trump is apparently receiving phone calls on a daily basis from Prime Minister Netanyahu, arguing for the use of a nuclear weapon against Iran. Interestingly, Prime Minister Netanyahu's own military, whose moral sense leaves something to be desired but whose professionalism is undoubted, are

resisting Netanyahu's efforts to embroil them in a war with Iran again, for two reasons. One, they understand very well that Israel does not have the capacity to intercept Iranian missiles and that there would be a rain of fire on Israel that would be quite devastating.

And second, they don't want to be embroiled in Israeli politics, which are entering a prolonged phase of bargaining over the formation of a new government. Prime Minister Netanyahu is a past master of bribery, blackmail, and otherwise incentivizing other politicians to join him. Having written off the 19 Palestinian-Arab seats in the 120-member Knesset, he will be trying very hard to subvert the coalition that was led by Gadi Eisenkot and to recruit its members to his own cause.

He's desperate to stay, and that has a lot to do with why he is advocating renewed attacks on Iran, because he would then be able to claim the title of wartime prime minister and make a serious case for a government of national unity, which he otherwise would be denied. So there's a lot going on, and the midterm elections, as you said, are connected to all of this. The authority of Benjamin Netanyahu has clearly been degraded, as his military and intelligence agencies' resistance to him illustrates. Donald Trump's authority will very likely be eroded in these elections we're having today. And he's already said that he plans to veto everything that is tossed his way for the next two years. So this is indeed a moment pregnant with uncertainty.

#Glenn

Yeah, I know Trump throws out a lot of words and threats, but what is concerning is that you also find people like Elbridge Colby, the Undersecretary of War Policy, who also seems to advocate for a limited nuclear war as an option, at least. So the fact that this is a thing now, advocating for the use of nuclear weapons, is quite troublesome. And I guess these are the kinds of scenarios in which he had envisioned possibly using nuclear weapons. But I did want to ask about the Democrats, though. I mean, on one hand, what does this likely victory of theirs mean?

Because they seem to want to restrain Trump in his war against Iran. Again, I'm not sure if they're able to. They do control the money, I guess. But they also want to escalate, I think, the war against Russia. Again, I'm not sure what tools they have at their disposal. But when you add, as you mentioned, this two-month period between the election and when the new government takes office, it leaves quite a few weeks for Trump to settle some scores. I was just wondering, how do you see this impacting the American wars?

#Chas Freeman

Well, I think we will see some contested constituencies in the United States subjected to claims by the Trump administration that the elections were stolen. And this means, in our system, that many issues will go to the courts. That will add further uncertainty to the government between now and January 3rd. Donald Trump is, as you suggested, not alone in his disdain for the nuclear taboo. And the United States is spending an enormous amount of money on modernizing its nuclear weapons,

including developing adjustable yields for those warheads, enabling the tactical use of weapons that otherwise would be strategic rather than simply tactical.

And I don't think, therefore, that one can discount the danger here. My own hope comes from the Israeli military's resistance to Prime Minister Netanyahu's advocacy of a war they regard as potentially disastrous for Israel. And, of course, they don't object to the violations of international law implied in striking civilian infrastructure, because they are not at all observant of international law or normal standards of morality.

But I'm hoping that the American military will demonstrate a comparable degree of principled objection to orders that are contrary to international law, set a terrible precedent, degrade the United States' security rather than enhance it, and probably result in a widespread proliferation of nuclear weapons and a more complex security environment for everyone. But I don't know that that will be the case. And I do know that political appointees like Elbridge Colby, as you mentioned, not to mention Pete Hegseth, are advocates of doing away with the nuclear taboo. So I think this is a very dangerous moment. As for the Democrats, you know, there's quite a good book out by James Carden, whom you may know from the context of the Russian issues, about how the Democrats became the party of war.

And they are very ideological. And, you know, Stephen Kinzer, who's been a friend of mine for some years, has just written a very good book about the Ukraine war and how we stumbled into it. And the level of vituperation that he's suffered from critics, primarily on the left, is quite extraordinary. I mean, it wouldn't surprise you because you have been subjected to similar slanders in your own country. But it is an indication that the Democrats are not ready for prime time in terms of realistic conduct of foreign policy. They remain very ideological. And the unrealism of many of their positions is quite extraordinary. I should say, on the Ukraine issue, there are some interesting developments. We have Vladimir Putin saying obliquely, not directly, "Look, I never said I wouldn't talk to Zelensky."

"He's welcome to come to Moscow if he wants, and we can talk about an end to the war." And you also have what is called a technical meeting, which is an interesting way to describe it when it probably involves the national intelligence chiefs and national security officials of both Russia and Ukraine meeting in Abu Dhabi, under the somewhat questionable mediation of Donald Trump's two special envoys: his son-in-law and his crony in the real estate business in New York, Kushner and Witkoff. So this is to happen in a week, and it is a bit of a breakthrough.

And here I just want to say that apparently one of the issues floating out there with Witkoff and Kushner, which illustrates some of the problems with their conduct of American international relations, is the proposal to restore gas supplies to Europe through Ukraine, using an American vehicle open to investment by the United States and its citizens to manage this transfer of gas. Well, one can imagine who the investors might be. And I think Mr. Witkoff and his son and Mr. Kushner are probably first in line for this. So once again, we have an example of an effort to conduct diplomacy in large measure for the private benefit of those conducting it. In Norway, which our

president has just gratuitously insulted, I suppose you must be concerned about competition in the supply of gas, but maybe not.

There is every possibility—and I believe that Kushner and Witkoff discussed this earlier—of repairing the Nord Stream 2 pipeline and reactivating it. This is a nice example of cognitive dissonance and lack of coordination in the United States government. There are many such examples. Marco Rubio, who is simultaneously the National Archivist, the head of the residual U.S. Agency for International Development, the Secretary of State, and the National Security Advisor, is not coordinating policy. So, with Ukraine, we have the interesting spectacle of the CIA and MI6 working together to assist the Ukrainians in destroying refineries that produce diesel fuel, while the United States is begging the Russian government to supply diesel.

One hand apparently not knowing what the other is doing. And we have an intelligence apparatus in the United States where the practitioners of covert action are having an ideological orgasm. They're just having a wonderful time, whereas the analysts on whom we depend for understanding foreign cultures, politics, and possibilities are demoralized, depressed, and, as I said, dysphoric. So the level of coordination in policy has come to a very strange pass indeed. Everything seems to depend on Donald Trump, but it's not clear that Donald Trump is in full command of his government.

#Glenn

Not being in full control seems like an understatement. It reminds me a bit of what happened in Syria, where we had different U.S. intelligence agencies working for different sides that were actually fighting each other. But this political crisis, though—I mean, when you have the CIA managing the Ukraine war to a large extent, and then Trump being the mediator, or at least trying to position himself in this way, it's very strange to see these two roles because, you know, it's like, "Oh, we're going to put pressure on Zelensky. He's going to have to accept compromises." But again, they can't fight the war without the U.S. intelligence services. So, you know, all the tools for pressure are there. I'm just wondering: is the U.S. negotiating with itself at the moment? Because they have the means to apply pressure, but it doesn't seem like, as you said, they speak with one voice here.

#Chas Freeman

Well, we did see the dialing down, or the throttling down, of the speed of Starshield communications. The Ukrainians were mounting these systems on top of drones and using them to intercept Russian jet-powered drones, and now they can't do that. It appears that was an uncoordinated decision. It's not clear who's in charge there. We had Donald Trump say, “I didn't do it.” We had Elon Musk say, “I didn't do it.” Then Elon Musk finally admitted he had done it. And I'm not sure where that stands, but this is an example of a persistent lack of coordination.

You have to ask yourself: if indeed we are talking about either a negotiated settlement with Iran or annihilating it, as the president has declared, why did the U.S. Navy bomb Qeshm Island yesterday?

You know, that seems guaranteed to increase Iranian intransigence rather than flexibility, and to drive home to the Iranians, once again, the essential correctness of their view that a ceasefire or some short-term arrangement is not acceptable. They need to have permanent assurances of their security that the United States and Israel are not prepared to provide. So there's a great deal of confusion. And, you know, it's not just on these issues.

I think the signal sent to Mr. Zelensky, which he apparently has received, is that he does not have American support to continue in office, and that one way to end the war would be for him to step aside and for someone more inclined to negotiate seriously to take his place. That is a kind of leverage. But the real leverage, as the Elon Musk Starshield incident demonstrated, is on the intelligence side. And we're apparently not using that. Similarly, we have the ability to shut down Israeli transgressions against international law by shutting down the supply of weapons and supplies. And we're not doing that.

Donald Trump, interestingly, just announced with Prime Minister Netanyahu that, effective in January, we will not be providing Israel with the $4 billion in cash that we have committed to provide it through 2028. And somehow that will stop, even though it's a matter of law. And we must assume that it is to be replaced by this welding together of the Israeli military and the American military, so that the net effect is that the appearance of aid to Israel disappears, but the aid continues on a, frankly, fairly parasitic basis. But we don't know there either what is really going on. And we have no effective understanding at this point of the plans for the post-midterm strikes on Iran, which Donald Trump says will be brief.

Again, this raises the question of a nuclear attack, I'm afraid. The Iranians are not going to accept a brief set of strikes. And if the purpose of launching a nuclear attack is to intimidate the Iranians, I don't think that will work. I think it will convince them that if they have not already built a nuclear weapon, they need to do so forthwith. So this is all very confused. There's no strategy. It does all seem to be related to domestic political posturing—performative stances rather than substantive ones. We'll see. I think it is positive that the meeting in Abu Dhabi will take place between Ukrainians and Russians, and I assume it will. I hope that is not another deception for an attack on Iran. But we'll see.

#Glenn

There's this deception, which makes it so hard to assess, because sometimes one isn't sure if the U. S. is merely unable to control Ukraine and Israel as proxies, or if the U.S. is just kind of hiding behind them, pretending that they're working autonomously and washing its hands of the whole thing. But we do see some indication of serious diplomatic efforts. Next week, the U.S., Ukraine, and Russia are, as you said, expected to meet. And then, at the end of November, we're possibly going to see Xi Jinping, Vladimir Putin, and Donald Trump meet in China. How much hope do you have for

these diplomatic efforts? Because even if they're being genuine and honest, it seems like all the different parties in both these meetings have very different agendas and even different things they want to prioritize.

#Chas Freeman

Well, there is to be a meeting, I gather, between Mr. Witkoff and European representatives to consult prior to the Abu Dhabi meeting. But I'm very uncertain what will come from that because I hear no positive noises from Europeans. And Europeans all seem to have different agendas. The French have always sought to keep a channel of communication open to Moscow. The Germans have been adamantly against that, other than your friend Alice Weidel, who argues for it. And the Italians are somewhere in the middle. The British are fiercely Russophobic and committed to the war. The Baltic states, although they don't have much heft, behave as though they do. And Hungary has somewhat modified its stance, but not completely. So what are the Europeans going to tell Mr. Witkoff? Is there a Europe to tell him anything?

Or are we watching the disintegration of the European project as nationalist perspectives take over? It was the Alternative für Deutschland in Germany and the Rassemblement National in France, and now the government under Giorgia Meloni, which has its roots in Italian fascism. You know, what is it? Where is the cohesion? And as far as the Ukrainians and Russians are concerned, I think it's been very clear from the very beginning what the Russian position and demands were. It's been very unclear how willing Ukraine is to accommodate any of those demands. So we'll see what happens in Abu Dhabi. As far as Iran is concerned, there is a frantic effort underway by Qatar to produce a diplomatic process of some sort. I don't hold that much hope for that. It's not clear to me or anyone else how much protection Saudi Arabia gained from Iran with its meeting in Tehran alongside Asim Munir of Pakistan.

The Mecca Alliance group, including the head of MIT, the Turkish intelligence service, was talking in a positive way to the Iranian security establishment, presumably largely focused on soliciting Iran's help in ending the conflict with Ansar Allah, but also on gaining assurances against the destruction of more of Saudi Arabia's infrastructure when and if the Israelis and Americans resume active attacks on Iran. Finally, of course, they also apparently discussed the possible incorporation of Iran, in some manner, into the tripartite entente of the Mecca Alliance. So, you know, it's very uncertain what is happening. Uncertainty seems to be a constant condition of life these days, along with erratic performance and deception and dishonesty and false narratives and slanderous attacks on anyone who objects to any of this.

#Glenn

Well, on that, and actually related to it, you mentioned Israel before. As you said, they also had a—well, let's call it a referendum on Netanyahu. Where do you see them headed here? Because this impacts the United States to a large extent. They not only have their own elections, but we also see

that the interests of the U.S. and Israel keep drifting further apart. This is being expressed, of course, not just by the public, but increasingly by politicians. And we also see top Israeli politicians speaking quite openly about needing a strategy to essentially live without the United States. If the U. S. either plays a minor role or there is a larger decoupling, what will they do? So where are the Israelis going? And I guess, to make the question a bit bigger, what's the significance for the United States?

#Chas Freeman

Well, I think the Israeli elections resulted in the following. First, a landslide in favor of genocide. The Jewish voters in Israel all voted for the continuation of the destruction of the Palestinians in Gaza. Both the coalitions that contested these elections support the increasingly vicious pogroms in the West Bank. Both support the reduction of southern Lebanon to the condition of Gaza, and both support ongoing warfare. We have the paper now from Tamir Hayman, the retired Israeli general, who says openly that continuous warfare is essential to the perpetuation of the Israeli state; that this is ideologically necessary for unity as well as a strategic imperative; and that Israel's neighbors are all illegitimate, false states, which Israel should feel free to dismantle.

And basically, this seems to represent two-thirds of the Israeli population—that is, the Jewish population. And so the result of the election was a confirmation of Israeli policy, but not a confirmation of esteem for Benjamin Netanyahu. There was enough respect for him that he gained 53 seats compared to Eisenkot's 48 seats. In a sense, he won the election. The referendum on him did not result in a decisive repudiation of him, although it certainly diminished his authority, as the current arguments with the intelligence services and the military also illustrate.

But there is no change in Israeli policy. And Israel seems to be continuing in the hope that it can hold on to its international support, even as that support, as you mentioned, continues to erode in the United States and elsewhere. In the United States, if indeed there is a Democratic wave in this election, we will see in power a party that is aware that the public is very negative about Israel and does not want continued arms sales to Israel or other support.

Even the Republicans have begun to express less support for the Israelis. We have the interesting phenomenon in the United States of the so-called Democratic Socialists of America, who are more European in their espousal of political ideas than has been the case in the United States. They don't seem to be fearful of the word "socialism." They are avowedly anti-Israeli—not anti-Semitic, in my view, but critical of Israeli behavior and policies. And they will play an important role in the reconfiguration of the Democratic Party. Periodically in the United States, we have seen the readjustment, reconfiguration, revival, and revitalization of political parties from within.

The Democrats, who have their roots in Thomas Jefferson's party, became the party of segregation and the dominant party in the Confederacy during our Civil War. In the 1930s, under Franklin Delano Roosevelt, the party became a grand coalition of the left, and they may well be reverting to that set

of policies. But they also have a tradition, and this may explain why one should not put too much weight on their saving the situation. After all, it was Harry Truman, the successor to Franklin Roosevelt, who used nuclear weapons against Japan and who founded the CIA, only to condemn it later in life for having gone out of control. He saw it as an analytical arm, and it became the principal arm for covert action in the U.S. government.

In the James Carden book that I mentioned, he sets up two alternatives in the Democratic Party: one being the party of Roosevelt, with a sort of anti-fascist, quasi-socialist policy, and the other being the party of Acheson and Paul Nitze—Russophobic, interventionist, and hardline rather than diplomatic, despite Acheson's gifts as a diplomat. So I think we're in a very uncertain period, and what begins to happen in this period before January 3rd will tell us a lot about where we're headed, which we can't really answer now. I don't think the election will produce a decisive turn one way or the other, but it will certainly produce indicators.

#Glenn

Yeah, well, there will be minor changes, I guess. But a lot of the big issues seem to be beyond the ballot box now. That is, the economic situation is getting quite dire, it seems. And it's just going to get worse, especially if the Middle Eastern war now blows up. It appears that the Israelis are now having open discussions about, you know, the fear that Trump might think about ending the war early, which they don't care for. In Europe, they have a great fear that Trump might end the war in Ukraine early. So, you know, for all the horrible things Trump is doing, there's someone worse standing next to him, you know, pressuring him. And all of this is, of course, going to push the global economy over the edge. I was wondering how you see this. What are the main indicators in the economy that you might be looking at?

#Chas Freeman

Before we get to that, you reminded me that you asked about the suggestion by Vladimir Putin that Trump and he meet together with Xi Jinping in Guangzhou during the APEC meeting. Yes, this is a controversial meeting, but I have to laugh when I hear the Europeans express grave misgivings and fear about this, as though these three men are going to agree on everything and impose something on Europe. I suppose they might make progress toward ending the war in Ukraine. That is conceivable, but I don't think that is going to be the main topic of discussion. Anyway, the economy. I'm reminded that, you know, there are real people and people you can ignore. And I first became aware of this when I was studying medieval history.

And I don't remember—I think it was around 1112, but it might have been later. It was during the period when there were two popes, one in Avignon and one in Rome. And the pope in Avignon became very alarmed because real people were getting killed for the first time. Why? Because the cranked crossbow, which the Chinese had invented in the fourth century before the Common Era but had cleverly declined to export through export controls, had finally reached Europe. And unlike the

regular bow and arrow, this could pierce heavy armor, and therefore it could kill the nobility in their heavy armor on their armored horses, which was clearly an inhumane situation that couldn't be allowed to continue.

So the Pope called the world's first disarmament conference, and 52 princes, prelates, and other figures turned up for it. They spent two weeks, at the end of which they solemnly agreed to ban the research and development, manufacture, or export of the crossbow. And the rest is history. Gunpowder came along and was even better than the crossbow—at killing real people, that is. So now, in the United States, we have the plutocracy, which has benefited greatly from the stock market's explosive rise to unparalleled heights. The value of shares has grown enormously. Donald Trump's economic policies have siphoned wealth from the poor and redistributed it to the wealthy, which is not popular among ordinary people, I should say. But it has benefited the plutocracy.

#Glenn

And they've been doing just great.

#Chas Freeman

You know, the stock market has been going up. That's what they care about. And corporate profits are up, and everything is wonderful. But suddenly, now we're having a stock market correction. The AI bubble appears to have burst to some extent, and the plutocracy are becoming worried. So I don't know whether Donald Trump will emulate the Pope and call some sort of conference to deal with this tragic situation where the wealthy are being threatened, but it's possible. We have an economy that's moving in several directions. Clearly, the level of debt is unsustainable. Lack of confidence in the fiscal integrity of the United States is growing.

We see this reflected in accumulated reserves of gold in places like China, but elsewhere as well. The removal of French and Dutch gold from the vaults of the Federal Reserve in New York and its repatriation is an indication of a lack of confidence. The fact that the Chinese have sold down most of their dollar holdings and the Japanese appear to be reducing theirs is another indication of a problem. And that problem has practical effects because it affects interest rates, which affect people's mortgages. That affects the housing market, which impacts people's jobs, you know? People lose employment. The labor participation rate goes down. And meanwhile, inflation sets in for many reasons.

But some of them have to do with domestic political decisions, for example, on tariffs, which are now widely recognized, I think, by ordinary Americans to be hurting them through inflation. So dysphoria, again, I think, is the correct word—the opposite of euphoria—to describe the mood at the moment. And I don't think this election, even if it does produce some corrective to the Trump policies that have caused the problems, is going to solve any of these issues. So, you know, people talk about the decline of American power. Well, you know, that begins with the decline of prestige.

Prestige is the shadow that power casts on the world, and that shadow is shrinking. And the retention of unparalleled military power by the United States is not a cure for that.

And yet that is the only answer that people seem to come up with. We have domestic issues that get in the way of the passage of the inflated $1.5 trillion defense budget that Donald Trump has proposed. And I don't know how that's going to work out, but I think we're in the middle of a fiscal crisis. And the Federal Reserve is under tremendous political pressure from the White House, which has had its effect. I mean, normally, I think they would have raised rates at their last meeting, but they didn't, I think because of the election and in deference to Donald Trump. We'll see. But again, domestically as well as internationally, there is a state of confusion and not a little bit of despair about the way things are going.

#Glenn

Yeah, well, I think that confusion exists everywhere in the world now.

#Chas Freeman

But, of course, whatever happens in the U.S., the rest of the world feels it.

#Glenn

So, it's going to be very interesting to see the election outcomes. But it's also difficult to predict how they will affect U.S. policies. I was interviewed earlier today on an Indian TV channel. I was making the point that, you know, if the Democrats win this election in a landslide, what does it mean? Trump could become more restrained, or he could become more unhinged. I mean, it can go either way. So I think it's...

#Chas Freeman

I would bet on more unhinged, but, you know, I think this is a real problem. There is what is called an ebbing red tide. That is to say, support for the Republicans is receding. Real Republicans don't like the cult that their party has become, and they're beginning to separate themselves from it. But the surge of support for the Democrats is really just a reaction to the Republican policy failures. It's not because anybody likes the Democrats. Nobody knows what they stand for, except that they're against Trump.

So, that's good enough for most voters. They will vote against Trump. And then what? Again, I come back to the Israeli election. People were against Netanyahu in large numbers, according to the polls, but when they went to the ballot box, they voted for the same policies that Netanyahu has espoused. I'm sure I've told you before about one of my favorite observations by the late president of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere. When Americans criticized him for having a one-party government, he

said, "Well, the United States has a one-party government, too, but with typical American extravagance, you divide it into two."

#Glenn

I see that quote. That's a great quote.

#Chas Freeman

Yeah. Anyway, it's always fun talking with you, even though the subjects are grim.

#Glenn

Yeah, they tend to be in this day and age. So, yeah, thank you so much for taking the time. Always a pleasure.

#Chas Freeman

I'm glad to be with you when I can be.

#Chas Freeman

Keep well.