

# Paul Craig Roberts: The End of American Unilateralism?

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## #Nima

Trump's tweets today, you know, he tweeted today that Iran is dying to sign a deal. They want a deal very badly. And later on, he tweeted again, said, Iran talks about a deal and then sends me a completely useless paper unrelated to anything we discussed. It's just amazing to me. And the other point is, just moments ago, I think it was, you know, 15 minutes ago, something like that, he tweeted again and said that I was supposed to attack Iran tomorrow, but I canceled that attack because Saudi Arabia, UAE, Qatar, all these GCC countries are asking me, don't attack Iran. So I canceled the attack tomorrow. There will be no attack on Iran.

And maybe he's trying – because people are talking about – again, he's trying to – they call it taqiyya, taqiyya, something like that. But – or the other point would be he may be – he's trying to do something. He's trying to deceive people, and he's going to attack Iran, by the way. What we know on the part of Iranians, they're ready, and they don't see these sort of tweets, and they don't see any sort of reason to follow Donald Trump when, you know, one minute he says something and the other minute just changes everything. Paul, how do you see the situation with Donald Trump? I think it's good to start with his visit to China and what he wanted from China. And what is your assessment of that?

## #Paul

Of the China trip?

## #Nima

Yeah.

## #Paul

Well, as you know, I don't think there's any point to any of these trips or any of these negotiations because they never engage the real issue. I did note that there was not a joint communique after

the meeting. There was not a joint press conference. And I did note that Trump's account of the meeting was entirely different from the Chinese account of the meeting. So we have no idea if anything Trump says that was a result of the meeting is true, because the Chinese don't repeat any of it. So who do we believe? Well, it depends on who you have the most confidence in. And I don't think the confidence indicator is leaning very strongly in Trump's direction for the reasons that you said. He's got one position now and a different one in five minutes.

And he's always blustering. And he's always acting as if Iran is either already destroyed or about to be. And he's always threatening to attack, and then he calls it off because somebody asked him to. And it's nonsensical. I don't know what the purpose of any of this is. I don't know if there's anyone in his government that can talk to him about the impact that he is making. He looks foolish. And I can't see how that helps him. You know, one of the things that politicians have always wanted to avoid was looking foolish. Doesn't seem to bother Trump. So I think the only significant element of the meeting between Trump and the Chinese leader was the Chinese leader's statement to Trump: do not mess with Taiwan or there will be conflict instead of business deals.

I believe what the Chinese said, that if the United States can avoid trying to interject itself between China and Taiwan, which is part of China and has been since the 1970s when President Nixon acknowledged the One China policy, that if the United States can just leave that alone, China, I don't think, will bother us and will continue to be a good business partner. But if the American impulse to hegemony or just to causing trouble intervenes in Taiwan, we're going to pay a big price. So I think that's the only important part of the whole meeting. I don't think anything else means anything or matters. And why it was held, I don't really know. I guess the Chinese just decided to accommodate Trump. It was Trump, I think, that requested the meeting. So, okay, let's accommodate him. And they're not confrontational, looking for conflict. So that's about all I think there is to say about it. I mean, I may be missing something, but I think not.

## **#Nima**

I think the point of... the main issue for China is Taiwan, which they wanted to talk about with the Trump administration. But with the statement from the White House, we haven't seen anything related to Taiwan. They didn't mention anything. The Chinese side mentioned that it was discussed during the meeting, the visit they had. And Paul, do you see any time soon the United States deciding about Taiwan? Because China really wants, you know, the unity of Taiwan with China, the motherland. And they can do it by force, in my opinion.

And at this particular moment that we're in, they don't need to attack Taiwan. They can do some sort of blockade or embargo on Taiwan and they would capitulate. There is no way to save them. It's an island. Is the United States going to facilitate that or escalate? Because Donald Trump has to sign a new sort of aid to Taiwan, which is more than \$11 billion in weapons. I don't know where

those weapons come from, because they don't have them right now, but they want to send them to Taiwan. And China knows that. China knows that Taiwan is on their side. It's not on the side of Donald Trump. How do you see that?

## **#Paul**

Well, I don't see what the weapons can do. So Trump may want to send them just because it makes money for the United States armaments manufacturers. You know, we have this massive armaments industry, and so we need conflicts or expectations of conflicts so that people will arm themselves and buy other weapons. Otherwise, it's hard to keep the system going. It's huge and it's expensive and has always thousands, tens of thousands, maybe hundreds of thousands of people employed. And the company stocks are valuable. And so to maintain all that, they need to move weapons. So they need, if not actual conflicts, they need the expectation. That's what NATO has been for. So one of the reasons Trump is down on NATO is that they don't buy enough weapons, and so it doesn't support our armaments industry.

So the point of the weapons going to Taiwan — they wouldn't help Taiwan in a war with China. There's no way Taiwan could deter China from taking the place over by force. But China doesn't want to do that. There's no need to. The Chinese plan has always been, we just gradually integrate their economy into ours, and then they see they're part of us. So I'm not sure what motivates the Taiwanese leadership. It may be bags of money from the Americans. Maybe we're paying them to be sort of antagonistic to China. But I don't think Taiwan wants a conflict — not a military conflict with China. There's no prospect for them in that. I don't think there's any prospect of us being able to save Taiwan should there be a military conflict, for the same reason that our ships can't enter the Straits of Hormuz — they can't get close to the Chinese shore.

So what can we do? There's practically nothing militarily short of nuclear weapons, but the Chinese have nuclear weapons also. And it was some years ago when somebody in the Pentagon said something about how we could nuke the Chinese and all. The Chinese instantly responded and showed the routes into the United States they would use for their missiles and how we would disappear. They weren't in the least bit intimidated. They said, okay, this is what will happen to you. So I think, Nima, this whole notion that somehow the United States has to control every country, everybody, everything — this sort of hegemonic approach — it's always been a part of the liberal American view that we are an indispensable country, somehow endowed with privileges and rights above other countries.

## **#Nima**

And this, of course... Sorry for interrupting. You mean neoliberals. You're not talking about liberals, because liberals like Noam Chomsky — he was totally against it.

## **#Paul**

Well, he's not a neoliberal. Chomsky is a liberal.

## **#Nima**

A classical liberal, I'm talking.

## **#Paul**

I'm talking about the American political liberals of the 20th century. The political liberals of the 20th century, they believed in American exceptionalism. They've written books about it, you know, the professors in the universities. They were represented in the State Department and other important parts of the government. Now, that view was hardened with the Wolfowitz Doctrine when the Soviet Union collapsed, because at the time, China was not what it is today in 1991. And the Soviet Union was the only constraint on American unilateralism. And when it collapsed and we started dismembering the Soviet Union, you know, we broke off the entire Far Eastern part, or Central Asia — Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan — all broke that off. We broke Ukraine off. We broke Belarus off.

And of course, the whole Warsaw Pact was gone, and the Baltics. And so, you know, this allowed the American neoconservatives to very boldly state the doctrine of hegemony. This, I think, is the main problem everywhere. It's the problem with Russia, with Iran, with China from the American standpoint. Now, the American problem with Iran is also influenced by Israel, by the Israel lobby. You know, Trump is very much in the hands of Israel. We attacked Iran, and this is officially acknowledged by the legal officer of the State Department, who wrote in the document that I posted the link to on my website, that the United States attacked Iran at the request of Israel. So that's the source of all the conflicts. It's the notion that we somehow have to be in charge everywhere.

And to be in charge, we will try to destabilize other countries, to block their initiatives. And this is all multiplied in the case of the Middle East because Trump is such a total puppet of the Israelis. So we have Israeli hegemony in the Middle East, which they claim through Greater Israel. And Trump is a supporter of that. So these are the two problems, and they don't get discussed. You don't see among the foreign policy community in Russia or China or Iran or Europe or the United States any discussion of the Zionist agenda of Greater Israel and how destabilizing this is. Basically, Israel has told all the countries in the Middle East, we're going to terminate you because you're in the way of Greater Israel. This is an assertion of hegemony over the Middle East.

And no one says anything about the American policy of hegemony over the world. It's the whole reason that we're using Ukraine in a proxy war against Russia. The neoconservatives were determined to destabilize Russia. You know, they tried it first when they sent the Georgian army into South Ossetia. I think that was 2008. And then they overthrew the Ukrainian government and built an army and were about to launch it into the Russian Donbass. These are all efforts to destabilize

Russia. We had a color revolution in Georgia, a former province of Russia, and for a while it was hostile, but the Russians overcame that and they got a government that was not hostile, and we tried to overthrow that government. That was last year or the year before.

I forget, you know, so much happens. But that American attempt to have a second color revolution in Georgia failed. So all of the aggression comes from Israel and from Washington. It doesn't come from China, Russia, or Iran. Russia was forced into the intervention in Donbas. They didn't want it. It's clear. Putin did everything he could to avoid it. For eight years, he hid behind the Minsk Agreement so he wouldn't have to do anything. China avoids any kind of real conflict. And Iran has not attacked anyone except in response to being attacked. Trump says it's a terrorist nation, but where's the terror? I mean, what terror do they commit? They suffer terror.

It's the assassination of their leaders, their scientists, by Israel and the United States. So when you have a situation like that, which is so obvious, that it's this hegemonic claim of the United States and Israel that's the source of all the trouble, and no one will acknowledge it or discuss it or say, hey, look, how can there be peace or negotiation when one side is claiming hegemony over everyone else? That doesn't permit peace or negotiation. So that's the great frustration. I've been stressing this for the longest time, and there's almost no response. People don't say, you're wrong, let me show you why. They don't... they don't say, oh, this is an idea.

We better start thinking about this. That's right. How can the Iranians negotiate with the United States and Israel when the United States and Israel don't think the Iranians have a right to sovereignty? And the Iranians don't even say that. You know, we've talked about it before. Why don't the Iranians raise the question of the Zionist agenda of Greater Israel? Why don't they? They should say, look, let's negotiate that—not whether or not we have the right, as we do under the Non-Proliferation Treaty, to enrich uranium or the right to control our coast, our waterways. Why are we negotiating that? We should be negotiating Israel's claim to the Middle East.