

USA Collapsing: Washington's Soviet Moment Is Here | Col. Douglas Macgregor

Summary Hegemony is over not only on the outside but within the US, too. The decline is irreversible says my guest today, Colonel Douglas Macgregor. We talk about Russia's next moves in Ukraine, the risk of wider NATO escalation, U.S. support for foreign wars, and why America's base network and war spending may be unsustainable. Macgregor argues the U.S. is losing control, the economy is the real pressure point, and a major pullback from overseas is coming. Links: McGregor Warrior Substack: <https://macgregorwarrior.substack.com> The National Conversation: <https://thenationalconversation.org> 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.com/shop> Donation: <https://neutralitystudies.com/donate> Timestamps: 00:00:00 Russia and Ukraine Turning Point 00:13:40 NATO Pressure and Nuclear Risk 00:15:14 America Rejects Another War 00:21:27 Bases, Parties, and Retreat 00:24:50 Soviet Collapse and U S Decline 00:29:21 Cuba Puerto Rico and the Hemisphere 00:32:24 Empire Mindset and Iran 00:37:23 Media Pressure and Public Pushback 00:40:44 Debt, Cuts, and the End Game

#Pascal

Welcome back, everybody, to Neutrality Studies, tonight again with Colonel Douglas MacGregor. Colonel, welcome back. Happy to be here. Thank you so much for making the time, because it is crazy times. And I was wondering how you are currently reading what is going on with Russia and Europe and the U.S.—the escalation that we are seeing, the drones that are going into Russia and even killed 21 school kids in Lugansk. And on the other hand, the Russians now said that Kiev must be evacuated, or that the diplomats should go because it's going to be dangerous. What do you think is going to happen?

#Douglas Macgregor

I don't like to be trite, but I think we have reached a strategic inflection point in the war in Ukraine. And I think we have to understand things from the Russian perspective at this stage. This war has dragged on and on and on. People are always asking why. In the West, the answer is, oh, well, the Russians are weak. They don't know what they're doing. Putin lacks will, and on and on and on. All of that's nonsense. President Putin launched this special military operation for the reasons that we've discussed many, many times. It was essentially a defensive move to protect Russia from what he did not understand at the beginning but eventually discovered was a very serious attempt to turn Ukraine into a battering ram that could be employed against Russia.

It took him time, but he finally discovered that it was not simply a question of reaching a settlement between Moscow and Kiev. It was a concerted effort in the West, led by the globalists, to destroy Russia, to carve it up, exploit it, and make it irrelevant on the world stage. When it became clear this was what was happening, President Putin fell back and said, look, it's time for us to build up. We have to create a new military establishment. The one we have is not adequate. And this is going to take time. And it has taken time. And he has moved deliberately, methodically, and cautiously because he wanted to spare as many lives as possible. He did not want to waste Russian lives unnecessarily. He is probably, in the history of Russia, the single most humane person to lead Russia in a war that's ever existed.

Because in other wars, the Tsars and then their successors were always willing to spend lives in the pursuit of their military objectives. Putin, to his credit, has tried to avoid that. Secondly, Putin has tried to keep in mind that the people his forces are fighting and killing are ultimately, for the most part, Orthodox Slavs. And he's trying to spare them as well. Now, I think he's been very successful on the Russian side. Anyone who spends time in Russia and talks to the population discovers very quickly that he has enormous support. The latest polling data suggests 82 to 84 percent support for him, which is pretty darn good this far into a war of any kind. So he has maintained that. He's maintained the standard of living.

He's negotiated all these sanctions very effectively to the point now where Lavrov simply says they don't matter anymore because we've found ways around them. But he still has a war on his hands. He still has a problem in Kiev. And that problem is no longer existential as it once was. In other words, the Ukrainian forces are decimated. They've lost over a million dead. It depends upon which source you want to check—certainly 1.5 to 1.8 million. Now I'm hearing people say it's more than that, plus another million casualties. Most of those will never return to duty; they're so severely injured. The bottom line is, from a purely military standpoint, he's been extraordinarily successful. The Russians have been extraordinarily successful, and they have built a very effective force.

The question is, now what? Because you're still stuck with this regime in Kiev. And while it can no longer threaten your very existence, it has the ability to do damage and remind everyone that they are alive and well. And sadly, we and the Europeans continue to support and assist them. Now, you mentioned what had happened to these schoolgirls, which was horrendous and despicable. That's not the first time the Ukrainians have done something like that. And if you listen carefully to whatever the Ukrainians claimed over the last four years that the Russians had done, in virtually every case, I would say 90% of the time, what they claimed the Russians had done, they had in fact done.

And we can go all the way back to Bucha, which came very early. And that was an atrocity committed by Ukrainians against Ukrainians. It was not an atrocity committed by the Russians. So we've been down this road before. What's different now, though, is that we, in addition to providing components for these long-range drones that are dangerous because they can fly great distances, we've also plotted the flight paths. We've given them the intelligence. We've flown aircraft,

surveillance aircraft, and come back and handed to the Ukrainians the exact locations of virtually every radar, every air and missile defense battery, every military installation, every supporting manufacturing site, every refinery, every oil storage site.

These things have been provided by us, and I'm including the United States, which is very, very disappointing. Because I don't think President Trump has ever gotten control of the Central Intelligence Agency or anything else in the government that seems to be on an autopilot of hostility to Russia. And I think that's why President Putin has said repeatedly, I've met with all of these presidents, and they all said they were going to do things. None of them were able to do very much. Obviously, they aren't really in charge. So the real question is, who's in charge in Washington? Is President Trump really in charge? Is he a hands-on leader? I would argue no.

And while he may say things and he may mean them at one point or another in time, he doesn't follow up to ensure that anything happens. And so I think now the Russians have decided this can't go on anymore, and there's only one way to end it. And that is, it's not enough to simply launch strikes. Whatever you launch in the air has a temporary impact on the ground. In other words, there's a period of time when you have knocked your enemy off his position. In other words, you have inflicted a certain temporary paralysis. But in order for that to have any real strategic impact, you have to follow up on the ground. You have to go in and exploit the success of your strikes. The Russians understand that, and I think we're on the verge now of watching that happen.

I think we're going to see strikes in Odessa that are designed to facilitate the seizure of Odessa. I think we're going to watch Russian forces cross on the southern end of the Dnieper River and take Odessa. Why Odessa? Well, obviously, it's an outlet to the sea. If you can cut Ukraine off from that outlet, well, you're going to reduce the number of mercenaries that can be brought into the country, arms and equipment, food, you name it. You can't export anything, or very little. You have to move everything through Poland and Polish ports in order to reach anything in Ukraine. That's a bottleneck that's difficult. And the point is, I think the Russians understand that has to stop.

#Pascal

Hey, very brief intermission because I was recently banned from YouTube. And although I'm back, this can happen anytime again. So please consider subscribing not only here, but to my mailing list on Substack. That's pascallottaz.substack.com. The link's going to be in the description below. And now, back to the video.

#Douglas Macgregor

Secondly, as we know, Odessa is historically a Russian city. It's not just Russian-speaking. It was founded by Catherine the Great and the generals that drove out the Ottoman Turks and the Tatars from Crimea. So it's one of those places that must return to Russia in the minds of Russians. Well, now you have several other concentrations that deserve some attention on the Russian side. There

is a large concentration of force up in Byelorussia, north of Kyiv. Very large. It also includes an estimated 20,000 to 30,000 North Koreans. In addition to that, you have another very large concentration that is roughly 100 to 200 miles east of Kyiv, facing the river.

Now, these are forces that have been working slowly across the northern portion of eastern Ukraine to eliminate the so-called neo-Nazis and Azov units and other things. They've generally had great success, and now they are able to turn their attention en masse to something more. So I think you have the potential now for three major avenues of approach for large Russian forces: one in the south that will cross the river, probably near Dnipro, I suspect, move south and take Odessa; another that cuts across the center in the direction of Kyiv; and perhaps a third pincer movement coming down out of Byelorussia towards Kyiv.

The reason I mention this is, yes, we're going to see more Oreshniks employed in places like Kyiv. And the Oreshnik is a devastating weapons system. We don't know how many of these they've got. They probably have somewhere between 50 and 100 Oreshniks ready to go. That's certainly enough for what they want to do. But the point is, they're also seeing something else happen. Putin has exercised a lot of patience because he always knew that the globalist regimes in Western Europe were not popular, and that the more they argued for war, the more unpopular they would become. This is especially true in Germany, which has been deindustrialized stupidly, throwing people out of work.

And Germany is caught up in internal problems with all these Muslims and others that are non-Europeans, that were not really invited into the country to begin with. This is Merkel's great gift to Germany, which is very destructive. So he's known about these things. And his assumption was, well, at some point, the Germans are sober-minded people. They'll wake up and they'll throw out the globalists. Now that seems to be coming. That's very important because in Europe, Germany is arguably the keystone in the edifice of everything — the EU, NATO, you name it. And it's very clear from what Alice Weidel has to say that if the AfD comes into power, there are certain things that are going to happen immediately. Number one, they want to end this war.

They want to stop supporting and supplying Ukraine. Secondly, they want to go to Moscow and make arrangements to buy energy again. That makes sense for them. They don't want to pay exorbitant prices for American liquefied natural gas or anything else. And I think the third thing that the Alternative for Germany has stated that is very, very important is they want us to leave Germany. And of course, in my judgment, I mean, back in the 1990s, when we returned from the campaign in the desert in '91, we looked around and said, well, we all love Germany. This is a wonderful place. We enjoy being here. But why are we here? Is it not time to begin drawing down and getting out of Germany?

Well, we did go through a drawdown. We went down from almost 200,000 to 30,000 or 40,000. But we didn't get out. We stayed. And we have used Germany as a staging point, much the way the Imperial Japanese used Taiwan as a staging point for the invasion of China. The Germans have had

it with that. I know the Italians are tired of it. And it's not personal. It's not because people hate Americans. It just doesn't make sense anymore. And finally, we have another problem. We have a problem with our obsession with forward presence. And what we are learning the hard way with Iran is if you put a lot of forces forward, they're probably not going to survive.

They're going to be struck by precision-guided missiles aided by space-based surveillance. So your whole forward presence at sea, in the air, on the ground is at risk. So then why have it? Why put all of these forces forward? So you put all of that together, and I think Putin says, I've got to move on the ground. I've got to end this. But there's good news. People are sobering up. So he wants to move carefully on the ground in a way that doesn't serve the interests of the globalists. He doesn't want to give the globalists ammunition to use against him by saying, oh, see, the Russians want to attack Europe. No, they don't want to attack Europe.

#Pascal

I mean, do you also think that they are trying to bait Russia into an attack on the Baltics or some other NATO territory in order to be proven right that the Russians are the new Hitler who just wants to conquer everything? And how do you think they are countering that? I mean, is this focus on Ukraine and Kyiv going to be the counter to say, like, no, we will keep the war inside Ukraine as we did for the last four years? Because it seems that also NATO wanted to keep it there. But that calculus seems to be changing, right? Because they kind of figure out they can salami-slice themselves into Russia without being counterattacked. And the Russians need an answer at this point. Mr. Karaganov put out there very scary prospects of even using tactical nuclear weapons on the European continent.

#Douglas Macgregor

Well, Karaganov is important because there are people in Russia that are very sympathetic to his point of view. So we can't dismiss it out of hand. But what we can say is that he is not in charge and that whatever his views are, they are not necessarily shared by Mr. Putin or Mr. Lavrov or others. The Russians have lots of reasons, justifiable reasons, to be angry. You know, that's clear. That's not open for debate. I certainly am sympathetic to their views. But cooler minds have prevailed. Now, here are a couple of questions that have to be answered. What's NATO? Now, President Trump just sent 5,000 troops to Poland. Everybody in the United States is sort of saying, what? What? What are you doing?

#Pascal

Like three weeks after saying he would draw down 5,000 from Germany. So it's like, it's just a shuffling around. Plus, there's, of course, a congressional bill that prevents the president from actually withdrawing a lot of troops.

#Douglas Macgregor

Yeah, I think we're all trying to figure out what's going on. But I think there are a couple of things we can say with absolute certainty. There is no appetite inside the United States to fight a war anywhere. Now, what do I mean by that? What I mean is that if you tell the American people, "Well, I've thought a lot about it. Obviously, we need to go to war with Russia," people are going to look at you and say, "You've lost your mind." You can't mobilize the United States for total war. The American people aren't going to accept it. They're not going to accept it against Iran. This is the fundamental, concrete problem in American foreign and defense policy.

Americans, historically, and you know this, Pascal, from your experience inside the United States and North America, 90% of the American population on any given day couldn't care less what happens beyond the borders of America. They just don't care. If you and I were to travel to Washington State and go to Seattle, Washington, or stop off in Kansas City or New Orleans, Louisiana, and say, well, what do you think about NATO? I wager that more than half the people would say, what are you talking about? NATO? What is it? They don't even know. Secondly, you say, well, those Russians are bad. Oh, yeah, they may be bad. What are you bringing that up for? Well, we're going to go to war. What? Well, Russians may be bad, but that doesn't mean we want to go to war with them.

What I'm trying to say is that the average American may not be as well-informed and well-educated as his European counterpart, but he is certainly more rational than the people in Washington. The people in Washington have operated in a vacuum for 30 years. They've been allowed to move forces wherever they wanted, to engage anybody they didn't like, to attack anyone they chose to attack, provided it never affected anybody at home. And they've gotten away with it. Not just the last 30 years — I would argue they've gotten away with it certainly since Vietnam. And the problem in Vietnam was very clear. We were broke by the time the war ended. That's why we came off the gold standard. So Johnson didn't bother trying to run for re-election. He knew he had no chance of winning.

But we had a serious economic problem, a financial problem inside the United States. It could not be ignored. So what did we do? We left. We packed up and we left Vietnam. Did we ever go public and say, gee, we're so sorry, we killed almost 2 million Vietnamese and it was a dumb thing to do? Not really. Did we talk about what we did over there? Not very much. Not for many, many years. In fact, Vietnam just sort of vanished from the airwaves because that's the way we do things. We lost, and it vanished. By the way, we lost in Korea. You know, we couldn't drive the Chinese off the Korean Peninsula. And Eisenhower, who was surprised by the war and probably agreed with MacArthur, because before the war began, MacArthur, right after World War II, said we should get all the troops off the peninsula.

It's indefensible. We can't defend it. It's not part of our security perimeter. Our security perimeter begins at the shores of Japan. But the State Department said, no, General, we're going to stay in Korea. So we stayed in Korea. We got a war. My point is that we're reaching a similar point now.

We've lost. We've lost everywhere. We've lost in Iraq. We've lost in Afghanistan. But nobody cared because it didn't seem to have an effect. Now there's an effect. If you go back into April, and that's very, very recent, it's much worse now. But in April, we jumped from about 3.4% to 3.8% inflation. Actually, it was about 3.2% up to 3.8%.

#Douglas Macgregor

Projections now into the summer say we're going to go up to 6% inflation. Now, why does this matter? Because if you're going to go to 6% inflation or 5% inflation, what do you have to do with your interest rates to suppress inflation? You've got to raise them. Well, that means raising your interest rates if it's 5% to 6%, or raising your interest rates from where they are now to 7% if you're dealing with 6% inflation. What happens if we do that? Our financial system will collapse. Our economy will implode. We can't do it. So what is the right way to put this? What is the 500-pound gorilla in the room? It's not Russia. It's not China. It's not Iran. It's our own economy that is being grossly mismanaged—our reckless spending. And who's being held accountable for it? No one. But is someone going to be held accountable for it when it all comes apart? Yes. His name is Donald Trump. So he's in a very difficult position right now. The intelligent thing to do is to get out of Ukraine right away.

#Pascal

Pull the plug. Say that's it. Get out of the Gulf, have an agreement with the Iranians, and get out.

#Douglas Macgregor

And also, to move beyond that, the Koreans would very much like us to get off the Korean Peninsula so they can take charge of their country. They have this thing called operational control. We, the United States four-star on the Korean Peninsula, command all forces on the Korean Peninsula. Koreans don't want that. They want to command their own forces. I agree with them. I said that in 1997, which is one of the reasons Koreans brought me to Korea. But the point I'm trying to make is we need to get out of all of these places. That world is over. That world has changed. How...

#Pascal

How widespread do you think your sentiment is within the United States? Because we see it in conservative circles very clearly. I mean, Tucker Carlson says the same thing, Candace Owens. This seems to be growing, this sentiment, right, that all of these bases make no more sense. And funny enough, it's Democrats that don't talk about this. It's the left that kind of just lets this one go. And of course, we have all of the neocons that are still around, although even Robert Kagan now admits that Iraq has been a failure. But his proposal is to, well, if anything, then double down. But it's becoming inevitable, isn't it, to wind this whole base system down?

#Douglas Macgregor

Well, when we say inevitable, I suppose you can say that. I think you're probably right. The problem is that it doesn't matter which party you're talking about. Both parties have benefited enormously over many, many decades from the reckless spending. In other words, you can't expect the people that put you into the vulnerable position you are in right now to fix it. It's like talking to a room full of drug addicts and saying, we'd like you to help us break addiction for all these people that we find all over the United States. And since you're addicts, we know you'll help us. Well, that's impossible. The addict is not going to help other people get off the problem.

We cannot expect this government to fix itself. So I think the government will simply fail. I think that's where we're headed. It's going to implode. And this is very hard for people anywhere in the world to understand, because whether you're a European—I just was on the phone this morning talking to someone who's at a conference in Belgrade—and what did they say? "Oh, well, the United States is this invincible, impregnable force. You know, where's the evidence that anything is going to change?" Well, people said that just before the Soviet Union collapsed. I remember it vividly. I had just come out of graduate school.

I just published my PhD with Cambridge University Press. And I was on the phone with a friend in England, and he said, "You know, Doug, I think things are going to fall apart." I said, "Well, I do too. I just don't know when." And that's what I wrote in my dissertation: inevitably, it's going to fall apart. But he said, "I think it's coming." Well, sure enough, within a month or two, suddenly the East Germans are piling onto trains and driving all over East Germany, trying to find their way into West Germany. Suddenly the wall in Berlin comes down—just bang, bang, bang, one after the other. I think that's what's going to happen with us.

I think suddenly somebody's going to say, "Wait a minute, we can't go on like this. We have to make adjustments immediately." It will all be done badly. It'll be a replay, in my judgment, of something you saw in Afghanistan. When we came out of Afghanistan, everyone in Washington had resisted leaving Afghanistan. Suddenly, the president said, "That's it, we're getting out." And this haphazard withdrawal made fools of us, made us look incompetent, made the military look just terrible. Well, I think we're going to see something like that happen again because the emergency at home will outweigh the importance of anything overseas.

#Pascal

What would be the scenario? I mean, the Soviet Union—Ambassador Jack Matlock keeps making that point that the Cold War didn't end when the Soviet Union died. The Cold War ended in 1989 when the US and the USSR negotiated it to an end and allowed for the reunification and came to all of these agreements, which were mutually beneficial. And two years later, the Soviet Union

collapsed for related but separate reasons. And then it fell, of course, into 14, 15 different pieces. But the United States—anything like that is unthinkable, right? I mean, the 50 states are never going to just dissolve, etc. It's like, how could an American internal rejuvenation—what could that look like?

#Douglas Macgregor

But let's back up. Ambassador Matlock, whom I esteem and like very much, is talking about something very different. He's talking about the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Eastern Europe.

#Pascal

Yes.

#Douglas Macgregor

We weren't negotiating the dissolution of the Soviet Union. We were negotiating the withdrawal of those forces. Very different proposition. And Gorbachev was smart. Today in Russia, everybody criticizes him and says he gave up too much, too fast, and so forth. That's all misleading. The situation inside the Soviet Union was already very fragile. He withdrew those forces, and he knew how to do that, and he did it very well. Just compare the withdrawal of the largest contingent of Soviet forces in Eastern Europe from East Germany, and compare that with our withdrawal from Afghanistan. Their withdrawal was infinitely better. And Russia did not look as though it was falling apart. It did fall apart later on for reasons that had nothing to do with the withdrawal from Eastern Europe and everything to do with internal contradictions.

I'm saying our internal contradictions are going to drive us out. And whoever is in power—it may well be Donald Trump—and if he hesitates or refuses to act, he'll be replaced and someone else will come in and do it. But we too will withdraw from the rest of the world because we can't afford to stay there anymore. Because we will not be able to pay out to the public at home all the money we owe everyone. We have all of these unfunded liabilities. We're having trouble with Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid. There are 2,000 redistribution programs designed as public welfare. All of these things are unaffordable. No one wants to step up and do anything about it. It's unpopular. All of this is going to have to change. What's the easiest thing to cut? Defense spending.

That's the easiest one. It's the largest portion of discretionary spending. It's the easiest to cut. And everyone will resist it, especially the senior ranks in the military, because that means they lose jobs. We have headquarters all over the place. We have 43, 44 four-stars. It's absurd. At the height of World War II, we had seven. Towards the end of the war, we promoted others to four-stars as honorifics. Gave them four. Thank you. You did a great job. Well done. We promoted people to five stars. It was an honorific. It was the same thing. But my point is, we're so top-heavy, it's pathetic. When you look at the small numbers of soldiers, sailors, airmen, and Marines we can actually deploy to fight someplace, and compare that to the numbers of admirals and generals.

It's outrageous. So that's going to have to change. And cutting these headquarters, pulling the forces out of overseas billets, that's easy. You're not cutting forces inside the United States. If you go to upstate New York and say, well, this post, we don't need anymore, there are 20,000 troops there, we're pulling them out, everyone will cry bloody murder. Oh, you can't do that. We have businesses here dependent on the post. And, you know, we have a manufacturer up here who produces things for troops on the post. You're not going to withdraw forces from America. You're withdrawing forces from overseas. And that's something we can do with minimal pain here. It's going to happen.

#Pascal

Do you think this will also include what is happening in the Caribbean, or is the United States going to be a hemispheric hegemon? You know, Cuba and the others, Venezuela and so on—are those going to be the places where the force is going to be concentrated, or will it be a complete withdrawal into the...

#Douglas Macgregor

Excuse me. Um, I would tell you that we have been a hemispheric hegemon since 1846. Yeah. We've been a hemispheric hegemon since we defeated Mexico. And in fact, that was something that the leaders of Mexico said: if we lose this war, you know, we're going to be taking scraps off the plates of America forever. They were right. So we're already the hegemon. We don't have to prove that to anybody. We don't have to invade anybody to do that. This is the problem with Donald Trump. He's looking at Cuba, and I think in his mind he wants to posture as liberating Cuba. Cuba's falling apart. That's fine. We should be interested, along with others in Latin America, in helping to manage that. Because what we don't want, and other countries in Latin America do not want, are hundreds of thousands of Cubans showing up on their doorstep.

So that makes perfect sense. But to go into Cuba with U.S. forces—we did that three times in the first half of the 20th century. Three times we invaded Cuba. We started in 1899, and then we went back shortly before World War I and after World War I. We wrote the constitution. We supervised elections. We installed governments. And then we left. The place we stayed in, where we should have also gotten out, is Puerto Rico. And Puerto Rico is a bottomless pit for American tax dollars and resources. It's unproductive. It's not America. It's part of Latin America. We have no business being there. Our position there is untenable. We should get out. We would like to. But now people in Puerto Rico say, well, if you leave, we'll all be poor, you know, because we're transferring billions of dollars to Puerto Rico on a routine basis.

Cuba is a bottomless pit. We need to stay out of it. The people who are there are going to have to live there and govern themselves, however they decide to do that. We have to get accustomed to understanding two things. First of all, the whole world doesn't want to be a replica of the United States. That's nonsense. Secondly, there are many ways to govern besides the way we do it. And

thirdly, different people with different cultures and different histories and different geography will do things differently from us. That doesn't mean they're a threat. So what we have to do with Cuba, I would argue, is help them in whatever way we can to manage this change that's going to happen down there. But we should stay out of it and absolutely not go into it.

#Pascal

Where do you think it's coming from, that there's still a good part of the establishment in the U.S. today, and actually also in Europe, who cannot think outside of these categories—that the others need to be like us, otherwise they are a threat? Where's that insecurity coming from?

#Douglas Macgregor

I think most of it can be traced to the imperial past. First of all, we are very much like Great Britain. People need to understand that, like Great Britain, we are not a continental land power. Now, we are in the Western Hemisphere, a continental power, and we can certainly field large armies if we want to. But historically, we don't do that. We are primarily a maritime and an aerospace power. In other words, we sail in, we fly in. And then when it's over, we sail home and we fly home. That's the problem right now in the Persian Gulf.

We picked this country, Iran, to attack at the behest of Israel and Israel's agents in the United States, who insisted that if we do not destroy Iran, if we can't decapitate it, if we cannot change the regime, we have to destroy it because it's vital and essential to Israel's survival. So Donald Trump has believed that. He's taken that on, and he's decided to do what he can to destroy Iran. He makes all these comments about ending a civilization in the night. Yesterday, he talked about blowing up Oman. I mean, this is ridiculous nonsense. It has no place. He shouldn't be doing it, but this is what he said. But there's a problem. You cannot conquer Iran.

#Pascal

Why not?

#Douglas Macgregor

Well, it's surrounded on three sides by some of the highest mountains in the world. It's not exactly terrain favorable to armies. To the south, you have virtually impassable deserts. It's about 140 degrees Fahrenheit down in southern Iran right now. That's not very helpful. In other words, the Iranians know they can take a lot of punishment, and they can outlast us. And by the way, for a fraction of the money that we have spent on these World War II-style forces, what have they done? They've invested very wisely in all of this missile and unmanned technology. They have access to

satellites, thanks to the Chinese and the Russians, which gives them instantaneous targeting data so they can hit any target within, say, 500, 600, 700 miles of their border. That's why the U.S. Navy is sitting 300 miles south of the Persian Gulf.

It's not an accident. They don't particularly care to lose their ships. But what does this tell us? It tells us that warfare has changed. The old instrumentalities don't work anymore, but the old instrumentalities are also legacies of that imperial past. And we are a replica, in a new way, of the old British Empire. And, of course, the French and the Dutch and the Belgians and, to a lesser extent, the Spaniards and the Portuguese. They've all been in the imperial business. They've all been in the colonial business. So whenever we go somewhere to fight somebody or deal with somebody, we're turning around to our European allies. But who are the allies that show up? We're the old colonial powers. They saddle up and they show up with us because that helps them, in their minds, be relevant. But it's not relevant.

It's stupid. It doesn't make any sense. Now, who doesn't fit the paradigm in Europe? Germany. Germany. Germany was historically not a colonial power. Germany was always interested in Germany. That was Bismarck's genius. He said, look, we don't care to have an empire. We don't want colonies. We don't need a big navy. Obviously, they didn't take his advice, and that helped upset the relationship with Great Britain and brought on the First World War. But he was correct, and that is still the view inside Germany. You know, people are always talking about how Hitler wanted to conquer the world. Hitler was furious with the Italians because he said, stay home. Don't go anywhere. We don't want to fight anywhere else. We're focused here in Europe. This is not new, but this is something we don't understand.

So it's not surprising at all that you would see the Germans stand up and say, no, we don't want to be part of the enterprise in Iraq. We really don't want to be in Afghanistan, right? The Germans established a very small post in Afghanistan, and everybody loved it because they brought in excellent beer on nearly a weekly basis. But they very rarely ever left their post. And why should they? They didn't really want to be there, but they were obligated under NATO. You know, I've got to go down there. I've got to put up with this nonsense. I don't think most Europeans today are very different from the Germans. Most Europeans are not interested in going all over the world unless it's as a tourist. You know, we are Americans. We're not interested in going anywhere unless we're tourists.

#Pascal

It's also there. It's a small group of elites that actually wants all of these policies, and it's just incredibly difficult to dislodge them from these levers of power. And they find, time and time again, ways to con a large part of the population into going along with this. And we do see in Europe at the moment, unfortunately also in Germany, quite intense warmongering propaganda, actually bordering on war mania by now, of expecting to go to war with Russia. It's very scary.

#Douglas Macgregor

And there's no evidence for any of it. But they control the media. And we have a similar problem in the United States. The same people who are driving us to war against Iran, the same people who want to make war on Russia, also dominate the mainstream media. And the Europeans are much more effective at suppressing alternative media than we are. So at least in the United States, we have alternative media, and other people can speak up, and other people can provide alternative information. It's gotten to the point now where the only people that believe most of the nonsense are people in my generation. I'm a so-called boomer. In other words, I was born in the '50s. I was born in 1953. And most of my peers, they say, oh, well, Iran's been a problem for a long time.

We should just bomb the hell out of them. That's what they say. Now, when you get down below the age of 50, people down there say, what? What are we doing? This makes no sense. What has Iran done to us? This is crazy. You know, nobody bothers to point out that during the Iran-Iraq war, we equipped Iraq. We stood up their forces. We provided advisors. We gave them munitions. And they killed hundreds of thousands of Iranians. Nobody ever points that out. We have a very one-sided view of everything. And most Americans, if you told them what I just said, have never heard that. They're not even aware of it. But the good news is, people under the age of 50 are no longer fooled.

In fact, I think it's even creeping up into the 50s now. Rationality, hard questions are being asked. So I think we're at the end of this process. But the one thing that will end it will not be a decision by sane, sensible, balanced people in Washington, because they don't exist. It's going to be financial. That's going to put an end to everything. We're going to be in just as bad a position as Richard Nixon was after Johnson left office. Remember, he took us off the gold standard temporarily, right? Because he had no other way to deal with the crisis. It was either that or we go into default. He did plan to come back onto the gold standard at some point in the future. Well, it never happened.

#Pascal

Then again, no politician, no real politician ever used the word "temporary" and didn't mean "permanent" when he said it, which is one of these words.

#Douglas Macgregor

Well, remember the real damage that that has done to us is that until we went off the gold standard, if you went to war somewhere, we had a war tax. It wasn't for free. And the other thing is, if we went to war, we provided American soldiers to fight it in large numbers, which meant that we had human lives, American lives, on the line. After we went off the gold standard, we were able to do two things. Number one, print as much money as you like to do whatever you want, which is now going to end—that's my argument anyway. And the second part is, we got rid of any sort of universal service. We created a large voluntary organization. Now we have become so bankrupt and

so corrupted that we no longer can raise armies to fight anywhere. So what do we rely on? Naval power and air power.

Yeah. Why are we relying on air and naval power? Well, it's sort of like sex without consequences. You know, you can bomb somebody somewhere, and you're unlikely to lose very many people when you do it. Same thing at sea. Well, just move further offshore, build a missile that goes further. You don't have to worry about casualties. I mean, that's the theory. I think we're reaching the end of that period. This is the last gasp, frankly, with Iran. I think after this, it's over. We're going to stop because we know it's too dangerous. But it's not going to be because rationality suddenly broke out in Washington. It's going to be a matter of unavoidable necessity, largely for reasons of finance and economics.

#Pascal

Well, we will see, because time will tell, and probably rather sooner than later, because it seems that something is actually not working anymore in the machinery. Colonel, thank you so much for your time. People who want to read more from you or see more from you, where should they go to find your work?

#Douglas Macgregor

Well, the first place I would go, and it's doing very well right now, is a Substack called McGregor Warrior Substack. And a lot of material that I've written over the years is available there. So you can go and read both recent, within the last couple of weeks, things, but you can also read things I've written for many, many years. And the reason I put them there is, like the testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee in 2017, and the paper that I wrote for RFK Jr. when he was running for president called **Taming the War State**. This drew on all this work that I've amassed over 20, 30 years, because all the things that I said were going to happen in military affairs have begun to happen. And that's a good thing because it's going to force us to reconsider the wisdom of doing the things we have been doing. So I think in the long run, it'll all be good. In the short run, it's going to be very painful. So, McGregor Warrior Substack. The other place is The National Conversation. It's thenationalconversation.org.

#Pascal

That's an attempt to explore the potential for a third party.

#Douglas Macgregor

And I think that's quite real now. And I found out just before I came on to talk to you that apparently Thomas Massie has now filed for a presidential run in 2028. Now, whether or not that happens is another matter. But the fact that he's doing that, and he met with Marjorie Taylor

Greene, and they talked about a third party—thank God. That's what we need, because these two parties are just not distinctly different enough to make any difference to us anymore.

#Pascal

Two wings of the same system, but we will see. I mean, I think your prediction is right. Something in the United States will change out of necessity. Everybody go and find Colonel Douglas MacGregor on Substack and on The National Conversation. Conversation, excuse me. The National Conversation. Links will be in the description below. Colonel Douglas MacGregor, thank you so much for your time today.

#Douglas Macgregor

Thank you, Pascal Lottaz.