

# End of Empire: USA Humiliated by Iran Deal | Alexander Mercouris (Audio)

Alexander Mercouris joins the show to discuss a likely Iran ceasefire, why he sees it as a pause rather than peace, the pressure on Gulf states to rethink their ties, Armenia's risky turn toward the West, and how the second Iran war exposed weak US intelligence and military planning. He also talks about Tulsi Gabbard's claims on US bio labs and the CIA's growing focus on intervention over intelligence. Links: Alexander Mercouris YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@AlexanderMercouris> The Duran: <https://www.youtube.com/@TheDuran> 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 Iran ceasefire and why it's theater 00:09:41 Gulf states, BRICS, and neutrality 00:17:58 Armenia's risky Westward turn 00:23:34 What the Iran war revealed 00:35:33 Tulsi Gabbard, bio labs, and the CIA 00:39:58 American decline and intelligence failures

## #Pascal

Well, hello, on a bus somewhere between Pskov and Moscow, and I'm sitting here with Alexander Mercouris. Alexander, welcome.

## #Alexander Mercouris

And delighted to be with you again here in the coach between Pskov and Moscow.

## #Pascal

We said we're going to use the time to talk a little bit about world politics, and it's going to be audio only, but I hope our audience will enjoy it. And we are talking today on June the 15th, and we just learned the news that there is an agreement between the Iranians and the Americans. It's not signed yet. It's probably going to be signed in Geneva, Switzerland sometime next week. But what do you make of this theater that we are seeing at the moment?

## #Alexander Mercouris

I think it is theater. The first thing to understand is that the agreement that we're probably going to see—and it's still "probably" because it's not a certainty—is essentially an agreement to extend the ceasefire. There are apparently provisions in this agreement about the Americans paying back some of the frozen assets to Iran. I don't believe we will ever see anything like that happen. The substantive issue, which is about Iranian enrichment, is completely unresolved.

What it looks like to me is a device by the United States to get the Straits of Hormuz reopened and to get oil moving regularly back into global markets, because the United States has understood that the anticipated economic collapse of Iran that they hoped would happen as a result of the sea blockade is either not going to happen at all or will not happen soon enough to make up for the rise in oil prices and the risk of a recession in the United States. So I think that this is a temporary ceasefire. Still, I think that the Americans and the Israelis will go away and will rethink their strategy. I don't think their objective in Iran has changed at all. And I think they're going to try and find a way to use the time of this ceasefire to restart this whole thing all over again, maybe in a different way.

## **#Pascal**

And so on the side of the Iranians, probably what we are seeing is just the other side of that. They can also use a break. They can also use time to reload. And in the meantime, they agree to something that, at least on paper, vindicates their position, even if in reality it's probably never going to be lived up to anything we're seeing. And let's not forget, it's an MOU, right? And the weird thing to me is that we started off about two months ago with the Americans agreeing to the Iranian terms in order to get to a peace agreement. And now we are at the stage of an MOU that was never foreseen. And the MOU should then get us to a final peace agreement. I mean, it's so convoluted in the process that it's hard to see how this can lead anywhere for sure. But at the moment, everybody can live with this kind of semi-frozen, semi-whole conflict.

## **#Alexander Mercouris**

Yes. It's important to remember that though the Americans have made the bigger concessions, I mean, they clearly started the war with the anticipation that there would be a rapid collapse of the government in Iran. And they made it perfectly clear. People are in denial about this. They made it absolutely clear. They said it quite openly. And the Israelis said it, shouted it from the rooftops, that the intention was to overthrow the Iranian government. So the Americans have had to pull back, to retreat an awful lot. But the Iranians have retreated too, because throughout March, the Iranians were saying that they were not prepared to agree to any kind of ceasefire, which is what we essentially are looking at.

They wanted a full, complete ceasefire, a final settlement of the entire conflict between themselves and the United States. That was supposedly the wish of the murdered Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. But the Iranians have now backed off, and they all agree to what is, in effect, a ceasefire. And I think the reason they've done that is because they've come under heavy pressure from their BRICS friends, China and Russia, to agree to this. So I think what the Iranians need to do, obviously, is prepare for the next attack, which is going to come. And one of the things they need to do is cash in on their agreement to do what their Chinese and Russian friends want and get the Chinese and the Russians more proactively to support Iran in the future.

## **#Pascal**

Iran, though, until now, and I completely agree with you, and what we've seen, round one last year—actually, we've just passed the one-year memorial of round one, the 12-day war—now we've had the 40-day war this year. For all intents and purposes, next year we might have a 60-day war or whatever it is. It seems that it's going in rounds. However, the Iranians, for the longest time—and you pointed that out on your program too—have had a strategy of self-reliance, right? They were always very suspicious towards any kind of integration, military or whatnot, with Russia and with China. I think for historical reasons that is understandable, but I think you made the observation that it just makes everything much more complicated.

## **#Alexander Mercouris**

Yes, I think this is the point, and I think this is the danger that Iran now faces. I mean, Iran has good reasons to want to be self-reliant. It was treated by the British, the Russians at one time, and the Americans as a semi-colony, or if you prefer, a protectorate. Part of the point of the Islamic Revolution of 1979 was that it was also a nationalist revolution. It was Iran taking control of its own future and its own politics and policies and its own life. But there is a limit to how much a country like Iran, at its present stage of economic and technological development, can do. And it has to accept that it is not a great power like China or, to a great extent, Russia is. So, the mistake the Iranians might make, and it's a real one, is that they might come away from all of this and say, well, mostly by ourselves.

We fought the United States and Israel to a standstill. We don't need to rethink this approach. We can continue to confront the Americans and the Israelis by ourselves. We don't need more help from the Chinese and the Russians. We can actually be more assertive towards them. And I think that would be a fatal mistake. I think that the reality is they do need the Chinese and the Russians. They need the Chinese there with their deep pockets and their technology. They need the Russians with their technology and their trade as well. They need to integrate much more deeply with the BRICS from now on. And that is the way to security and to sustained economic recovery and ultimately independence. What do you think is, you know, the role of the Gulf states going to be going forward?

## **#Pascal**

Because, you know, Saudi Arabia is also part of the BRICS, right? Yeah. I don't see a BRICS kind of solution emerge out of this thing. I mean, what we can imagine is further integration of Iran, especially with Russia and China on one or another level — maybe intelligence sharing, maybe some technological developments. Probably not so much military purchases. I think even if they decided today to buy Russian fighter jets or Chinese fighter jets, it would take a decade or so until that program comes to a close. But development of these lower-level, like, say, drone technologies or whatnot — although when it comes to drone technology, Iran itself is quite advanced, actually.

But the Gulf states, they were pounded very badly. They actually also learned this very hurtful lesson that the United States not only cannot defend them on the one hand, but that it will throw them under the bus — under the Iranian bus. This agreement, and we haven't seen the final form of it yet, might actually contain some concessions to Iran, that the United States will, if not withdraw, then at least not recolonize the Gulf states. It's yet to be seen what there is. But what do you think the Gulf states' position is going to be going forward?

## **#Alexander Mercouris**

The Persian Gulf states need to make some very important decisions about their own future as well. Because, as you absolutely rightly say, they placed all their bets on the Americans and the Israelis. They, as a result, got catapulted into a wall, which I am confident they believed would end very quickly. And to their horror, they found themselves in an open-ended confrontation, which was proving disastrous for them. Now, what the Chinese and the Russians have been trying to do—and they have been arguing this for years—is that they want the various states of the Persian Gulf region, Iran and the Arab states of the Persian Gulf, to come together and to develop what the Chinese and the Russians call a new security architecture.

By that, what they mean is that this region should, in effect, take control of the region itself. It should no longer rely on outsiders. This is, I think, one of the things that the Chinese and the Russians want to see. I think one of the reasons the Chinese and the Russians have been pushing so hard for a ceasefire is because the Chinese and the Russians have good relations with the Persian Arab Gulf states. They want to get the Arab states out of the position, the mess that they found themselves in. And what they will probably now try to do is say to everybody, to the Iranians, to the Arab states, well, look, we suggested to you the security architecture. This is the moment to move forward with it.

Let's not wait on the Americans, because the Americans clearly have their own agenda and create their own problems. Let's work together to develop systems so that we protect shipping in the Gulf, we keep trade open in the Gulf, we prevent wars being fought on our territory, in our region, that are so devastating for everyone. And let's make these arrangements ourselves, without the Americans and the Israelis. Very difficult thing to sell to the Arab states. Most of the Arab states in this region have, for example, pegged their currencies to the dollar, so that already gives the Americans huge leverage over them. There's also a long history of very deep strategic links between these countries and the United States.

Going to a strategic relationship of some kind with the Iranians against the Americans would be immensely difficult. But perhaps this might be the moment to try and move forward with that. Now, the Saudi energy minister, who is a prince and I believe is the brother of MBS, was at SPIEF, and he made an extraordinary speech. He said that Saudi Arabia and Russia—well, one is a Muslim country, one is a Christian country—but they will be friends forever unto the death. So, very dramatic language. Perhaps it doesn't mean very much, but it may suggest that at least the Saudis, who are

perhaps a little more flexible because they're the bigger country, are starting to think somewhat in this way. And anyway, we will just have to see where the diplomacy goes.

## **#Pascal**

Well, you know, this would make all the sense in the world, especially for countries that do have some sort of national outlook on the world left. And maybe you remember my presentation at the conference. If you seek a friendly relationship with all players in your region, well, then you effectively become neutral.

## **#Alexander Mercouris**

Well, that is exactly what it means. It means that you would be a friend to all and a foe to none. That is exactly what is being proposed here, because the Arab states have become foes of Iran because they've been friends of the Americans. But they would no longer be foes of Iran, though they would obviously still seek to be friends of the Americans, and of the Russians, and of the Chinese, and of everyone else. It would be the neutral status of the entire region.

## **#Pascal**

And I do remember very clearly how it was Mohammad Marandi, Professor Marandi from Tehran University, who taught me on this podcast that if the Gulf states severed their ties—their military ties—with the United States, not the economic ties, their military ties, if they canceled all the base agreements and kicked the Americans out, then the United States would lose the physical capacity to attack Iran. So that might very well be actually the Iranian strategy here—to actually have a ceasefire that ultimately encourages the Gulf states, from their side, to cancel all of these agreements and make it maybe de facto impossible for any kind of large-scale attack, even with Israel still being over there. But you can only do so and so much with these long-range missiles, medium-range missiles.

## **#Alexander Mercouris**

You're quite right. I mean, one would like to think this. There's no doubt at all that that is the Iranian strategy. I mean, they set it out in statement after statement and document after document that they want the Americans to pull out of the Persian Gulf region. The problem is, and this is, I think, something which... I mean, it's very well for Professor Marandi to say these things, but from the calculation of the Persian Gulf states, telling the Americans to leave is going to be a very difficult and challenging thing to do. That is, given the extent to which these countries are now interconnected with the Americans in economic and geopolitical terms. So it may happen, and everything is possible, but it will require a significant exercise of political will.

## **#Pascal**

Yeah, and we might see something less dramatic than that, but something like a tacit understanding that even if the United States stays, it wouldn't bring certain weapons, or it would have to have a change in the number of troops or whatnot. I mean, a lot of this will depend on... well, indeed.

## **#Alexander Mercouris**

But I don't really see that one. I don't either. Well, I mean, this takes us back to the choices that the countries in the region need to make. I think the Iranians have every desire and wish to create the kind of security arrangements in the Persian Gulf that we're looking at. But they have to make certain decisions about their relationships with countries that are already their friends—I mean, the Chinese and the Russians. And the Persian Gulf states have an even bigger decision to make, which is: do they remain not just friends, but also allies of the United States? Or do they seek to remain friends but become neutral? Now, that is in some ways for them an even bigger thing. But it is existential for them, because Iran will survive one way or the other. It's a big country. The Arab states in the region—it's more problematic.

## **#Pascal**

It's way more problematic, especially looking at how they came into current existence versus how Iran did that a couple of thousand years ago. So even if now the theater of war is kind of winding down or cooling down, even if it is only a break, we are seeing at the same time how other theaters might be building up—most importantly, Armenia. And we see how now Armenia seems to be on a straight path toward... well, I would call it further vassalization under European and American tutelage. And really, how the person who took dramatic decisions and gave up parts of Armenian territory, apparently, allegedly, has won again in elections, which the observers on the ground told me on my podcast have been widely rigged. What do you make out of the position of Armenia now, which borders Iran?

## **#Alexander Mercouris**

Well, first of all, this is an existentially dangerous moment for Armenia. Oh, yes. I mean, it is in a very, very dangerous region. It is very short of friends there. Azerbaijan is not reconciled to Armenia at all. Turkey remains structurally hostile. They are taking a colossal gamble on the West. They're alienating their very, very strong friends, who were the Russians. As I said, this is very, very high risk and very, very dangerous. It's high risk in economic terms. It's high risk because the West is far away and is unlikely to come to Armenia's assistance. But it's high risk also in another way that connects to the situation in Iran. Now, a year ago, I was in Georgia, as you have recently been, and I had a meeting, a discussion with an American there who I'm fairly confident had connections with the intelligence agencies. But I'm not going to say he definitely did. But he talked about the American embassy in Yerevan, which is enormous.

## **#Pascal**

Yes.

## **#Alexander Mercouris**

And he said that one of the reasons it was so enormous was because it was orchestrating events in northern Iran. Yes. So one of the reasons why this region has been so important for the Americans is as part of America's siege of Iran. Now, if the United States decides that this siege cannot be sustained, that Iran is basically no longer overthrowable, then of course Armenia's usefulness to the United States declines drastically. And the Americans might start to cut down their commitments because Armenia is very far away from America. It is very difficult for the U.S. to sustain indefinitely a presence there.

The Russians and the Iranians will be antagonistic to that presence. So I believe eventually so will the Turks, because the Turks do not want the Americans too close to them. So Armenia may find that the Americans decide to go, in which case, where will Armenia under this leadership be? So, very high risk, very dangerous, very reckless. Again, a small country, or the leadership of a small country, or a group of people within that country gambling, desperate to be part of the West, prepared to take enormous risks with their country's economic future and its geopolitical security, and enormous risks that this could go catastrophically wrong.

## **#Pascal**

Yeah, so there we will probably have to observe what's going to happen with this so-called trip that Trump – what was it? The Trump Road for International Peace and Prosperity, right? There's this corridor, the Zangezur Corridor that they want to cut off and cut out. If that thing goes forward, we can probably safely say that the United States still hasn't given up on its plans with Iran. If the thing just fizzles out and fizzles away, and even that huge embassy should get smaller and smaller, we would have a strong indication that that strategy goes away. By the way, another – it's not an embassy, but it's a consulate that is huge, that the Americans keep using in order to meddle in another civil war, is in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Wow. Huge, huge consulate, and it is used directly in order to intervene in the civil war in Myanmar.

## **#Alexander Mercouris**

One learns something new every day.

## **#Pascal**

So, I mean, these embassies and consulates are, of course, used because they're under diplomatic protection. They're CIA and spy hubs, like, in most parts, especially the large ones. However, going

back again to the main topic, the US strategy in this region at the moment is actually at a point where we might see change, right? Because this war has kind of now brought out certain underlying tendencies. Most importantly, of course, that Iran seems to be much stronger than the West thought it is. What else do you think this second round of the Iran war taught us?

## **#Alexander Mercouris**

Well, I think we did learn that the Iranians were much stronger, but I think we also learned that the Americans are much weaker than many of us supposed. And I think that is going to have dramatic implications. I mean, American military power is not overwhelming, especially naval power. Naval power is not overwhelming. There are lots of rumors that the F-35s, the stealth fighters, were not as effective as had been assumed. And it's open. I mean, Jim Webb, who has been a senior U.S. military officer, he was JFK's national security advisor. He's had lots of contacts with the U.S. military.

He told me on his own show, so it's out there on YouTube, that the Iranians were able to track the F-35s with all sorts of interesting technologies, which I suspect they got either from the Chinese or the Russians. But anyway, the stealth technology that the American Air Force has overinvested in has been found wanting. And we'd already had indications from the Ukraine war that American industrial resilience, military-industrial resilience, was not very strong. This has now been re-emphasized, and it turns out that American leadership in military technology is not that strong either.

## **#Pascal**

And, you know, we saw a couple of very interesting media stories during these 40 days of war. One of them, of course, was this kind of lone pilot that got lost and was rescued. I mean, that's in and of itself interesting. But the even more interesting one that I think flew a bit under the radar is this alleged fire on board one of the aircraft carriers that apparently broke out in a laundry room and just raged for more than 24 hours. And I keep thinking that probably this is a lie. Probably the thing was struck by some sort of projectile. And even if not, I mean, it would make the situation even worse because it would mean that these things catch fire all by themselves without anyone having to do anything. Well, it is, yes.

## **#Alexander Mercouris**

Quite fascinating. That story has never been properly explained. There are all sorts of things that have happened. There have been lots of stories and rumors circulating that American ships were hit by various drones and projectiles and various things. Of course, we never have the full details. But I think I mentioned to you conversationally, I've heard, you know, it's been corroborated to me by more than one source. I don't know that this is true myself, but as I said, I've been told this — that the Americans at one point got so desperate to get some oil appearing to come through the Strait of Hormuz that they were telling ship owners to pay the Iranians the toll, the fee, and they were refunding the ship owners that fee.

So, in effect, the United States was paying ship owners—was paying the Iranians, actually, to be more precise—indirectly paying the Iranians to sell oil to China, which is where all that oil was going. So, I mean, it's all very bizarre and very extraordinary, but it does, again, show that the Americans, when their plans go wrong, as they did in Iran, are weaker and more disorganized and less efficient than all of us assumed.

## **#Pascal**

Yeah, and then again, the approach is, let's throw as much money at it as we can. And this seems to be becoming more and more the approach of it, because we now have a \$1 trillion military budget. But on our forecasts and other colleagues', we've been saying for a long time, I mean, what is eroding? It's the capacity to produce these things, these implements of war. And that one, none of us sees how the structural changes are happening—how structural changes are happening inside the US or its alliance system to correct for that. So this whole "let's throw money at it" approach is also ultimately now running toward a dead end.

## **#Alexander Mercouris**

Absolutely. The other thing I have to say is that yet again, we have seen that American intelligence gathering and analysis is unfit for purpose. The US colossally miscalculated in 2022 the resilience of the Russian economy. It's obvious now that the Americans, perhaps over-relying on the Israelis, colossally miscalculated Iran's resilience altogether. They assumed that this was a weak country when it turned out it was actually a rather strong country.

## **#Pascal**

Well, you know, the Israelis had a couple of great successes, and I'm not saying that because I'm a fan of them—not at all, the opposite. But certain realities must just be faced. I mean, on the one hand, they did manage to kill Hassan Nasrallah. They managed to genocide Gaza pretty much successfully, as horrible as it is, but they did it, and they achieved a good part of the decimation of these people. They managed to change Syria, right?

And to actually turn it, flip it around from basically a no-man's land that would even guard against certain Israeli attacks on Iran, to somebody who is incomplete and not to support, right? This Al-Qaeda leader, al-Sharaa, who is now in power there. So all of that seemed to work in their favor, and also especially Syria—the speed with which, in the end, the Bashar al-Assad government fell just surprised, I think, everybody, including the Russians. And there was, I mean, there was maybe this euphoria from the side of the Iranians and Israelis: we can do this to Iran now, now's the time.

## **#Alexander Mercouris**

Yes. I'll tell you what I think about this. I think that one of the things that's become very clear over the last few years is that the Americans and the Israelis do covert operations extremely well. Yes. And what has happened, I suspect, is that their intelligence agencies have become diverted extensively towards covert operations. Yes. And so they're no longer giving intelligence collection and analysis. I don't mean intelligence collection in terms of knowing where the Supreme Leader is or when he works at a particular time, but getting an overall sense of the actual society that they're going to be confronting. They don't do that analysis as well as they need to. So I think this is where the problem is—that their effectiveness in covert action has, in effect, caused them to downgrade the even more important role for an intelligence agency of finding out what is actually going on.

## **#Pascal**

And I had a very interesting conversation with George Beebe recently that is not published. It was a private conversation in Tbilisi. But he, as one of the former directors within the CIA, kept also talking about the importance between the... well, the intelligence arm, the people who try to figure out what's happening. And we have people like Ray McGovern and Larry Johnson who were part of this kind of arm of the CIA. And then there's the other arm, the operations arm. Yes. And the operations arm seems to have been getting much, much more love than the other one. Yes.

And then the other one still is doing intelligence, not how GB wanted to do it with open-source materials and trying to figure out the overall picture, but rather the money-laundering scheme where you give certain people a lot of money in order to do whatever they want, and you never really know how those things are. Yes, but the operations arm seems to have gone even further. And what we saw in January this year, with this regime change approach from below, with the mass protests and the Starlink panels and so on, seems to have been directly part of this strategy, of this hammering down through the operations arm of the CIA. Yes.

## **#Alexander Mercouris**

Well, that's exactly right. This is exactly what he wants. Operations has become over-dominant. I get the sense, actually, that the CIA collects a lot of intelligence. So do other elements of the American intelligence community. And I also get the sense that the US still has a lot of good analysts. But it's not exactly what you said — the part of the system that receives the love, and probably the money, and ultimately the attention. What the United States has is this extraordinarily effective secret army that it can deploy around the world and achieve all kinds of things very cheaply and very easily. And it's becoming over-dependent on it.

## **#Pascal**

That is quite interesting. So this state within a state that the CIA is, and this unauditible entity, kind of diverging itself, diverging away from the knowledge-producing side and going into, again, the brute force kind of, we crack down and we can do it side.

## **#Alexander Mercouris**

Yes, exactly. One would imagine, one would like to believe, that every day when the president receives his daily brief, he's informed about, you know, well, actually Iran has all of these factories that produce XYZ and does all of these things, and it's got this level of military production, it's got this kind of engineering. And then when a decision is made to look into the possibility of attacking Iran, there is a major report and analysis on how it should be done and if it's possible at all, and all that kind of thing.

I'm not, again, advocating any of these things, but all I'm saying is, if you're going to follow that kind of foreign policy, you should be thinking of, knowing what you're doing. But I get the sense that doesn't really happen at all anymore. The politicians mostly get their opinions from the media. I've been told that this is so by politicians in London. They get their ideas from the media. The media shapes their views. They don't really pay very much attention to what the analysts say. What the analysts say is never presented properly. And decisions are made very casually, without very much understanding of what their effect is going to be.

## **#Pascal**

It's quite fascinating. The good news for the CIA is at least they don't need to change the acronym. They just need to change the "I" from intelligence to intervention. Then we get the new purpose of the whole thing.

## **#Alexander Mercouris**

Absolutely. It's a very good way of putting it, actually. I might steal that from you, by the way. Oh, please, please do.

## **#Pascal**

Take all you could use. What do you make of Tulsi Gabbard? On her way out, she slams the door really, really hard, exposing like dozens and dozens of actual biolabs, actually in Ukraine, confirming all of the things that were called conspiracy theories and actually managing to bring that stuff out. I always wondered why she was so quiet, but apparently she saved her energies for a couple of big stories, and this must be one. What do you make of it?

## **#Alexander Mercouris**

Well, the first thing to say about that is that it's not just the conspiracy theorists who have been vindicated again, but also the Russians, who were heavily saying all through 2022 about these laboratories that were there. And nobody paid any attention. I mean, Victoria Nuland turned up in Congress and sort of let slip that, yes, maybe something of this kind was actually taking place in Ukraine. But everybody else said, "Oh, it's just the Russians, they're just saying these things." It turns out otherwise. Well, I agree. I think Tulsi has actually done an excellent job here, and I think we've learned an awful lot. I was always skeptical that she was going to remain in post for very long. It seemed to me that the entire deep state machine in the United States, if one can use that expression, was almost inevitably going to become hostile to her. But I think the fact that she has exposed this is actually, dare I say, almost enough to justify the fact that she was at TNI for a year.

## **#Pascal**

Do you think it will change something? I mean, because I haven't actually heard the follow-up. It seems not to have caused this huge outrage. No, it's not. I suppose she would hope that it will impact somehow the funding from Congress and maybe bring congressional scrutiny. But it seems that that's not really what's going on.

## **#Alexander Mercouris**

No, it has attracted no attention at all because we have this system in the West today of a kind of omertà, where terrible things are disclosed and a wall of silence descends, and the media is not covering the story. In Britain, it's not been covered at all, by the way. I haven't seen a single report about it anywhere in the media in Britain. So we have this enormous problem that these extraordinary revelations are not attracting attention. But nonetheless, it is there. It is now on the public record. Yeah. Eventually, perhaps, someone, when the mood changes in America, will go back, will find this information there, and will eventually take it forward.

It's very much like what happened in the mid-1970s with the Church Committee. I mean, everybody, everybody knew in the 60s and early 70s about all the terrible things the CIA was doing. And they were spying on their own people, which they're constitutionally barred from doing. All kinds of awful things. But nobody was interested in looking into it until suddenly they were. And then when they were, as I said, all that evidence was out there to actually pull together and to build a case out of. So I would regard this as something of a gift from Tulsi to the future.

## **#Pascal**

Yeah, it's interesting because it brings us back to the discussion about the CIA, where you see how within the United States there are forces who are working on restraining this beast that the U.S. political process is. And nobody can completely win over it, but you can play cards with each other. And Tulsi just gave a big and important card to whoever is then going to be able to pick it up.

## **#Alexander Mercouris**

Yes, I think something has happened in the U.S. which should not be underestimated, though it is a very slow burn. And that is that first the Edward Snowden revelations, then the whole Russiagate business, then all sorts of things that have followed since then. Let's not forget WikiLeaks.

WikiLeaks, absolutely, definitely not. What that has taught Americans, or at least those Americans who are interested in these matters, which actually is a surprisingly large section of the American population and an articulate one, is that the U.S. intelligence community is now playing an active role in American politics. It's always been known that it plays an active role in the politics of other countries. But now Americans know, or some Americans know, that it is taking an active role in their own politics. And with every step, every one of these allegations as we move forward, we get closer to the point where there might be an eruption in America and people finally say enough's enough and this has to stop.

## **#Pascal**

Yeah, we will see whether it's possible to stop the thing, because I had this discussion with Aaron Good, and one of the things we kind of agree on is that when you have a system in place, and the United States is a system, the system has mechanisms to deal with forces against it, right? Anything that tries to change it will automatically, you know, either legally or illegally, somehow be taken out. And the standard example is that, yeah, if a president oversteps too far, well, there's always a place in Texas with a cabriolet where you can do something against them, right?

## **#Alexander Mercouris**

I watched that program. I thought it was an exceptional program. I ought to say that I think the system is much more entrenched today than it was in the 1960s. So in some way, the difficulty of mounting a challenge today is much greater than it was then, or at the time of the Church Commission in the 1970s.

## **#Alexander Mercouris**

Against that, the crisis is greater too. So America is no longer the undisputed economic colossus that it was in the 60s and the 70s. There are more challenges to American power overall than there were then. There's probably more disenchantment in the U.S. with the political system. So the obstacle is stronger. It's even more immovable than it was before. But who knows? Maybe the forces are also building up, which might be irresistible. So we'll just have to wait and see. We are nowhere close to the point when that challenge will come. We're still years away, maybe decades.

## **#Pascal**

No, but we do now see very unmistakable signs of imperial decline. The way the Iran war now went into a pause, the way the U.S. is forced through different means to camouflage Iran, that this Ukraine escapade is not working out the way it is, although it's far from being resolved and Russia is anything but out on the other side. But it's definitely not this type of "we just roll in and declare victory." We are far away from 20 years ago with Iraq, right? And that in and of itself is kind of maybe a symptom, but it's a symptom of something underlying that we are all trying to understand. And it seems that the pulse of the thing is...

## **#Alexander Mercouris**

It's not doing that well. Exactly. I think you've described it exactly. I think that is exactly where we are. So the crisis is greater. And if America is to get it as a society, as a nation—I don't mean as an empire—but if America is going to come out of that crisis eventually, then it has to address all of these accumulated problems of empire. And that's where, as I said, the gift to the future of someone like Tulsi becomes important. Now, you know, it may not do so. Britain didn't. Britain has never really confronted its own imperial history. It's buried it under a carpet, basically. And the result is that Britain continues its decline. Even post-imperial Britain continues to decline.

## **#Pascal**

In this sense, Russia is different, isn't it? I mean, Gorbachev, for whatever you think of him, good or bad, he did start, or the Soviets did start, a process which was confronting, actually, the shortcomings of the system. It blew up the Soviet Union, but it birthed modern Russia, right? Modern Russia, as we're seeing, is kind of a... it's a different animal than what the Soviet Union was in 1985.

## **#Alexander Mercouris**

It's much more vigorous. There's far more vitality here. There's far more open discussion. It's also, I dare say, a happier country than the Soviet Union was in 1985. I think this is absolutely true. And in fact, you could go further, and you could argue that the process began in 1956 with the 20th Party Congress and the exposure of the crimes of the Stalin era, which was very incomplete and never really went very far, but it opened the door.

## **#Pascal**

And it was large-scale.

## **#Alexander Mercouris**

It was large-scale.

## **#Pascal**

Can we imagine that in the United States, like trying to expose the crimes of previous presidents?

## **#Alexander Mercouris**

Not at the moment. I mean, we're not in a situation in America where, not only have they not reached the point that Russia is in today, they haven't even had their Khrushchev moment. I mean, we're still very far from that.

## **#Pascal**

We're still pre-Khrushchev. We're not even close to Gorbachev. No, no. Well, I think that's a good point to end it, and we will continue the discussion. Alexander, if people want to find you, they could, of course, find your YouTube channel, Alexander Mercouris, on YouTube and on your Substack, and The Duran. Any other place where people should find you?

## **#Alexander Mercouris**

Well, there's also my channel, Alexander Mercouris' channel, and I'm starting rather hesitantly to make a presence on Twitter—on X, I should say, since it's no longer Twitter anymore.

## **#Pascal**

I like the resistance to the word X. It just shows opposition to an imposed change. Okay, we'll talk again, and thank you very much for your time, Alexander.

## **#Alexander Mercouris**

Thank you.