

Three Front War MADNESS: Washington Just Lost Everything | Amb. Chas Freeman

At 250 years, the US Empire and its satellites in Europe and East Asia are in irreversible decline. The lost Iran war, the terminal decline of the Israeli-proxy project, and the suicidal nature of Europe are unmistakable indicators. Ambassador Chas Freeman, former U.S. ambassador to Saudi Arabia and former Under Secretary of Defense, discusses the Iran war pause, Israel's growing political isolation, U.S. pressure in Lebanon, the war in Ukraine, Europe's fear of Russia, Taiwan tensions, and the failure of old Western policy. He argues that diplomacy is becoming unavoidable as states seek more independence. Links: Chas Freeman website: <https://chasfreeman.net> Chas Freeman Substack: <https://chasfreeman662157.substack.com> Neutrality Studies substack: <https://pascallottaz.substack.com> Merch: <https://neutralitystudies.com/shop> Donation: <https://neutralitystudies.com/donate> Timestamps: 00:00:00 Iran war pause and West Asia 00:07:51 U.S. politics and Israel-Palestine 00:16:12 Israel's grip on U.S. politics 00:25:13 Europe, Russia, and Ukraine war risks 00:35:00 Taiwan, China, and U.S. escalation 00:43:33 A failed order and new diplomacy 00:45:01 Follow Chas Freeman

#Pascal

Welcome back, everybody, to Digitality Studies, today with the always brilliant Ambassador Chas Freeman, former Ambassador to Saudi Arabia and Undersecretary of Defense in the 1990s. Chas, welcome back. Thank you, Pascal. Good to be with you. Chas, you have a unique ability to kind of distill the moments that we are in and bring a bit of conceptual clarity. And I wanted to ask you to do that again for us now as we speak on my July 4th, your Independence Day, although at your end it's still July 3rd, 2026. What is your assessment, first and foremost, of West Asia? Where did four months of war with Iran leave the world?

#Chas Freeman

Well, it's left the world in suspense, and that suspense is not going to be resolved anytime soon, in my view. What happened as a result of this war on the diplomatic front was an agreement to talk about negotiations and a framework for negotiation. And that framework was called a Memorandum of Understanding. I think it would be more accurately termed a Memorandum of Misunderstanding. But in any event, there it is, and it has raised provisions that the United States must comply with for the Iranians to agree to various moves on their part. That is, they're interlocking moves, but the first moves are those of the United States. Primary among those is no threats or use of force by the United States against Iran or by Iran against the United States.

That was violated almost immediately by the Trump administration's response to continued Iranian control of the Strait of Hormuz, which the president asserts, without any basis, is under American

control. And the issue there is that the MOU provides a 60-day period framework during which Iran is to manage the Strait of Hormuz without any tolls or fees. And that is what it is doing. But, of course, the United States has attempted to arrange for the transit of the Strait by ships in defiance of Iranian control. And that has led to an exchange of fire and the violation of the MOU. But the principal issue has been the American requirement to rein in Israel in Lebanon.

And here we have a very strange juxtaposition of J.D. Vance agreeing with the Iranians that the Israeli aggression in Lebanon should be curtailed. Donald Trump apparently having some strong words with Prime Minister Netanyahu on that subject on the one hand, and on the other hand, Marco Rubio, the Secretary of State and J.D. Vance's principal political rival, arranging an agreement with the feckless, unauthorized Lebanese government to perpetuate the Israeli occupation of Lebanon and to facilitate cooperation between Lebanon and Israel in the destruction of Hezbollah, which is the only effective force defending Lebanese sovereignty. So the Lebanese government does not do that.

So we had a ceasefire between Lebanon, the Lebanese government, and Israel, two parties who were not firing at each other. And now we have a collusive arrangement between them aimed at eliminating Hezbollah as a force in Lebanese politics or in the region. All of this doesn't work, and the present leadership of Hezbollah has made it very clear that it sees this arrangement as entirely illegitimate, and it's joined in that judgment by many Lebanese, who I think will regard their current nominal leadership with the same affection that the French reserve for Marshal Pétain. You know, this is essentially like the division of France into Vichy France and Nazi-occupied France. And nobody has any strong attachment anymore to Vichy.

So, there is that. Then there is the problem of the so-called negotiations, which are to take place guided by this framework, which has been violated now in every respect. Though there are no negotiations, there is a mediation between the Americans and the Iranians by Qatar and Pakistan, most recently conducted in Doha. But the American representatives there are Messrs. Witkoff and Kushner, the same two men who have previously served as foils and instruments of deception to enable the surprise attacks on Iran. They have absolutely no credibility with the Iranians, or for that matter, with anyone else. They have bungled the Ukraine issue. They've bungled the Iran issue.

And of course, they've bungled the Gaza issue. And so the final point here is that we have a rupture between the United States and Israel, which is present at the popular level but not apparent at the political level. That is to say, the Israelis have made a bet that the Zionist lobby and its plutocratic donors, who have Donald Trump in thrall, will be able to prevent him from terminating support for their aggression in the region. And in fact, as we speak, they are doubling down on the genocide and terror, the ethnic cleansing in Gaza. They are doubling down on the same in the West Bank. They are attacking Syria for reasons no one can understand.

And they are trying to turn southern Lebanon into a version of Gaza, with all the infrastructure destroyed and the place depopulated by its inhabitants who have been driven out. So this is the

situation, and the consequences of it might be more tolerable if we were not facing various deadlines. In the United States, there is the issue of the midterm elections. And we've just seen in our politics the proof that one reason Kamala Harris did not succeed as a candidate in 2024 was that she ducked the whole issue of Israel-Palestine. We've seen in New York primaries the election of Democratic Socialists of America members who are very much focused on the issue of Palestinian self-determination and holding Israel to account for its war crimes.

#Pascal

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#Chas Freeman

More interestingly to me, in Colorado, a lawyer of Ethiopian descent, a very beautiful woman, who was not elected for her beauty but prevailed in the primary because she was fired from her law office for writing a brief in support of Palestinian rights. And she then took to politics. I think her name is Metem Kyrgios or something like that. And she prevailed in a primary against a heavily financed AIPAC candidate. We've seen this in Los Angeles too, with another left-wing anti-Israeli candidate elected in a primary. And in Washington, D.C., the same thing.

The mayor, very likely the mayor—effectively the woman who is going to be elected mayor in a city that is overwhelmingly Democratic in its orientation—is very much in line with Mamdani in New York. So this is a fundamental rupture between the United States and Israel, not reflected in the political elite. And this is, of course, the same issue that bedevils, that brought Donald Trump to office, that bedevils European politics. In Europe, the issue is the unelected, unaccountable European Commission and its failure to take account of the attitudes of Europeans, the inability of ordinary Europeans to feel that their voice counts for anything.

This is a common problem now all through the West. And it is probably going to be a major factor in our midterm elections. I mean, not just the Israel-Palestine issue, where 80% of Democrats now want to punish Israel, but more generally, the election is going to focus on the lack of accountability and corruption, with Donald Trump setting new records with stock market manipulation. It's no accident that wars in the Persian Gulf start on the weekend and end before the stock market opens, with a claim of spurious moves toward peace. Billions of dollars have been made in the manipulation of oil prices and other stocks, not to mention the digital currency market. Yeah, this issue.

So I think we're seeing the corruption of American politics in part as a result of continuing ties to an Israel which has lost its conscience and moral standing. And the other issue, and I'll finish, is of course that the global economy is being held hostage. It takes about four or five weeks for a tanker that leaves the Strait of Hormuz for the United States to deliver the sour oil that is required to make

diesel and jet fuel, which means that it'll be sometime in early to mid-August before new supplies arrive. And we're at risk of seeing a shutdown in the trucking industry and in aviation in the United States. Globally, the same factors are at work. There is a risk of inflation.

Greatly increased inflation, literal shutdown of some economies, a global recession, perhaps even a depression. All of this weighs heavily on, I mean, the international part of it. I don't think Donald Trump cares about that, but the domestic part of it he does. And so he's been under huge pressure to pause this war. It's very clear that the pause is being used by both Iran and the United States to prepare for another round, probably after the midterm elections. But the Iranians expect another attack. I think Donald Trump will oblige them. But it will not be effective because of the loss of the deficit in the magazine depth—it's called the lack of weaponry, the lack of interception capability that the expenditure of ammunition and missiles in the early part of this war left us with.

I mean, we're talking about two, three, four, five years to replenish what has been expended, which means that if Donald Trump, as appears to be the case, the administration plans another assault on Iran, this is not only an instance of the famous definition of insanity—that is, doing the same thing and expecting a different result—but it is far less likely to be as intensive as the first rounds were. The Iranians are actually in a better position, with more retained ammunition, drones, missiles of one sort or another, safely stored, being rebuilt. So the next round, when and if it comes, is another instance of what I call fantasy foreign policy.

That is to say, it can't have any chance of success. And one wonders whether the U.S. military, who are very professional, are in fact being heard in the White House, whether they're in fact speaking out as they did before this all started, with no effect. So I'm sorry, that is a very, very long answer to describe a very complex and very unnerving situation in West Asia. I would just add that the internal politics in Israel, with an Israeli election coming up in October, are a further complication. Mr. Netanyahu, who has been the wizard of Israeli politics, is in grave danger of seeing himself ousted, and if so, he'll end up in prison, which he's been desperately trying to avoid.

So there are many, many imponderables. What will happen in the midterm elections? What will happen in Israel's elections in October? We know what will happen in Iran. We've seen a turn to a far more militaristic, aggressive regime than the one led by Ali Khamenei, whose funeral is taking place today. I think probably the Iranians chose the July 4th date for a reason. But anyway, we don't know what is going to happen, but all the indications are that Mojtaba Khamenei, the new supreme leader, needs to consolidate his power, and that will require him to defer to the Iranian Revolutionary Guard, the IRGC. And so there you have it.

#Pascal

Thank you. I mean, it is extremely complex at the moment. But what I wonder is if we are now seeing the beginning, basically, of this translation in the United States of very broad political discontent with foreign policy about the genocide and about this warfare, into actually the political

layer. As you just said, we see first candidates being elected, and we're seeing how other candidates are pressured not to adhere that much anymore to the wishes of Israel. I mean, this is now very prevalent.

I talked yesterday to a Syrian journalist in Lebanon who was telling me that you can actually feel on the ground at the moment that certain things are not going Israel's way anymore. He thought Israel would start treating Beirut the way they are treating Gaza, but they can't because the United States stands in the way. He's actually highlighting that in his analysis. So are we now seeing how, having lost this round of the war—and most people agree this is just round number two or number three, with more to follow later—it's now translating into actual changes in what is politically possible in West Asia?

#Chas Freeman

I think very clearly it is. And we can talk about the security architecture of West Asia, if you want—the emerging security architecture—because I think it does represent quite a change from the past. But in the United States, it's very clear that the tide is against the Zionist lobby. And you see two things. I mean, I've mentioned the various primary elections, which indicate that the problem is not limited to New York and, you know, that it is a national trend affecting the West Coast, the mountain states, and Washington, D.C. itself. But beyond that, you see this in the frantic activity of the Zionist lobby.

The Ministry of Strategic Affairs in Israel, which is responsible for exculpatory propaganda, has greatly increased its expenditures in the United States. There's a huge surge of money. It's not doing any good. Basically, more and more candidates are running on the platform that they are not beholden to AIPAC or any other element of the Zionist lobby. And we see interesting contrasts. I'm in the state of New Hampshire, which is just to the south of Maine, where there's a very interesting candidate, Graham Flattner, who's attracted some attention internationally. He's a working-class resident of Maine who has quite a turbulent past. He was in the military.

He got some tattoos that he regrets getting. Young men do things like that. And he's apparently had fairly, uh, loose morals in terms of his relationships with women who aren't his wife. But all of this is set aside. And the interesting thing is his opponent, the incumbent Senator Collins, like the governor of Maine who opposed him in the beginning and dropped out basically, they were getting big chunks of money from big donors, literally hundreds of thousands of dollars each time. He has only people—he's running on a platform financed by \$5, \$10, \$20 contributions.

So he is really a representative of a populist reaction, paralleling, I think, the Trump reaction. As I say, Trump was, you know, he of course was financed by Zionist plutocrats and other plutocrats, but he won because there was a populist upsurge of distress and reaction to the arrogance of the political elite and their indifference to—to go back to the theme of the European Commission and so forth—their indifference to popular opinion. So yes, there is a real change going on. In Lebanon,

Hezbollah has turned out to be fairly formidable on the battlefield. It has held its ground. It has inflicted serious casualties on the Israelis.

It is clear that the United States is, in fact, withholding some support for Israel and restraining it, particularly in terms of attacks on Dahiya, the suburban community in Beirut, which is overwhelmingly Shiite and therefore pro-Hezbollah. But, you know, I would say that more generally, and to echo what I imagine the Syrian journalist told you earlier, we're looking at a collapse of Israeli fortitude and resolve. Of course, there are many statements that are very belligerent and defiant of the United States. Israel is picking a fight with the United States, and it remains to be seen how that will come out. I don't think it will end well for Israel because American nationalism is a force to be reckoned with.

And it's more and more evident. You see this in the splintering of MAGA, you know, with people like Tucker Carlson or Marjorie Taylor Greene or Candace Owens, you know, breaking with Trump on this issue. But, you know, even in Europe, you're seeing now the beginnings of some kind of backbone on the issue, efforts to impose sanctions on settler organizations and so forth. It's not very effective. I mean, I would say Europe long ago learned to wring its hands while sitting on various issues. I know that there's just been a European delegation in Taipei that has made various virtue-signaling statements, which have no consequence at all, except that they're more likely to provoke a Chinese reaction than to caution the Chinese.

Anyway, Europe remains a mystery wrapped in an enigma, and no one knows where it's going. But it is clearly not going in the direction of Israel. And so this is, you know, we've had a change of government in the U.K., very significant. Keir Starmer's wife was an ardent Zionist. That had a good deal to do with his policy. I don't think the new man is going to be of that persuasion. So if you look at what is happening, I keep coming back to the analogy of the Christian crusader kingdoms of the 11th and 12th centuries. Basically, they failed to make peace with their neighbors, they lost their international support, and they withered and died. Israel is in danger of that.

You can't blame Netanyahu for this because if you look at the polling data, three-fourths of the Israeli people are very favorable to the war with Iran, approve of the genocide in Gaza, and believe that Israel should be doing what it's doing in Lebanon. So, you know, basically this is a society that has become sociopathic or maybe psychotic. I guess sociopathy is a subdivision of psychosis. And it illustrates the point that Henry Kissinger made. You know, he said, even the paranoid have enemies. But I would add that the paranoid are particularly good at making enemies. And Israel has no friends anywhere at this point, except a few diehards in various parts of the West who are being marginalized.

#Pascal

You know, this kind of observation that the paranoid are good at making enemies — this is why people love your analysis, because I think this is exactly what we are in. And I've had on this

channel several people who actually argue that it's not just the metaphor of the Crusades, but that what we are seeing is the latest iteration of a drive toward the East, of colonizing the East that keeps failing time and time again for the very same reasons. But let's maybe switch a little bit toward, again, Europe, because I think you're right. The Europeans, when it comes to Israel, are adopting a more critical stance finally after three years of genocide. But when it comes to Russia, the one thing that unites them at the moment is their immense Russophobia and their immense drive toward making a self-fulfilling prophecy that the Russians will attack. What is your view of where we stand now that we have massive strikes inside pre-2022 Russia and the drumbeat, as I perceive it, for war with Russia in Europe?

#Chas Freeman

Well, just as the United States has proven incapable of controlling Israel in order to have a coherent Iran policy, one that might produce a satisfactory peace, a condition that's better than the one before we went into this war, the same thing is true with regard to Russia. What they have in common is that the Iranians and the Russians have both concluded that there's no point in negotiating with the United States, since the United States is not capable of developing a coherent position or following it up by implementing whatever is agreed to. There are many reasons for that, but that is less important than the fact that the Russians and the Iranians have reached the same conclusion.

In the case of the Russian relationship with Europe, things have gone much worse because the Russians have basically concluded that not only is it not worthwhile to talk to the United States, but that the Europeans, who are wasting a lot of time talking about whether they should talk to Russia, have decided instead to declare war on Russia, and are in fact boasting about it. And I speak specifically of the UK, which is perhaps the father of much of the Russophobia, going back to the Crimean War, but also to the great game of dividing Europe in order to manipulate it. Keeping Russia out is fairly key to the success of that strategy.

So anyway, the UK has been the father of Russophobia, and it's been quite successful in imparting it to other Europeans, with the result that you have now the British in particular boasting about developing technology and producing missiles that are capable of long-range strikes inside Russia. And, of course, the war has escalated to include long-range strikes inside Russia, which have produced a predictable Russian counter-escalation in the form of more damage to Ukraine. But I think we've now gone beyond that. I would not be surprised to see one of those factories in the UK have an accident, whether by sabotage, a special forces attack, or maybe even a misfire. I don't think Article 5 has much weight in Russian thinking at the moment.

And I think that the Russians have concluded that there is no point in talking to Ukraine because Ukraine is responsive to the European warmongering and Russophobia. In fact, Ukraine is, of course, more Russophobic than anywhere else on earth probably, including Poland. So the Russians are going to do to Ukraine what they did to Grozny in Chechnya. And the Ukrainians know that they are

on the ropes, and we're seeing a huge propaganda effort from Western Europe, NATO, and Ukraine, misportraying the situation as illustrating a possible Ukrainian victory. Nothing could be farther from what is going to happen. We see figures on Russian casualties which are absolutely preposterous.

We see ground being taken by the Russians, not so much with the meat grinder approach that they had used, but now with glide bombs and other means, and missiles and so forth. And we see a turn toward the destruction of civilian infrastructure in Ukraine that far outweighs what was done before. So I think the Russians have concluded that they need to end this war and that the way to do it is through savagery, not negotiations. What will the Europeans do in response? I don't know. But one thing is for sure, the Europeans are quite willing to fight to the last Ukrainian. I don't know that they're willing to do anything beyond that.

And they have a problem because, of course, the United States handed Europe the bag of Ukraine, and the idea was that Europeans would buy American weapons that would make American military industries rich and Donald Trump happy, and it would provide the weaponry to Ukraine that it needed, and Europe would pay the bill. That was the idea. The problem is there isn't anything to buy now because of the depletion of the weaponry. And my own interpretation of events, which may be wrong, is that Russia was waiting to see what the impact of that depletion would be on Ukraine before coming up with or doing a strategic review.

And if I read what Vladimir Putin is saying correctly, he's deciding to go for broke. And so I don't think these last few days' very savage attacks on Kyiv are a one-off. I think this is the beginning of a much more intensive Russian campaign to subdue Ukraine. And when I say subdue Ukraine, I don't mean take a lot of Western Ukrainian territory, because the last thing on earth the Russians want is that bunch of Ukrainians as part of the Russian Federation. But Ukrainians, with Western help, have escalated virtually everywhere. They're trying to cut off Crimea and make it into an island, no longer connected to the corridor that goes to the Russian Federation. They've been making serious assaults, all of which have failed, on Russian positions in various places.

Meantime, the advances continue in the Donbass. And I don't know whether we've seen a reference now from Vladimir Putin to Novorossiia as an objective. That includes Odessa. I don't know whether the original objective was clearly to take the remaining part of Donetsk and then have a discussion and reach an agreement. I don't know whether that's still the case. Of course, Russians are not happy about the war. Why should they be? It's been costly in many ways. It hasn't hurt them economically much, but there have been serious casualties. It's been disruptive. It's not nice to not know whether a Ukrainian drone is going to come down on you in the middle of the night. So it's unnerving. But it's not enough to break their will.

And I don't think the Ukrainians' will is going to be broken either. I think they're going to lose stuff on the battlefield, and eventually they'll have to deal with the realities that this creates. So this is not a pretty picture, and it is in grave danger of further escalation, including strikes in Western Europe on support facilities for Ukraine, conducted in one way or another. And you can see that the

Russians have changed their position if you listen to Sergei Lavrov, who is quite clear about diplomacy having lost its utility, which means he's not in it anymore. So this is not a pretty picture. There is a danger, of course, also that, having been frustrated in West Asia, Donald Trump will turn again to Eastern Europe. That is a problem.

#Pascal

Yeah, no, I mean, absolutely thinkable. The third scenario that's thinkable is what a couple of people have also been talking about, which is a third theater: East Asia, Taiwan. We've seen some drone shipments, or at least planned drone shipments, to Taiwan. I personally think this is unlikely at the moment because it just seems quite stable, and there is this kind of status quo that I think is hard to disrupt. But the theater in Europe, of course, is exactly as you're laying it out. It's still very ugly. But the one thing that you also said—there was this assumption, especially by the neocon corner, that again, US capacity, industrial capacity, is infinite, weapons are infinite, all we need is orders on the books. And that's not true anymore.

And at the same time, you're credited, actually, as the father of the term “fighting to the last Ukrainian,” because I think you were the first one to say that in 2022. And it turns out to be true. This is what NATO is doing. But the Ukrainians are now running out. So Europe needs to be at this point where they need to decide: do we really want to have an all-out war or not? And this is currently being kind of negotiated. And I wonder—what worries me the most is that what I hear from Russia is that they are now taking the Europeans seriously when they say that. They used to dismiss it when somebody said they want to break up Russia. But by now, a lot of people are taking them seriously. These people actually want to destroy us. So why should we wait for the war if they are telling us that it's going to happen anyhow, that they're going to make it happen anyhow? How do you see this structural element?

#Chas Freeman

Well, I think it's pathetic that when António Costa advocates dialogue with Russia, he's accused of some sort of treason. How on earth can you conduct a war without talking to the enemy or maintaining contact, if not overtly, at least through intelligence agencies? So I think the Europeans have no answer to their dilemmas. And I think there is really a grave danger of this getting out of control. The reality is that the two most competent armies on the planet now are Ukraine and Russia. And God help anybody who goes up

#Chas Freeman

Against either of them.

#Chas Freeman

So there's that. With regard to East Asia, I think, you know, one must bear in mind that there's the principle that Sun Tzu announced—you know, winning without fighting is the acme of skill. I think that's often misinterpreted. What he means by that is parsimony, that you should be very minimalist in your expenditure of blood and treasure. That is sound strategy. And I don't think the Chinese want a war over Taiwan. I think they think trends are in their favor over the long run, and they're prepared to be patient. The only thing that could alter that would be some development in Taiwanese politics that exceeded the bounds of discretion. The president of Taipei is...

#Chas Freeman

Capable of that kind of ill-considered judgment. That could provoke something. Certainly, from the military point of view, the diversion of the United States to other theaters presents an opportunity. But the other possibility is some American maneuver. We've broken every agreement we made about the normalization of relationships with Beijing. We have an all-but-official representation in Taipei. Members of our government travel there at the ministerial level. We have armed forces back on the island, and even on Jinmen and Matsu, the Quemoy and Matsu, the two islands in part of Fujian province that Taipei still controls.

And, of course, we have championed Taipei's diplomatic relationships internationally with punitive measures against those who decided their interests would be better served by having a relationship with the rest of China. No country recognizes Taiwan as Taiwan. They all recognize it as China, the Republic of China. So there are, you know, and of course the arms sales agreement that we made, the understandings we made during the normalization discussions, their reaffirmation and strengthening in the August 17 communique of 1982, have all been put by the wayside. We are major fuelers of the military tension in the Taiwan Strait through our support for Taiwan's military.

And so one can't rule out an accidental provocation of some sort resulting in a war, but I don't think it's likely. I think the Chinese have shown themselves to be very sober and serious. And their whole strategy from the beginning with regard to Taiwan was not based on playing chess, but playing Go or Weiqi. And a master of that game knows when he's lost and concedes. And so the idea is that Taiwan, which is Chinese after all, culturally and in virtually every respect, will understand at some point that the game is up and it will do a deal. Unfortunately for Taipei, the terms of the deal are not improving with time.

That is, Taiwan's position is weakening. Its bargaining position is not strengthening. Its relations with the United States are more problematic, given the nature of the Trump presidency and the fact that Trump, you know, basically declared economic war on China, and we've lost that war too. We've been checked in that war. So you're in Tokyo, you know, the influence of the Japanese on this is important, and the Japanese prime minister's statements continue to rile Sino-Japanese relations. There's no clarification on the Japanese position on Taiwan that is convincing.

So in a way, Japan has once again failed to provide a convincing answer to the anxieties that have existed with respect to its behavior in World War II, for textbook issues and this kind of thing. And it's not clear that Japan really knows how to handle the rise of China effectively in a way that doesn't produce some sort of gross misunderstanding and accidental damage to Japanese interests, as well as, of course, American interests, since the United States is part and parcel of the Japanese strategic universe. So... yeah, I mean, if you look around, what does all this mean? It means that Israel-first as a foreign policy is a failure.

It means that the proxy war against the Russian Federation fails—is a failure. It means that the post-war legal order that prevented mass atrocities like genocide is a failure. It means that the United Nations, which was once fairly important, if not central to global affairs, is a failure. And so there is a need for renewal and reinvention of institutions. And all this is taking place in a context which we've discussed before, very much in evidence in the West Asian region, in which countries want strategic autonomy. They don't want to be under the thumb of any patron anymore. Patrons do things like the Lebanese Agreement. They don't help you.

And they, in the case of Israel, they bring you up short when you want to conduct a seizure of all sorts of territory. They're in the way. And for the Saudis and others, they've learned that the United States can't protect them and, in fact, prioritizes protecting Israel over them, and that they have to make their peace with Iran. And so, at the funeral of Ali Khamenei, the deceased, murdered Supreme Leader today, in addition to a delegation from Iranian Jews who have a reserved seat in the parliament—which is not exactly what the image is—there was a Saudi delegation. You know, people in the region are adjusting to new circumstances, which is the subject of another discussion sometime.

#Pascal

It is. We have to wind it down. But I'm glad we are ending on a hopeful note that maybe out of a funeral, something peaceful might arise and an order might actually come back from this destruction. Chas, people who want to follow your writing should find your homepage, chasfreeman.com, right?

#Chas Freeman

And I now have a, you know, I somehow got onto Substack, and I didn't know I was on it, but now I've decided to post all these things of possible interest. And all of Chas Freeman's space is now on Substack as well. And I will be doing a, I'm doing a talk on Monday, and I just posted something—a talk I gave in 2008 called "Why Not Try Diplomacy," which retains much of its relevance. On Monday, I'm speaking to a group of interns at the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training on the subject of why diplomacy is inevitable.

That is why you can't avoid it in the end. And then later in the week, I'll be giving my talk to the assembled senior Chinese executive students at the University of Cambridge China Education Program. So all these things will go both on my website, which I apologize for—I did it myself, therefore it's crude, but it works, except for the link to emails, which I can't fix. And they will also go on Substack, so if people are interested, they can see that. Thank you for mentioning that.

#Pascal

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