

TRANSCRIPT

Victory Coalition Briefing

TAKING STOCK ON THE TRUMP-NETANYAHU SUMMIT

Frank Gaffney with David Wurmser, Rober Spencer, and Daniel Greenfield

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BEGIN TRANSCRIPT

[00:00:11] **Frank Gaffney:** Welcome to a very special briefing by our Victory Coalition on the meeting that was held recently by President Donald Trump and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, in which momentous things were decided. And perhaps most importantly, a partnership between the two men seems to have been perhaps rekindled or properly forged based on some new fundamentals that have wide ranging implications for both the wars that Israel is currently afflicted by, and the prospects for peace in the Middle East, and perhaps far beyond [00:01:00] as well. My name is Frank Gaffney. I am the president of the Institute for the American Future, which is proud to be a sponsor of the Victory Coalition. We are presenting this program with several key members of that coalition, some of the finest minds, I believe, on the Middle East and on more broadly, the history of our times. We are going to be talking about the context as well as the substance of the meeting, and what now seems likely to be flowing from it. A particularly important part of the context is, as I've indicated, that we've witnessed an alignment, it appears, between the government of Israel and the government of the United States. That has not been in evidence, certainly for the past four years. Some Biden rhetoric notwithstanding, and arguably apart [00:02:00] from the first Trump administration has not been characteristic of the United States policies.

[00:02:10] **Frank Gaffney:** During the first of the well, I call them three Obama Biden administrations. We're going to begin our conversation by talking with a man whose

acumen in all of these matters, and whose I believe clarity in addressing them in ways that can be accessible to the rest of us, is without peer. His name is Doctor David Wurmser. He is the senior analyst of the center for Security Policy with responsibility for its Mideast programs. But he brings to the job of introducing all of these topics A lifetime of experience as a naval intelligence [00:03:00] officer. As a senior official in the State Department, the National Security Council. And most recently, the office of the Vice President of the United States. Doctor Wurmser. It is a pleasure to have you with us. I appreciate so much the fact that you have made yourself available to Victory Coalition team and to its work at enormous personal cost. Given all of the other demands on your time and expertise. But we're particularly appreciative that you're with us today to kick off a conversation about this recent meeting and whether it augurs a new special relationship whether the first fruits and future prospects are very much involved with saving Judeo-Christian civilization.

[00:03:58] **David Wurmser:** Thanks for having me. It's an honor [00:04:00] to address the group. The United States really did shift its strategic vision. Until now, the United States has always seen Israel. Yes, a special relationship, a sort of moral obligation, frankly, a moral obligation that came from World War Two and helping the Jewish people survive and get back on their feet. But it was seen as balanced by our larger interests in the Middle East. And that was always an agonizing thing. I would argue historically, if one really examines the historical record, support for Zionism and support for the Israeli state was never balanced or was never, never needed to be balanced with our access to the Arab world. In fact, if you look at the British and then you look at the American experience periods in which America or Britain before were pro-Zionist and were clearly working with, with the Jews to establish the state or [00:05:00] to protect the state. Were periods which fairly often coincided and followed and were followed by periods of fairly strong American presence in the region, with fairly amicable relations with some of the major powers. It was really in the wake of the perception of American weakness, and moreover, the idea that somehow the United States was abandoning Israel. Israel was seen as the bellwether of how much the United States defends an ally that is fundamentally itself a part of its own world. In other words, Israel is seen to be part of the West by the region. And if the West is willing to abandon its own integral part, Arabs understand the United States is not going to stand for them either, as pro-Western allies.

[00:05:54] **David Wurmser:** So essentially, the utility of American alliance and the utility of being pro American [00:06:00] dissipates the more we distanced ourselves from Israel. So I think that point is important to make because the fundamental framework was wrong. And yet, until this administration now that guided our policy toward everything, the peace process and so forth, where we had this fundamental idea that Israel needs to essentially weaken itself its cast in terms of concessions for peace, lands for peace. But the net result was that Israel's too strong and needs to be weakened and give up something as to bring around the Arabs to accept it with a minimalist footprint. And then then you have peace, and we can maybe ignore that problem and have a better world of relations with the Arab world. That concept collapsed on October Seventh once and for all. And what we see emerging in its wake is the is the idea that actually it's Israeli strength and [00:07:00] the resoluteness of American support for Israel that best secures peace. The first Trump administration, it was the Abraham Accords, were fundamentally grounded to that idea that the Palestinian issue and Israeli concessions of land for peace to the Palestinians are not essential for making peace with the Arab world, especially those who are leaning toward the United States, whether it's the UAE or Bahrain or others. And that, in fact, Israeli strength reinforced the utility of Israel itself to those countries which made them want to make peace with Israel almost independently of the United States, but certainly encouraged by the United States under Trump.

[00:07:45] **David Wurmser:** So I think we're returning to that paradigm. We're taking it to a whole new level and understanding that it's only as strong Israel and in Israel that has the proper moorings strategically, which include land, strategic geostrategic, [00:08:00] diplomatic backing and geographic assets that secure Israel in a fundamental way going forward for decades. That strength and the clear Israeli willingness to fight for itself and defend itself alone, has made it a highly valuable ally, potentially for many Arab countries. And certainly through that, with the Arab countries gravitating toward peace with Israel on that foundation, also make Israel and the alliance that emerges from it a fundamental anchor for the United States in the region. So we really are moving now toward a circumstance where the United States is its relationship with Israel is in the region is becoming quite akin to what we had with Great Britain. Throughout the last two centuries, since we signed the Treaty of Paris. And we were [00:09:00] no longer in a state of war with Britain. We were essentially strategic allies in Britain was our window and our anchor, as well as one of the main and forces of

stability on the European continent. So we're seeing a parallel structure emerge here. And that's key, because the United States does not want to engage in endless wars. It does not want to send troops.

[00:09:23] **David Wurmser:** It doesn't want to have an imperial presence in the region to maintain stability, nor can it give up on the region. There are vital assets, and surrender would reflect horribly on American global reputation of strength and undermine actually the deterrence that is imperative for ensuring no wars. So the only way to bridge that gap becomes a strong Israel. So all the vectors seem to be coming together now for a very different sort of American-Israeli relationship. One grounded the final vector that I want to cover is the civilizational [00:10:00] the United States is facing really its greatest threat from within when we face the Cold War Americans weren't particularly religious, but they respected religion, and they understood Christianity, Judeo-Christian culture as a foundation of American a foundation of American values. The Declaration of Independence begins. We are endowed by our creator by certain inalienable rights. Well, the whole concept we have of citizenship, civic virtue and rights really is anchored to the idea that was born on Mount Moriah and with Abraham's near sacrifice of Isaac, which established that human life is the property of God. It isn't something that people can just dispense with and throw away at will for their interests. It is something divine, [00:11:00] and the foundation of our human rights outlook is anchored to that fundamental belief. And so it lies at the core of who we are as a people. But that core, if you look in Europe and America, in the Middle East Christianity is under assault from now.

[00:11:21] **David Wurmser:** Really? And this makes the Chinese threat much more. It's really a subversive campaign from within to take over institutions, religious institutions, and turn them against what they're meant to be against the values that they have traditionally stood for. And that's a fundamental assault on one of the three key Pillars of Western civilization the Athens, Rome and Jerusalem. It's the Plato to NATO continuum is now under threat from within. On top of that, Christianity in the Middle East is now facing extinction from [00:12:00] Islamic assault. Whether it's Egypt, whether it's in Syria now, whether it was in Iraq, and I fear also in Lebanon. And there's only one place Christianity has a firm foundation and is thriving and growing, which is Israel. And there's only one place that now has a vested interest in ensuring that its surrounding Christian populations in Lebanon and Syria, and possibly even in Egypt, survive. And

that's Israel. So again, even on this civilizational foundational basis Israel emerges as critically important, let alone from the fact that Israel is the cradle of Christianity itself and the ability of Christians to freely access. And cavort with their with the coterminous Jewish history of the region. And to protect the holy sites that are in the Bible and so forth. All [00:13:00] now converge also on the issue of Israel's thriving and geographic presence. So I think on every level, strategic, cultural, civilizational, it we're heading into a fundamentally different relationship with Israel.

[00:13:16] **Frank Gaffney:** There are, as always, an absolutely brilliant exposition of both the broad canvas on which some very important art has now been cast, as well as some of the specifics of it. And I particularly appreciate you introducing this theme of the civilizational dimensions of the war we're in at the at the moment, I'm particularly appreciative that we have with us, albeit by video tape, a man who has studied that topic intensively and has documented it magnificently in some 29 different [00:14:00] books, the most recent of which is to be published in March, entitled anti-Semitism History and Myth. Robert Spencer is the author. We caught up with him for a portion of our television program, Securing America, and he was kind enough to say we could use parts of his presentation there for today's purpose. And I'm extremely grateful to him for not only graciousness in that respect, but also for the incredible work that he does as the executive director of Jihad Watch Org, as well as a columnist for Front Page Magazine and PJ media. He's a great friend as well as an extraordinary mentor to me. And I think to many of us, and we look forward to his comments by video. Let's go to them now.

[00:14:55] **Robert Spencer:** This was, I think, the most momentous foreign policy event in [00:15:00] the history of the United States and the world since Ronald Reagan, said, Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall. And you remember, because, of course, you were in the Reagan administration that the whole world, the political establishment and the elite media all scoffed at President Reagan, said he doesn't know what he's talking about. The Soviet Union is here to stay. And he was the only one who insisted, no, you give it a push. It's weak. It will fall. And of course, he was proven correct. And he stuck to his course, even though the whole world was against it. It's the same thing now. What President Trump and Prime Minister Netanyahu outlined the other day was a totally new approach to a problem where every established and accepted approach has failed repeatedly, and Trump is going against all the conventional wisdom, just as Reagan did,

by insisting [00:16:00] we're not going to keep reapplying these failed approaches. And what's been missing in all those approaches has been a full and realistic acceptance and understanding of Islam, Sharia and its doctrines of jihad. Because the two state solution idea, which is still, of course, what the foreign policy establishment wants and assumes is going to settle this whole problem is based on the idea that all that the Palestinians want is sovereignty, and that they will then live side by side in peace with Israel. Real that refuses to take into account the reality, which is that the doctrine of jihad is maximalist.

[00:16:44] **Robert Spencer:** It will never be satisfied with any state of Israel of any size, because it is part of Islamic belief that that land, because it was ruled by Islam at one point must be ruled by Islam forever, [00:17:00] belongs by right to the Muslims, and is under the egis of the divine imperative in the Quran. Drive them out from where they drove you out. Chapter two, verse 191 that accepts no mitigation and any negotiated settlement with Israel is only a stepping stone toward full achievement of that. So consequently, Trump is betraying without ever saying this. But he's betraying an awareness of this by saying this. They're just going to keep trying to destroy Israel. They're just going to keep on harming innocent civilians. We cannot continue to allow this and enable this. And I think the full story is only now just coming out about how much the United States government, under Biden and Obama enabled and aided the Palestinian jihad against Israel, while ostensibly professing support for the state of Israel. In any case, his proposal, as [00:18:00] audacious as it is, and probably it's just a leading point for new negotiations and a whole new way of thinking about this problem. But the fundamental aspect of his proposal that I think is bedrock is that Hamas is not going to be allowed to harm Israel any longer, and that this chimera of the two state solution, this fantasy that the Palestinians are going to accept Israel and live in peace with it if we just give them enough land or give them this or give them that, or shower enough billions upon them.

[00:18:36] **Robert Spencer:** It's over. And so this is a world historical, world changing event. This is a war that has been fought for 1400 years. And in the Islamic world, there's a very clear and vivid memory of all that. But it's been completely forgotten in the West, not least among foreign policy so-called experts. And what Trump is paving the way to doing [00:19:00] now is opening the door to an official recognition of what is really quite an obvious fact, which is that the people who hit Israel on October 7th, 2023

hold to exactly the same ideology and goals as the people who hit us on nine over 11. And as this so-called lone wolves who go out on streets in France and Germany and Britain and Sweden and elsewhere and start stabbing people at random, this is all a single attack by a unified force. And as long as we continue to. Pretend that that is not true, and to treat all these as separate and discrete incidents, we will not mount an effective or realistic strategy for dealing with this attack. This is only emboldening the jihadis when they see well, the West doesn't have any clue. They don't even realize [00:20:00] what they're up against. And so they don't have. Not only does no Western government have a strategy to deal with Sharia or jihad, they don't even recognize that it exists.

[00:20:14] **Frank Gaffney:** Thank you. Robert Spencer Amazingly insightful and incisive comments on the seamless nature of Sharia supremacism, despite its myriad fault lines and Different sectarian and ethnic and geographic characteristics. It is one fight. It is a war for the free world. A war against Judeo-Christian civilization that we are in. And those who fail to understand that, I believe, are setting us up, as Robert said, for a very, very grim future, if not actual destruction. [00:21:00] We're going to hear next from another member of our victory coalition. I'm very proud to say Daniel Greenfield. He is an author. He is an essayist. He is the executive vice president of a terrific organization, the David Horowitz Freedom Center. He has been, among other places, I believe, at FrontPage magazine, been commenting on some of the forces at work within the Trump administration That I have made the kind of clarity that the president exhibited this week all the more needed. And the hope is that all those who are in his employ, particularly I'm speaking now of political appointees, especially in the Defense Department, will be aligning with the president on this kind of special relationship, this kind of role in [00:22:00] the fight against this global threat of sharia supremacism in the Middle East and elsewhere, rather than being undermined by his own people, something that he suffered altogether too much of in his first term. We certainly hope that will be the case, but we're going to ask Daniel Greenfield, who has been studying this, writing on it extensively, to comment both on the larger topic here of the nature of this partnership, its prospects, as well as the distinct danger that we might find both undermined by those opposed to the president's policy within his own administration. Daniel, welcome back. It's so good to have you with us, sir. The floor is yours.

[00:22:50] **Daniel Greenfield:** Thank you so much. Now, whether it's the incredible press conference between President Trump and Prime Minister Netanyahu or [00:23:00] the battle of the USAID. The arrival of Trump has been a massive earthquake. And one reason it's been such a massive earthquake is because DC tends to be governed by very specific codes and groups, and we see this all too quickly in foreign policy. There are these abstractions. You know, there are debates about neoconservatism or foreign policy realism, whereas President Trump doesn't operate by any such political abstractions, but he uses his common sense. And what he said is absolutely shocking to people who are foreign policy professionals about, you know, let's just resettle the people who are living there who are causing all the problems somewhere else because Gaza is unworkable. It's absolutely shocking. Of course, if you're a foreign policy professional, because you tend to think in terms of boxes. And the great challenge for presidents who have brought common sense to the table. Doctor Wurmser mentioned Reagan and struggling with his people, with his staffers to actually just say, Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall. It was so hard for them to process this because it was out of the box. [00:24:00] And, you know, we use out of the box as a general expression, but it's a literal case in DC where there are very specific rigid boxes. And when President Reagan went ahead and just said, Mr.

[00:24:12] **Daniel Greenfield:** Gorbachev, tear down this wall, he was operating outside these boxes, outside these very strictly, rigidly defined parameters. The American foreign policy did not used to be this rigid. This categorized this was the result of academic abstractions of the rise of various factions, some in some cases abetted by foreign elements. Whether it was Marxism, whether it was oil lobby money from the Muslim world. But they created these rigid hierarchies and intellectual abstractions which American foreign policy has been crippled by for way too long. Now, our various misadventures over the last generation have largely been the result of these abstractions. So President Trump coming in and shaking them up is very vital. But at the same time, much like President Reagan, he's bound to be in conflict with staffers. And that's very much an issue [00:25:00] at the Pentagon, because the Pentagon is increasingly being staffed up at various desks by people who are aligned with the Koch brothers, Koch brothers. At this point, they're pretty much one now that's actually running things. Charles Koch, who has run various organizations, largely destructive. I mean, they've done some good things in the area of deregulation, but beyond that, domestically, they've advocated pro crime policies. Policies that effectively helped

enable the crime wave we see today. And on foreign policy, they largely promote the same agenda as the left does now. Yes, the Koch brothers. Koch brothers are libertarian.

[00:25:38] **Daniel Greenfield:** The thing is that libertarians tend to align with leftists in a number of areas. They see an alignment with leftists when it comes to what they consider to be limiting government power. So when it came to enabling criminals to rampage around the country, well, the Charles Koch was comfortable getting together with George Soros and some other leftists to say, you know, we should actually [00:26:00] enable criminals because it's the government that's the problem. And on foreign policy libertarians have largely been pushing the same foreign policy as Barack Obama did. There isn't that much daylight there. And there's so little daylight that Charles Koch got together with George Soros to create something called the Quincy Institute for Responsible Statecraft. One of whose veterans is currently serving in the Pentagon under the administration. Unfortunately, a whole lot of people from various organizations, foreign policy organizations, whether it's Quincy, whether it's stand together, which was the one of the various incarnations of the Coke machine. Dan Caldwell, who's currently really playing a key advisory role in the Pentagon, came out of Americans for prosperity. There was one organization that was tied also to Senator Rand Paul, again funded by Koch brothers money. So in total, we have about 4 or 5 organizations [00:27:00] all funded by Koch money, some interacting, actually, with Soros and the left and the people who have come out of there have a particular point of view and a point of view that they share with the left is that America is the villain, that our enemies oppose us and hate us, not because they themselves are bad, but because our foreign policy is bad, but because we've been abusive imperialists and they want to stand together with our various enemies and dismantle our foreign policy, this is a kind of a tone we've been seeing in various forms on the not only on the left anymore, but increasingly on elements of the right.

[00:27:37] **Daniel Greenfield:** We tend to see this with articulated with Tucker Carlson, with some others, and some of them stop at Russia, others actually advance forward. And they say, well, China, our problems with China are also due to are also due to our foreign policy. And that includes, by the way, some of the people in the Pentagon now, including a fellow named Byers, who's now sitting in the Southeast Asia desk [00:28:00] at the Pentagon, who go ahead. And they say that if America stops actually threatening

to support Taiwan, if we stop supporting our various allies in Asia, we'll stop having tensions with China. And really, we should stop complaining about Chinese trade abuses, because really, it's been an incredible miracle, as they say. It's an incredible miracle because it lifted millions of Chinese peasants out of poverty, which is great for the Chinese peasants, perhaps.

[00:28:27] **Daniel Greenfield:** Or no. For people who know about the history of Maoism, perhaps not so great. It's certainly not any good for America. And its foreign policy is not America first, though it's being disguised, it's being smuggled into. It's being called America first. And it's not America first. America first is actually putting American interests first. This is really distinct from that because the position is not America first. It's not that we, the rest of the world should serve our interests. It's not even isolationism. Rather, it's the idea that American foreign policy has been the obstacle in the way of international trade relations. So for the left, [00:29:00] the great agenda in foreign policy is multilateralism. It's the UN. It's all these foreign or international organizations, and American foreign policy needs to take a back seat. You know, in the Obama era, it meant leading from behind and get out of the way so we can have all these international organizations, these globalist Boost organizations create a new order. And that's, you know, what somebody like Jeff Sachs would advocate. And there's a reason why Sachs was a UN official is so popular on with Tucker Carlson and some of that crowd. The libertarian one is a minor variant on that, and they prioritize international trade relations. So they believe American foreign policy is interfering with international trade relations. So they oppose any kind of tariffs, any kind of crackdown on China.

[00:29:43] **Daniel Greenfield:** They believe that they're not prioritizing the UN or traditional globalist organizations that are in the realm of policy, things like USA. Instead, they're prioritizing international trade. And anything that gets in the way of international trade is bad. And American foreign policy needs to accommodate [00:30:00] that. And this is obviously, again, as I've said, not remotely America first. Now, when it comes to Israel this has been a long standing issue because our foreign policy in the Middle East was originally shaped by oil lobby companies. And these companies prioritize the agendas of Saudi Arabia. They prioritize the agendas of Arab Muslim countries. And they insisted as long as the oil kept flowing, we should go along with whatever it was those countries wanted. And we did that. We allowed Saudi Arabia

even to nationalize our oil industry allow them to buy up much of our foreign policy apparatus. And as long as the oil kept flowing, it was considered to be just fine. This held true pretty much throughout the Cold War. Then the Cold War is over. We kind of go into the wasteland a bit in parts of the 90s, and we really start having to reckon with Islamic terrorism as its own distinct entity. We try to ignore that in various ways, as much as we can. Once 911 happens, we can no longer properly ignore it.

[00:30:58] **Daniel Greenfield:** And the modern era [00:31:00] arrives with everything that came with it. Now, the basic problem is that the realists still insist that American foreign policy is the cause of most of the problems, and that if we just make ourselves small, we make various concessions, we make deals with Iran, we make deals with Muslim countries around the world, and we sell out Israel because of course, Israel is seen as the problem, not the solution. Then everything is going to be great. And that's still the zombie foreign policy that the apparatus offers us, much like it's the same foreign policy apparatus that the Obama people offer us, as they did under Biden, because they don't really believe that America needs to project its strength abroad. And President Trump is not really aligned with these various paradigms. People call them, for example, an isolationist, or they accuse him of being a war monger. Neither is true. President Trump is treating each problem individually, and he's applying common sense to those various problems, which is absolutely shocking. If your entire life's work is to maintain a paradigm and make sure that everything conforms with this abstract paradigm. [00:32:00] Thus, President Trump's approach to China and Russia or other places might be different, but he largely operates from a position of American strength rather than American weakness. And both the left and the libertarians absolutely hate that because they think American strength is the whole problem.

[00:32:14] **Daniel Greenfield:** They think government. Libertarians think that American government is the whole problem. They think that American strength is the whole problem. Bring that together and you have the worst foreign policy imaginable. So it's a major concern that the Pentagon, which is supposed to be the arena that is actually going to project American strength, that has the ability to do all sorts of back door diplomacy and has in recent years, somewhat problematically, as we've seen under Biden and under Trump's first administration, can actually go out of their way to undermine the president. And hopefully this time around, President Trump has the generals. He has the people around him who actually are making who actually are

going to support his foreign policy. But it's a worrying situation when Charles Coke and some of his people who are libertarians, not America, firsters go in and they actually are able to set foreign policy with, at least within and defense [00:33:00] policy in ways that actually undermine that agenda, because America needs to project strength against China. And right now it has people in there who don't believe that to be the case. It needs to project strength in the Middle East. And they don't believe that to be the case either. The fundamental fallacy of the left in its foreign policy has always been that a weakness is better than strength. Leading from behind actually will keep America out of conflicts, and that is absolutely not the case, as we saw under Obama.

[00:33:25] **Daniel Greenfield:** Instead, that kind of policy unleashed conflict. And President Trump, paradoxically, for some of these people, has actually been the man to project strength. And if you project strength, you actually avoid conflicts. You avoid wars. And President Trump's ability to supersede that supersede these foreign policy abstractions in many cases, probably because he's not even aware of them, is really vital for maintaining America's interest. And for actually having a president in charge was not just beholden to some establishment, to some think tank series of think tanks, but who actually looks at a problem and says, I see what the problem [00:34:00] is. I see everything that we've done in the past has not worked. Here's what we need to do to solve it and to actually fully articulate that foreign policy, that defense policy. President Trump needs people around him who actually are responsive, who are flexible, who are able to look past their various political biases, these boxes that they've been living in for their entire careers. And go ahead and say, I was not expecting this. As you might respond to President Trump's press conference, I was not expecting this. It's completely out of the blue. But you know what? Looking at this, what the person is saying makes sense. And this is something we should explore.

[00:34:36] **Frank Gaffney:** Thank you Daniel. I couldn't agree more. And I appreciate again, as always, your clarity on these issues. I did want to you mentioned John Andrew Byers in the context of a Coke apparatchik in the Pentagon with responsibility, I believe, for South and South Asia affairs. Apparently not China [00:35:00] specifically, but it's obviously a big factor in that neighborhood. But also Dan Caldwell, there's going to be the deputy to General Keith Kellogg working the Ukraine Russia negotiations portfolio and also as another deputy assistant secretary of defense for the Mideast, Michael Dimino. Yeah, as people with these sorts of problematic ties and I sure completely

you're concerned, as I know does David Wurmser, that the president might find himself subverted by such folks who, interestingly enough, I don't think you mentioned this, but you know, it bears repeating. If you did, he explicitly said Donald Trump on the 15th of January in one of his truth social posts, that he did not want Coke personnel in his administration. [00:36:00] They need not apply. It was pretty much his turn of phrase. And yet he now finds three of them in, in key jobs. And I hope that what we're talking about here, and why it is so obvious that these individuals and their political base in the Koch empire are simply not America first. They call it restraint, by the way. And I think maybe it would be useful to have a little conversation about this. David, you've written about this, as am I, and I think Daniel as well. What does the meaning of restraint mean at this moment in time in American foreign policy? David.

[00:36:41] **David Wurmser:** Restraint. It's sort of abused right now. It's a code word for not engaging anywhere. And worse, it's code word for blaming America first for why we even have to engage. There are some who argue that it's [00:37:00] our aggressive policies toward China over the last century is the reason why the Chinese Communist Party hates us rather than the essence of the Communist Party, which is anchored to a global revolution and believes their system needs to defeat the West and establish global communism. Similarly, with the Middle East, you see policies advocated under the framework of restraint that say, well, we wouldn't have a problem with Iran if it weren't for Israel or in the very least, we wouldn't have a problem with Iran if we didn't go into Iraq in 2003. The problem with all that is that these ideologies are inherently anti-Western. If you look at what Khomeini said before he came back from Paris and took over in 1979, there's a fundamental belief in [00:38:00] the conquest of the entire world that's embedded in his thought. And, of course, like with the with the Nazis and like with the communists, the Soviet communists wherever there's a global ideological struggle that seeks to destroy the West, they run up against American power. And then they try to cast this as the Americans are the aggressors, and that they use that in order to disarm the Americans from doing what is natural for any country. When you're threatened and you see somebody rising who wants to kill you, says he wants to kill you and is preparing to kill you that you actually start taking defensive measures and occasionally even preemptive measures to stop him.

[00:38:46] **David Wurmser:** So this whole thing of saying that the United States has engendered the hatred of itself, rather than the fact that we as the most powerful

country in the free world and more, we are really the culmination [00:39:00] of the 2000 years of Western civilization, which includes Rome, Athens and Jerusalem. We are the embodiment of that, both in terms of ideas, power and civilizational strength, and as a result, they understand that there is nobody you need to attack more than the United States, and you do that through its most important allies. So in many ways has become a tool for our enemies to say shut down. Don't attack us. We're not your enemy. When? In point of fact, that is exactly what they are. And that is exactly not what they want us to understand. They want us to understand that they, our enemies, want us to believe that our enemies are not really our enemies, especially if we behave nicely. That was the essence of the America First crowd. I mean, the I'm sorry, blame America first crowd of the 1970s that culminated in the [00:40:00] Carter administration and the collective policy of apology. And it was exactly what the Reagan revolution was a response to. And unfortunately, I think there's a lot of well-intentioned people who don't want to engage as heavily in many parts of the world. And I understand that. I, I personally think that the United States needs to reduce its footprint in the Middle East considerably, but to do so, it needs to ensure that its enemies are weak and its allies are strong.

[00:40:32] **David Wurmser:** Otherwise, we're simply ceding an entire part of the world to our enemies, who have objectives that are unlimited. They're not limited to the region. They will come after us. So it all depends on strong allies, and it all depends on weak enemies. And that's where we get to what really is emerging as the Trump Doctrine, which is let's have our allies carry more of the burden, let's have them more robust. But to do that, we need to [00:41:00] unleash them. We need to make sure that they are not restrained by us. So our restraint is only enabled by their being given the initiative and the freedom not to be restrained if necessary. So, again, I think it's tapping into a genuine American sentiment of fatigue with parts of the world that, frankly, are too abysmal for Americans to soil themselves with in many ways. But unfortunately, we have global power interests and global economic interests. And the structure of the world relies on our power. So we have to find a way to square that circle. And that's through our allies. So the restrainers, unfortunately, I think, are serving the agenda of really our enemies. Although I agree with the idea that we should be very prudent and exercise restraint whenever we apply our power. But again, [00:42:00] it really relies there for on strong allies. And when you look at these appointees, they do not believe in strong allies. They believe in trying to appease our enemies at the expense of our allies.

And that's a that's a prescription not for restraint, but collapse in an endless war that then draws us in.

[00:42:20] **Frank Gaffney:** If you want to think about endless wars, look no further than what the Sharia supremacists have been waging against the Judeo-Christian world for whatever it is, 1400 years or so. That is an endless war, and the only way you can end an endless war against implacable foes, as David mentioned, is defeating them. Otherwise, it's surrender and they will have their way with you. David. One other thought you suggested that restraint has become a... for other [00:43:00] things, not engaging, being among them. I really think it becomes more and more clear. Passage of time that what these folks have in mind is having it be a euphemism for retreat. And if we don't counter it, as you've indicated, with support for allies who are engaged and powerful and decisively advancing our interests as well as theirs as I think is the case with Israel, it makes this abject retreat, which is Robert Spencer indicated is emboldening of our enemies. Daniel, I wanted to ask you about Iran. In this context the president announced on the occasion of his meeting with Benjamin Netanyahu that he had just reimposed the maximum pressure campaign. That was a very important part of his [00:44:00] first term. Could you talk a little bit about that, and in particular, a question that I've discussed with David elsewhere? Do we really have time for the maximum pressure campaign to operate, or is what's needed now really? Intervention, not necessarily by us, but by Israel to help bring about an end to the regime into Iran, enabled, obviously, by the people of that country. But anything short of that is unlikely to actually stop the imminent acquisition of nuclear capabilities there.

[00:44:41] **Daniel Greenfield:** Fortunately, I think the time when maximum pressure would have been effective passed some time back. The results of the 2020 election, or for that matter, the entire Obama administration, altered that balance fundamentally, I think. Iran is preparing, according to reports, to deploy some sort of nuclear [00:45:00] weapon just as a demonstration, it's going to be blamed, I'm sure, on President Trump. But the reality is it was the three terms of the Obama administration that made this possible the infiltration of Iranians of Iran, Iranian agents into the political system, particularly among the Democratic Party and our foreign policy establishment. So we have very much a ticking clock if we actually want to prevent a breakout whatever that actually would involve. I think, first of all, the United States could empower Israel to go ahead and do what's needed. Empower the nations of the Abraham Accords to do

what's needed. But in the larger sense, if we actually want to stop an Iranian nuclear bomb, then the United States would actually have to take action. We're the only ones, really, who have the larger capability to go ahead and smash that program, because Iran has built a very complicated and complicated in a very well shielded nuclear program. The result is [00:46:00] that we are looking at a scenario in which not just Iran will have nuclear weapons, but the networks of Islamic terrorists around the world that are linked to Iran will have access to nuclear capabilities. This is a clock that we began ticking when China obtained nuclear capabilities. Pass it on to North Korea.

[00:46:19] **Daniel Greenfield:** Pass it on to Pakistan. And Iran is really the hub of a lot of Islamic terrorist groups around the world, beyond just Hamas and Hezbollah. The conflict with the Houthis would be a good deal uglier if the Houthis had nuclear capability. Likewise, the various other terrorist groups that Iran has relationships with. The head of al Qaeda is currently located in Tehran and has been for quite some time. Iran's links to September 11th. One of those things that are not really discussed very much. So there are networks of Islamic terror groups around the world that are linked to Iran. If Iran gets nuclear capability, where it's most likely to do is to pass some of it on to those groups, allowing for plausible deniability, because that is really how it operates. So unless [00:47:00] we actually move aggressively to checkmate and there are lots of things that can be done. Iran's oil shipments are obviously a major vector for bringing in money, but really there are two options. One of those is to directly interdict the program. The other is to aggressively push for regime change right now. Either of those are options. The United States does have the capabilities to do them. I don't know, that's something we're actually going to do. And if not, then we need to look at the consequences down the road, because the consequences down the road are that we're not just going to be dealing with terrorist groups, we're going to be dealing with terrorist groups that have access to nuclear materials.

[00:47:36] **Frank Gaffney:** David, I wanted to explore another rising power in the region and its implications for everything else that we've just been discussing. And that would be Turkey and its support for the Muslim Brotherhood, its support for Al-Julani in Syria. It's [00:48:00] it's clear ambitions under Recep Tayyip Erdogan to reestablish the Ottoman Empire in some form or fashion. Its threats and others in its orbit, like Azerbaijan to finish the job begun in World War One of wiping out Armenia's Christians. I mean, this is a nation that is obviously a prime example of Sharia supremacism

enabled in part with funding from Qatar, the prime financier of so many of the jihadis around the world. What are your thoughts about the regional arrangements that we're talking about here, the kind of assault on Western civilization of [00:49:00] which Turkey has been a very prime part now for years in Europe the former Constantinople, Istanbul and other places.

[00:49:12] **David Wurmser:** Yeah. Turkey in this neo Ottoman project, which is really a neo caliphate under sultan Erdogan has been really the guiding principle of Turkish policy for quite some time, a decade or so or two. And it really is very dangerous now, Turkey's been very limited in the power that it had to project it. It certainly has a big military, but it looked around itself and it had the Greeks on one side, it had the Russians to the north, it had the Iranians to the east, and it had an Iranian proxy structure to the south, and ultimately the Israelis. So they really were limited in kind of bottled in. They tried they tried desperately [00:50:00] right after the earthquake in not earthquake. I'm sorry. The bomb in and it was really tantamount to a bomb in Beirut harbor. Yes. It was the storage of materials, but those materials were essentially bomb making materials that Hezbollah had stored there. And that blew up Beirut in about four years ago. They tried to come in after that using humanitarian structures to try to establish their control over Lebanese politics. And they failed. So, so they had been failing until recently. And the reason why, until recently they failed was that the Israelis essentially destroyed the Iranian structures that held up the entire proxy network that that boxed in the Turks from the south.

[00:50:54] **David Wurmser:** So the Turks and their allies, which are remnants of al Qaeda, Iraq and [00:51:00] ISIS and jihadis from all over Central Asia, essentially swarmed into a vacuum. They now imagine that that they now are the tip of this Islamic volcano that has finally found its sea legs and is now going to expand and resume the expansion of the Islamic empire that was left off a thousand years ago and eventually sweep to finally their great victory over the world. This is really the embodiment of the ideology they have. And this, of course, means that they have this imagination of tremendous aggressiveness to everyone around Them including Israel. Israel also has Hamas and Hamas. I think we have to understand. Hamas was a proxy of Iran, but it was also a proxy of Erdogan and his Muslim [00:52:00] Brotherhood ideology. And it was sort of a schizophrenic organization. Accordingly with the destruction of the Iranian axis the Hamas is now essentially it shifted already. It is now a proxy of Erdogan, not as

much a proxy anymore of Iran. So we have to readjust our thinking in those terms. Erdogan's sweeping his forces through his Hayat Tahrir al-Sham, the al Qaeda remnant is into Syria brings the Turkish military dangerously close to Israel.

[00:52:43] **David Wurmser:** And if with this, defense agreement that's emerging between Syria and Turkey emerges fully. We'll see the basing of Turkish troops in Syria very close to Israel, which brings Israel in direct conflict with an imperial country [00:53:00] that seeks to eliminate it, which is ultimately what Erdogan still believes it's part of the Ottoman provinces and should be should be part of the Ottoman Empire. So this is very dangerous, and the Israelis have to start organizing for that. The problem is that Iran is not finished yet, and this only adds to the urgency of finally bringing the Iranian problem to a full collapse and conclusion, because it's still a wounded cobra and you don't turn your back on a wounded cobra. But Israel has to move on. It has to start preparing for the next level of threat. Now, as far as the Christian element, actually, the Christians in the region are more threatened by Turkey than they were by Iran. Iran was never pro-Christian, but it understood how to use the Christian communities of the Middle East for their gains. So you saw especially Greek Orthodox Christians aligning with [00:54:00] Hezbollah, Christians in Syria, at times aligning with the Alawites and so forth.

[00:54:05] **David Wurmser:** They were ultimately on the in the target crosshairs, as every other non-Muslim minority was. But there were these tactical alliances, or at least tactical tolerances. You will see no such tolerance of Christianity under Turkish Islamist imperial expansion. Part of it is also that the rise in Damascus of an Arab Islamist government that believes in the purity of the early caliphs and that if Islam only returns to that purity, it will again resume its global expansion. Well, that early purity anchors to the Umayyad Caliphate, which existed in the first hundred years of Islam, 150 years of Islam, and therefore the retaking of [00:55:00] Damascus, which is which was the capital of the Umayyad Caliphate. Retaking Damascus inherently symbolizes the reemergence of that Salafi, that early Islamic caliph crowd, which then invites or really symbolizes the resumption of Islamic expansion globally. So I don't think you can get around the wedding of Islam to Damascus and Islamist movement to Damascus as anything but quite frightening and dangerous. And of course, the first ones in the crosshairs are the Christian communities in Syria and next to Syria that they that they

consider part of Syria, namely Lebanon. So I think what you're seeing is emerging Turkish assault first and foremost on Lebanon.

[00:55:51] **Frank Gaffney:** Thank you. As you're speaking, I'm mulling the proposition that should Turkey put itself in a position where [00:56:00] it invites some kind of preemption by Israel with its bases in Syria, whether it's moving quite directly towards a conflict with Israel. I wonder whether we would find ourselves in a position where the relevant provisions of the NATO alliance would be invoked as an attack against one attack against all. Any thoughts on that, Daniel?

[00:56:30] **Daniel Greenfield:** We're facing a tremendous, transformative period. The question is ultimately how we'll handle this. You know, there are some people who say that it's too late. I don't believe that to be the case. What I do believe, though, is that we're going to be seeing some serious debates about what we need to do going forward. And I think it's important to actually have those arguments and win those arguments. Under the past administrations, there was really no room for arguments under [00:57:00] Biden, under Obama, there were no debates. Now that we actually have an openness to being able to debate those things, we need to win those debates, and we need to actually be able to move forward on transforming on big transformative projects that would actually be out of the box and change our relationship to the world.

[00:57:20] **Frank Gaffney:** This would be fascinating because there are lots of reasons why. It seems to me Turkey's role as a member of NATO has outlived the reality of its conduct that this prospect is another one that should be should be factored in. There's no mechanism in place at the moment, of course, to remove Member nation from data. But one of the things I think the administration is going to have to think hard about is what do you do about Turkey? And the president is, as has been noted you know, has been [00:58:00] engaged, of course, with the Turks in the past had a, I think, a fairly positive attitude towards Erdogan personally as a strong figure but also crack the whip with him memorably over Pastor Andrew Brunson and the liberation of that that Christian, to your point, David, who was convicted or being prosecuted, at least for evangelizing among the Muslim population in Turkey. And it's a reminder of both what Trump can do in that case with tariffs and, and other economic measures and I think arguably needs to do when it comes to the ambitions of the Turks, clearly on display at the moment. I did want to ask one final question [00:59:00] of, I think you both, if I can

could you discuss a little bit the implications should we, in fact, see the president's vision driven? Let's be clear on the basis that he's correctly assessing the current situation in Gaza as uninhabitable or, as he put it, a demolition zone, that there will be outmigration from Gaza by current population of the place. What does that mean? Given the nature of that populace, given particular its indoctrination by for decades and fealty to Hamas, not everybody, obviously, but many of those in Gaza today. What would it mean for Egypt? What would it mean for Jordan? What would it mean for Syria or [01:00:00] others where they might wind up going perhaps temporarily, perhaps permanently? And how should we proceed if the answer to that question is it could be quite problematic. Daniel, let me start with you.

[01:00:14] **Daniel Greenfield:** As a practical matter, Jordan is already much of it is already composed in practice, if not legally, of some of the same people that we call Palestinians have. Quite a few of them are aligned with the Muslim Brotherhood already. Egypt has a major Muslim Brotherhood problem, and it seems like they're increasingly conceding to them. If you look at polls in those countries, the level of support for terrorism, as long as it's not ISIS, as long as it's not directed internally at Muslims, is already high. So the idea, I think really the idea that has taken hold, that the Palestinians are some sort of unique entity, that their support for terrorism is uniquely bad, is not really supported by any evidence, including polls and surveys. Yes, they are more likely to support terrorists and yes, they are somewhat uniquely, directly [01:01:00] governed by terrorists, though considering the current state in Syria that even that's not so unique in the region. Realistically speaking, there's there has been this perception that because they're governed by terrorism, they are somehow worse than any other people in the Middle East. And that's not really true. It's the kind of the fact of the norm of the Arab Muslim world. And as a reality, you do see hundreds of thousands of some of those same people already living around the region.

[01:01:24] **Daniel Greenfield:** And I don't have the exact numbers now, but in the past, there have been hundreds of thousands. If not, I think over half a million of them scattered, living and working around the Middle East in places like Saudi Arabia, Kuwait. Before they were kicked out, there were about 280, about 200,000 of them. So they're ready and they're about, I think, 80,000 of them now in Kuwait now. So the basic reality is that it's not going to fundamentally change anything. Obviously, it's the organization itself that's the problem. So when the PLO migrated from Jordan to

Lebanon, they brought wars with them. If any Arab Muslim country is stupid enough to allow terrorist [01:02:00] groups to function, allow them to have terrorist leaderships, well, they're going to have problems, but that's really on them. And the Muslim Brothers, which Hamas is a component of, is already highly active in Jordan and in Egypt and in other places. So it's not bringing in anything really new to the table. We're already talking about a population that's already dispersed there. We're talking about a terrorist group that is already present there, moving from one country to another.

[01:02:23] **Frank Gaffney:** Thank you. David. Your thoughts? Do we need to be concerned?

[01:02:26] **David Wurmser:** I do have a slightly different dimension to it, which is the Palestinian leadership. And by this I don't mean just Hamas. I mean the PLO. I mean Arab nationalism. I mean, Hajj Amin al-Husseini, going back to the 20s is a cult of death. And it is inculcated the Palestinian people to become, as a people a cult of death. And that is why, wherever they go, there has been destabilization and radicalization. And I would argue that part of the abyss [01:03:00] of Middle Eastern thought beyond the Palestinians is a function of the infection of the cult of death from the Palestinian leadership, which, of course, was imposed to some extent on the Palestinians by the by these external schemes. Whether it's the Nazis or the Soviets or whatever. Bottom line, though, now we have a 4 or 5 generational cult of death, that there is no solution to Solution to that. Without loss of agency and any Israeli occupation of 4 million people, 5 million people is going to be an endless war for them of trying to suppress a population that that that is in an imbued with this cult of death. So I see no way out of this other than through the president's plan, which is the removal of Palestinians from the territory. Breaking [01:04:00] their agency as a political force over themselves, integrating them into a new structures of education and societal existence. And then finally breaking this now really unbreakable if you keep them in one place in Israel or in Gaza or Judea and Samaria, if you keep them there, there's no way to break the cycle. It has to be done by removing it and breaking them into various communal parts around the world, where they're exposed to education systems and indoctrination systems that are not just this continuation of this murderous cult of death that has now defined Palestinian nationalism.

[01:04:49] **Frank Gaffney:** It's such a brilliant and critical point, which I think to conclude our briefing today, I think taking away from it, on the one hand, the [01:05:00] idea that this is a cult of death that has at its core, the destruction of Judeo-Christian civilization and the opportunity afforded by the necessary demolition of Gaza made necessary by Hamas and its operations inside Civilian homes even, and businesses and hospitals and mosques and the like. Having created conditions under which the president quite rightly is saying it is an uninhabitable place, and these folks must go elsewhere. I pray you're right, Daniel, that the difference that it will make in some of the places to which they might go is immaterial, but I certainly agree with both [01:06:00] of you that there is no prospect for an improvement of the lives of those folks, let alone peace for Israel and the discouragement, if not the enduring, defeat of those who seek to inflict on not only Israel. Mass destruction, but on us as well. And I think others in the non-Muslim world. So this brings us to the end of our time together. For the moment, I want to thank Doctor David Wurmser Robert Spencer, Daniel Greenfield the indispensable bastion who has made all of this possible and the rest of the Victory Coalition team that has begun to try to provide [01:07:00] in a real time, wherever possible. And we hope informed, authoritatively informed and creative way the prescriptions for moving towards victory, which is, in the end, the only solution to the kinds of threats that we've been we're discussing here today. And something that I am more grateful than I can adequately express to God before everyone else, but to Donald Trump and to Bibi Netanyahu that had found in this moment a partnership that we hope can, in fact, ensure victory for those in the West who seek life and value it in humankind rather than those who seek death and wish to inflict it on [01:08:00] us all. Thank you to you all for attending and for passing this video on. We are grateful to you for your support for the Victory Coalition and its work. God bless you.