

TRANSCRIPT

A Victory Coalition and Israel365Action Virtual Briefing

Trump's Clear-Eyed 2016 Warning About the Threat Posed by the "Radical Islamic" Ideology Called Sharia

The Urgent Need for a Second Opinion on Doing Deals with Its Adherents Nine Years On
President Trump Deserves – and Requires – a Second Opinion on Empowering Sharia-supremacism

Frank Gaffney with Dr. David Wurmser and Rabbi Pesach Wolicki

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Media File: Webinar_Sharia_supremacism.wmv

BEGIN TRANSCRIPT:

Dede Laugesen: [00:00:11] Hello, everyone. Thanks for joining us today. I'm Dede Laugesen for the Victory Coalition and Israel 365 action. We encourage you to visit VictoryCo.org for information on new programs, access to videos of our past webinars, and tons of other very valuable content. Follow us on X at Co4Victory. Our moderator today is Frank Gaffney. Frank is the president of the Institute for the American Future and a member of the Victory Coalition. He is host of Securing America on Real America's Voice Network.

Frank Gaffney: [00:00:51] Welcome, everyone, to this virtual briefing. We consider it an emergency briefing by the Victory [00:01:00] Coalition and our partners at Israel. 365 action led by its executive director, Rabbi Pesek Willkie. We anticipate he will be joining us, but he is not with us at the moment, but we will turn to him when he arrives. We are going to be talking about the state of play at the moment, vis a vis the Middle East, with respect specifically to several initiatives that are very much front and center in the region, and most especially Israeli and US policy making circles. We're talking about the prospect of deals with Hamas, a cease fire that is being rooted at the moment in the conflict there, [00:02:00] as well as some kind of deal that would make permanent the cease fire in Iran that was announced by President Trump at the end of what he called the 12 day war. These are subjects that have been very much the topic of a high level

conversation in recent days here in Washington, D.C., where Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel has been visiting with the president and his senior subordinates, members of Congress and others. He as best I can tell, is very much in the throes of the negotiations involving Israel and the relationship between the United States and Israel in the management of these [00:03:00] negotiations, and whatever might come from them is, is very much, I think, top of mind for the Prime Minister and his traveling party.

Frank Gaffney: [00:03:12] I wanted to share with you just some opening thoughts, and then I will bring up our colleague, Doctor David Wormser and introduce him properly. But just by way of background it seems to me that one of the most important contributions made to this topic certainly at the level of someone who at the time was a candidate for president, has gone on to be elected to the office not once, but at least twice. Some would argue three times that would be Donald J. Trump. I'm speaking specifically of a speech that [00:04:00] he made in Youngstown, Ohio, on the 15th of August, 2016. At the time, he was the Republican presidential nominee, had come out of the convention and was in the final stages of what proved to be surprising to some a successful run for the white House last November. The speech was about the differences that he was drawing between himself and the Democratic candidate for president, his rival, Hillary Clinton. And it was a very thoughtful very carefully articulated presentation of the Republican nominee's Views on a central issue of the day one that is, [00:05:00] if anything. Arguably even more important now. And that is what the President to be called a radical Islamic terrorism. That was the ideology, in his view, that animated the attacks that had been taking place notably, of course, on nine over 11 and then in a variety of places around the world as we fought with those who perpetrated the attack and their allies.

Frank Gaffney: [00:05:42] We were told in that Youngstown speech that this was not simply, you know, random individuals acting out there was something that was animating them. My [00:06:00] own personal view is that it's best described as Sharia, the Islamic operating code, if you will, that has been drawn from and been the path, if you will, or the way the literal meaning of Sharia for generation upon generation of Muslims since Muhammad's time, which has at its core the idea that it must be made dominant worldwide and that all adherence to Islam, faithful adherence to Islam, must adhere specifically to Sharia injunction, that they engage in jihad to bring about that triumph of Islamic rule. Why is all this important? [00:07:00] Because the thrust of that

speech. The critique of the Clinton candidacy. The contrast that was drawn between the former secretary of State and her views and policy approaches, and that of the Republican candidate for president was really rooted in this idea that when you're dealing with people who embrace in this case, believe that they are called by Allah to practice Sharia an ideological program. This is a very different challenge than dealing with people who are you know, motivated by other considerations. Pecuniary territory [00:08:00] for riches of other kinds. This is a very formidable force. And I think that is especially true of irrespective of whether they are Shiite or Sunni Muslims. Those that embrace Sharia are called to act on its various injunctions, including jihad. I hasten to add. Fortunately, not all Muslims do embrace Sharia.

Frank Gaffney: [00:08:42] In particular in this country. I think it's fair to say that large numbers of them have come here to get away from it, and don't want to either be constrained to live under it's well, totalitarian and in some cases outright [00:09:00] barbaric, sort of seventh century nostrums, let alone impose it violently or otherwise on anybody else. That's the good news. The bad news is those are people who have a name that's applied to them by the faithful Muslims, the Sharia compliant ones. And that is they're apostates. And that is a capital offense under Islam. And consequently, a great many Muslims who don't want any part of Sharia are keeping their head down. And they're not saying such blasphemous things, let alone overtly practicing them, which makes this problem the greater, because while there are people that are natural allies within the Muslim community, they are very, very much the majority of them at least, [00:10:00] are feeling very constrained by the threat of harm to them personally, their families, their businesses, what have you. Should they be deemed apostates? The point is, and the reason that we're having this briefing on an urgent basis, is if you believe that you can strike deals with people who embrace such an ideology, who feel especially called to it by their God, you may well find yourself confronting what has happened throughout the history of Islam, and that is that those deals turn out to be not Permanent ceasefires, let alone truces or, you know, cessation of hostilities on a permanent basis, but rather.

Frank Gaffney: [00:11:00] A [00:11:00] temporary suspension of hostilities so that those who are particularly at the losing end of it at the moment the Muslims in many cases use the time available as a result of the cease fire to regroup to rearm and then to reengage under more favorable circumstances for the purposes of achieving a decisive

victory. So we're going to talk with two of our leading lights on all of these issues in the course of this briefing about how that plays into the moment we find ourselves in with active negotiations Underway with the Iranian regime and with the leadership of Hamas. Indirect in both cases at the moment, but very much involving both. The [00:12:00] president of the United States and his senior subordinates, as well as Prime Minister Netanyahu and the other parties on the Islamic side. Rabbi Pesach Wolicki is the executive director, as I've mentioned, of Israel 365 action. He is a columnist for The Jerusalem Post. He is the co-host of a terrific podcast, Shoulder to Shoulder. He has been intimately involved, both personally with family members, involved in various aspects of the hostilities that were thrust upon Israel after October 7th. And in the days since, in helping the rest of us understand what exactly is going on and most especially, I believe, doing a formidable job of truth telling about what is not going on. And we're anxious to get his thoughts. At this moment.

Pesach Wolicki: [00:12:52] I'd like to take a step back from the events that we're looking at and talk [00:13:00] about the bigger conceptual mistake that I believe that not only President Trump seems to be making, but that I believe that all Westerners have been making with regard to Islam in the Middle East for decades. And it expresses itself differently from the left and from the right. But it's really all one mistake. About 30 years ago, it's almost exactly 30 years ago. It was in late 1995. I was asked to accompany an elderly Jewish philosopher to a lecture because I was living in Jerusalem at the time, and Emil Haim. And there might be some people on this call who heard of him. He was a Jewish philosopher who passed away in 2003. He was a Holocaust survivor who had survived a concentration camp and then moved to Canada, eventually became a very. Eminent professor of philosophy, and he was a man of the left. He was part. He was one of the leading theologians of the Reformed Jewish movement, which is really a left wing branch of Judaism. But [00:14:00] towards the end of his life he politically moved to the right, and he moved to the right in the early 90s due to the Oslo Accords, when the whole quote unquote peace process began with Yasser Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin and Bill Clinton, we all remember that Emile Fakenham, who at the time was retired and living in Israel, was very opposed. And being a part of the being one of the leading, you know, intellectuals of the left. The left didn't like that.

Pesach Wolicki: [00:14:26] And he sort of found himself politically homeless. And it was around that time that a synagogue, about an hour and a half drive from Jerusalem,

had invited him to speak, and he was too elderly to travel on his own. And I was asked to get a cab with him and ride in both directions. So I had a time to spend with this eminent Jewish philosopher and Holocaust survivor. And I asked him in the car, we talked about a lot of things, and one of the things I asked him just point blank, like, why, you know, why are you so opposed to the Oslo Accords? I was opposed to them. I was part of the protest [00:15:00] movement against them. I've always been on the right, but I wanted to know why he was so opposed. And he said, listen, the answer is very simple. He said all of the mistakes that Westerners make about the Middle East are all one mistake, and the mistake they make is that they believe that that economics is more important than ideology to people because it's more important to them. And so it's a bit reductionist. His answer, admittedly, to, you know, to put it all on one on one simple issue like that, but there's a lot of wisdom in what he said. And that, you know, we just saw President Trump right after we destroyed the nuclear facilities in Iran but stopped short of toppling the regime that was as close to being toppled as it had ever been. We stopped short of it. And Donald Trump not only not only did we stop short of it, but [00:16:00] but President Trump was proudly said that he stopped short of it.

Pesach Wolicki: [00:16:05] He proudly said that he that we could have killed Khomeini, but we did not, and then went ahead and declared that Iran can still sell its oil to the Chinese Communist Party. And the reason that he gave was because they've been hit really hard and they need to rebuild their country. And then we go over to Syria, where President Trump is doing this dance with the recent ISIS al Qaeda graduate, Ashira Al Jilani. And he's doing the dance with him, assuming that economic incentives and incentives for all kinds of economic Normalization could take this jihadist and lure him in to the family of nations. And I don't know what's in this Al Giuliani's heart. And I don't know if he's now suddenly giving up on his jihadist ways. I have no idea. I can't I can't read his mind. But from our perspective, from the perspective of President Trump, what [00:17:00] we see here is a belief along the lines of what Falkenhayn said 30 years ago, which is that because deep down, Westerners value life and Westerners value prosperity and freedom, and they value these things, they believe that really at the heart of it all, that's what these people really want. And they want power and they want money, and they don't really take the ideology all that seriously. They take it seriously on the surface, but they don't really take it seriously. And this is a mistake that Franklin Delano Roosevelt did not make in World War Two.

Pesach Wolicki: [00:17:35] No one thought that the Nazi's real motive was economic, or that Imperial Japan's Imperial Japan's real motive was economic. We understood that these were genocidal, evil ideologies, evil regimes that needed to be completely destroyed. And that was the only way to break the people of the indoctrination. They understood that. And that's why this coalition is called the Victory Coalition. There's no substitute for victory. It's not simply a slogan. It's really [00:18:00] true. It's true psychologically. It's true politically. The only way to really break these ideologies, to really make a change is through defeating them. And that defeat must come on terms that they understand. And if we think that they are going to be motivated into some sort of actual lasting, you know, lasting peace or last or even lasting cease fire. When I say the last thing, I mean lasting. If we think that we can entice them into that with economic incentives, we are missing the point. They are motivated by ideology, and that ideology can only be defeated by actual defeat where they're brought to their knees and their people. And they. Understand that they have submitted and they've been defeated. And that's the only hope we have for change. Otherwise, we're just kicking the can down the road, and we're going to be living in a world where we're fighting, where our children and grandchildren will also be fighting the jihadists who unfortunately will probably be even stronger at that time. So that's my opening [00:19:00] statement. I'll kick it back to you, Frank. That's just my opening framing of our conversation.

Frank Gaffney: [00:19:04] Wonderful. And I think I think you've captured brilliantly the thrust of what I was trying to get at in terms of the downside risks of doing what we do if we fail to appreciate the importance of ideology. As you've indicated, we're going to hear next from Doctor David Wormser. Again, no stranger to these programs, I think, in fact, he's participated in all of them, for which we're very grateful. Doctor Wormser is these days the director of the Mideast program for the center for Security Policy. He brings to that role, however, a wealth of experience and senior levels of the US government, in addition to having served as a naval intelligence officer through the Navy's ranks, rose to that of a lieutenant commander. He has been a middle East expert, assisting an Under-Secretary of state, a national security adviser and a [00:20:00] vice president of the United States. And we consider him one of the most important resources of our victory coalition, as well as for our country and indeed the free world more generally. Doctor Wormser, thank you for joining us, and we'd love to have you back. Opening comments if you're on.

David Wurmser: [00:20:18] Sure. I mean, look, it's tough to follow both you and Pesach because I think you guys covered a tremendous amount of very important information. I'll pick up where Pesach kind of left off. We just had an event which the press really hasn't picked up on, but should, which is we've had another ship attacked and sunk. Second one in about four days. In the bubble Mandeb straits by the Yemeni Houthis. They've taken 19. Or somewhere between 12 and 24 of the crew hostage. Killed about four. So what? The reason why I raised this is because we had a cease [00:21:00] fire with Yemen. Now, the cease fire applied only to his to America and to the west. And the shipping. It did not apply to shooting missiles at Israel, so that Houthis, even after the cease fire, happily continued to send missiles into Israel. Much to the agony, I think, of the Israelis. But nonetheless, we had had an agreement with them. And lo and behold, only three months later, we're back in a situation where the Houthis are violating that cease fire. They're sinking ships and killing people and taking cruise hostage. In fact, this is probably the worst wave we've had of the Houthis in this piracy on the seas since the beginning of the conflict. I don't remember that many hostages and not many people killed in such a short period of time.

David Wurmser: [00:21:49] Two ships sunk large ships in a period of 3 or 4 days. So this tells you something. Ceasefires are not peace. And the reason for [00:22:00] it is exactly what Frank, you say, which is really alluding to the treaty the hood and the Treaty of Hood and so forth, where essentially the weakness of the Muslim armies under of the faithful, under Muhammad, he dealt with reality, and the reality dictated to him that he needs to bide his time, build his strength. And when he's ready, he chooses then to violate the cease fire and attack those who oppose him. There was no fundamental obligation. The treaty. Your word is a word is your word. None of that really mattered. It was the faithfulness and commitment to the ideology. The belief that Muhammad had that was the only measure for validity. There was no independent concept of credibility, of agreement, or none of this had any reality beyond the utility for the key [00:23:00] thing. That was the only reality for Muhammad, which was the faith. And I think we forget that over and over and over again that when we sign an agreement, we think an agreement is an obligation. An obligation is beyond yourself. You can't just decide, well, you know, whatever. And yet that is exactly what Muhammad did. So we don't understand how agreements don't mean anything.

David Wurmser: [00:23:28] There's circumstantial moments in time that are suspended. The moment underlying forces have changed for somebody like Mohammed and for those, you know, extreme those extremes who follow him. So first of all, there's no there's no commitment. There's nothing that binds, as we would understand, binding somebody. The second thing is faith. Also very early on there was a battle, the battle of the trenches. And in that battle Muhammad [00:24:00] was facing the armies from Mecca and the, the, the various tribes in Medina decided to sort of back out because they saw the writing on the wall. This was a lost cause. Muhammad wasn't very strong. These are very powerful forces with whom many in the Medina had been trading, and so on and so forth, including the Jewish tribes. So Muhammad essentially took this as a test of faith. And he said, listen, the worse it gets, the more it proves your faith in in in this in my belief system, and the more you sort of give in to reality, the more you're worthless, the more you are not part of the tribe. You're not part of this community of faithful. So he had no problem with people abandoning. He just - go, we'll deal with you later. And he did. I mean, the high bar massacre of the Jewish tribes was, in part, originated [00:25:00] in the fact that they didn't support him in Medina against the (inaudible).

David Wurmser: [00:25:05] So, anyway, the bottom line is, yes, he dealt with them, but for the moment, the main, important, most important thing was the worse it got, the more reality showed him that he was in a lost cause and things were not going to go his way. The more he doubled down in faith, believing this was a pure a test of purity of faith. So when you're really dealing with a believer, every measure we have of reality, whether it's economic, which is what I think Pesa referred to. And we thought that was the case in the Oslo agreements. We thought that was even the case on October 6th when the head of intelligence in Israel thought that all these signs of, of trouble that were emerging were just sort of rattling the cage to get a better economic agreement with Israel and more workers to go into Israel and so forth, all these economic conditions, but even more, [00:26:00] the very commitment to your life into your into your existence, your welfare, in the most basic sense, was suspended in relation to the ideology. And this is we're getting to what is something we in the West do not understand, which is a cult of death. And when you're dealing with Yemen, when you're at the Houthis, not Yemen, the Houthis, when you're dealing with Sinwar and Hamas, when you're dealing with the Iranian leadership, the fact that they control a nation doesn't mean they're a true nation.

David Wurmser: [00:26:33] What they are is there a cult there, a death cult? And we see the sort of suggestions of it here and there. Even in Western thought, there's no accident that while most extreme leftist thought was not suicidal because ultimately it was based on the raising of man to the level of God, which meant that there was a preservation of man implied in it. In communism [00:27:00] and so forth, there was this subtext of nihilism and so forth that that did begin to go toward this cult of death. You saw it in some of those works and so forth. But it's very interesting that the true sort of ideas that went that way were by many thinkers who had spent some time in the Middle East exposed to some of the most radical forms of Islam. And I think this is what we're dealing with when we're dealing with Khomeini and Khomeini. And the current leadership of Iran is we're dealing with a cult of death, not a true nation. How do you come up with an agreement with that? It's very clear from the Yemeni Houthi incident that any cease fire is only to regroup and attack more forcefully.

David Wurmser: [00:27:45] At the end of the ceasefire, we saw that at three weeks into the ground invasion in Gaza in 2023, after the Israelis had been invaded, there were two weeks of sort of waiting. The Israelis were [00:28:00] preparing. Then they went in, and then after three weeks, I think Hamas was at the edge of complete collapse, complete collapse. So they signed a cease fire and gave up about 100 hostages in order to regroup. It had no desire to resolve this. They're the ones. After two weeks, the Israelis were practically begging to go on and release more hostages for more peace, etc. The Hamas just started the war again because they were ready to start the war again. It's always the same story. We don't understand the depth of this ideological commitment to a cult of death. And we don't understand that cease fires are not the beginning or first chapter of a piece. They are the first chapter of the next round of war. For somebody who is committed ultimately to fighting to the death. And that, I think, is the bottom line, is we're in a twilight struggle to the death with these ideologies. And if you have them on the run, you have them on the ropes, they're on their hind legs. Why quit? And yet [00:29:00] we consistently make the same mistake.

Frank Gaffney: [00:29:03] Thank you David. You know, I did an interview today with most impressive military historian by the name of Michael Walsh, and he pointed out that, you know, the United States military has not been involved in a conclusive, decisive victory since the end of World War two. Tragically, I think Rabbi, with the

interventions of the United States under successive presidencies, Republican and Democrat. That has been more or less true of Israel as well. Give us, if you would serve your current take on the situation on the ground, particularly vis a vis Gaza and Iran and the state of the negotiations, as best we can discern it, dealing with both.

Pesach Wolicki: [00:29:53] Let me start with what you said about not having a decisive victory. And also tying [00:30:00] in a little bit with, with some of what David just said. Before we get to the state on the ground right now, because it flows directly from that. You know, there's on the on the problematic part of the American. Right. And I don't know what's right and what's left anymore. We seem to be in a horseshoe world where the extreme right is meeting up with the extreme left. But you hear this, this messaging that the only reason they hate us is because we antagonize them, because we start intervening in their lives. Right. And this is this is a perfect example of not taking their ideology seriously and not being willing to finish the job. The lack of appetite for victory that, that Michael Walsh was talking about, because it's really a lack of appetite. It's not for lack of ability. The lack of appetite for victory on behalf of the West has, has, has just made things into a slow deterioration in terms of Western civilization and the [00:31:00] challenge to the West, which, you know, now you have every you know, everyone in the West is freaking out about the fact that Europe is being lost to the Muslims. But, you know, it's a lot of it seems to me I hope I'm wrong, but it seems to me a lot of too little too late there.

Pesach Wolicki: [00:31:16] And but at the same time, they don't connect the dots. Those same people who are willing to who are who are terrified about Epic City and are terrified about Islamic encroachment politically in America and in Europe. Don't connect the dots and realize that Israel is trying to actually be victorious. Israel is actually trying to defeat its enemy, something that, again, the Western powers don't seem to have an appetite for. And it's not just a problem of trying to achieve peace or, you know, some sort of, you know, you know, the lack of prospect of military victory. It's a very it's a fundamental civilizational problem. And that that's why the West will, you know, will the West will continue to lose to Islam [00:32:00] until it's willing to actually look it in the eye and defeat it. And this is, you know, so this relates to exactly where Israel is right now, because from the perspective of Israelis, Israelis want total victory. Israelis want the destruction of Hamas to the point of submission or their or just being removed from their

full Israeli control, albeit military control, over the Gaza Strip for the foreseeable future. While we sort things out and figure out what's next.

Pesach Wolicki: [00:32:32] We don't have to have the final solution on, you know, the day after we're done here. It can be a process, but Israelis want total victory. And Prime Minister Netanyahu keeps saying it. No, Hamas in the Gaza Strip. And at the same time with, you know, with Iran, I mentioned before that President Trump was so proud of himself that he stopped regime change there. When, you know what, if one takes a step back and says, what is your long term plan? What's your long term [00:33:00] plan? How do you expect this? Is this Sharia supremacist jihadist ideology to ever go away? What if you sat down with these people and said, okay, let's talk. Let's talk long term strategy. How do you expect it to happen there? Do you not acknowledge that there's going to have to be a kinetic conflict at some point where this gets sorted out? And then the question is, do you win or do you lose against jihad? And if there was never a better opportunity than the one we've had that we had right now that we're in the middle of, that we're still in this war. We have this opportunity for victory, and it's not being taken. So from Israel's perspective, the fact that that that we were that we stopped short of regime change and the fact that it looks like we may be forced to stop short in Gaza, although they're trying Netanyahu is being heroic and always saying, no, it's not going to happen.

Pesach Wolicki: [00:33:49] We are going to get rid of Hamas. And insisting that even if there's a cease fire, we're going to continue. That's why Hamas keeps, keeps insisting that there has to be some commitment to end the war because [00:34:00] they want to keep us from being victorious. I don't believe despite all of the optimistic talk, I don't believe that there's actually going to be a deal. I don't think there will be. I don't think there will be a deal because of this point. And, you know, the Americans seem to think that they could get Israel to back off and maybe get some sort of extended Ended ceasefire. But there's a there's a lot of pessimism in Israel about the possibility of a deal. And I mean pessimism when I say pessimism, pessimism that because people do want to see the hostages come home, we also have to there's a lot of in Israel, there's a lot of chatter and it's healthy chatter, recognizing the reality that we will never get all of the hostages. There will never be a deal that releases all of them.

Pesach Wolicki: [00:34:46] There's no reason whatsoever. There's no reason in God's green earth that Hamas would ever agree to release the final live hostages, because they would lose the only leverage that they have. So the only way that you know, that, you know, that [00:35:00] that we solve all of the all the hostages is by total victory, defeating Hamas completely and then seeing what, you know, seeing what we can salvage. So it's there's I, I, I don't know if this is just me or it's just the camp I'm in, but there's a sense of unfinished business and, and frustration we were so close to removing the Iranian regime. We were so close. We're so close to total victory over Hamas. And yet there's always these obstacles in the way. Hands being tied. And it's and it. If we pull back the camera and think about its civilizational and what it says about the West, it does not bode well. Long term for everyone. But Israelis are pretty committed. I think that there's going to be at some point, Israel is going to have to break with American policy and just finish the job in Gaza, because the Israeli people are not going to stand for any end of this war that does not involve the complete destruction of Hamas.

Frank Gaffney: [00:35:57] Thank you, Rabbi. David, I'd like to get your response to the question [00:36:00] as well. And the situation overall as you see it, and in particular, this idea that knowing the cult of death, as you so aptly put it, as you do what the inevitable response really is to the lack of appetite, is it not really more accurately described as the lack of will, the failure of will, the failure of resolve. How is that seen by the Sharia supremacists? And therefore, what does that mean for the prospects here? Deal or no deal.

David Wurmser: [00:36:35] In any war? The victory comes when you break the will of your opponent. And if the Sinwar Khamenei crowd believe that the West's will is flailing, then they believe they're on the verge of victory. This isn't just a public relations. Oh, we survived, we won. They really believe [00:37:00] that the failure of the West to defeat them and to the point of being destroyed reflects a failure of will. And that that failure of will is the long term trajectory of where we're headed. That's how they view it. So there is no victory over them, not only because they are, you know, very good at PR and making their defeats look like victories. It's because they understand the fundamental point of war is to impose your will and break on the other and break his will. When, when and that's, that's essentially their single measure. And they see that will breaking. What I think is happening here is on a larger scale. President Trump gets it. He

obviously got it in 2016. I think he has deep in him this appreciation. No. President [00:38:00] Trump is not a professor of medieval Islamic philosophy. But he intuitively gets this. The problem is Washington does not. Washington. If there's one thing that really changed between the time I came to Washington in the 80s and now is it's a town that reconciled itself to defeat, to being a middling power to not having the power to get things done. It was a town that was committed to mediocrity, and the entire establishment was committed to not winning. It was all about managing, managing decline, managing defeat, managing not winning. And I think what you're seeing from day one of this administration, and we saw it with the first discussions of ceasefire with Gaza already the day or two before the administration took office the team coming in had to rely on the team going [00:39:00] out in order to set policy.

David Wurmser: [00:39:03] And unfortunately, I think you've also seen a number of appointments in this administration which really represent the Washington establishment. So I guess what I'm getting at is that you have the veneer on top of a president who does understand victory. Who does understand what needs to be done in the long run. Even though he may at times become a little too transactional and see. But he learns and he's willing to say, okay, that didn't work, let's do this. The problem is that we have in Washington an entire bureaucracy that is now uncomfortably populated by too many that are really, truly representing the ethos of the Washington establishment, which, first of all, does not understand Islam, does not understand radical Islam, does not even wouldn't have even delivered us a victory in the Cold War against communism. And is willing to accept the world [00:40:00] of a retreating America, a declining America, and trying to find some deals to codify that decline in a controllable way. That seems to have been the undertone of almost every major policy concept coming out of Washington in the last 30 years. And unfortunately, I think it has way too much grip on this administration. Certainly has a lot of grip on the Washington chattering class, the press, the chattering class, also the think tank world and the funders of the think tank world and in Washington. So I think we're dealing with the structural issue in Washington and MAGA, the world of American greatness that the President Trump seeks. It's still too thin a veneer above what is really still a cesspool underneath which will not deliver us. Victory will deliver us defeat.

Frank Gaffney: [00:41:00] Yeah. And [00:41:00] again, Rabbi, from your perspective in the Middle East, you're tracking what is happening inside the United States. And this

term that David used of retreat as the perception when a powerful nation fails to have the will to exercise its power, it seems to me. But I'd be very interested in your take on this. It's laced with contempt for that power which we've seen much in evidence in the various affronts the mullahs have engaged in, particularly during the Obama and Biden years. And to some extent, I'm sorry to say, even now with, you know, actual threats to President Trump including from inside the United States. So if retreat is an operative word that the pseudonym for it here, I guess, is [00:42:00] restraint in some quarters, including among advisers to President Trump, formal or informal. Could you just help us clarify Weather. If you're concerned that there might actually be an endless war here not because of what Israel is doing, not because of what President Trump might do if he were to back up Israel seeking a decisive victory, as you, David, have both talked about. But because the enemy perceives that they are winning and they will therefore redouble their efforts, if not immediately in the foreseeable future.

Pesach Wolicki: [00:42:41] That's a very good point. You know, retreat is a is sometimes an important maneuver in, in warfare. And an effective retreat is a difficult thing to do to, you know, especially if America first, foreign policy means that America is less involved [00:43:00] overseas, is expending less resources overseas, and that there needs to be some sort of organized retreat of American strength from the world and involvement in the world, if that's what America first means. Okay, let's talk about what that looks like in an effective way. And that's where the conversation tends to break down because for the for the more we'll call it isolationist wing or I don't know what to call these people anymore. We're going to have to come up with some new names, because there's a lot of camps being formed over the last couple of months. But for that, for that crowd that, that was, you know, found the, you know, in some of our close friends, Frank that found, you know, that was screaming for rooftops that the, the worst thing in the world would be regime change or American involvement. Okay. You don't want America involved. What is America less involved in the world look like in an effective way? And at the obvious answer is that what it looks like is where [00:44:00] you have regional allies who are reliable, who can take care of business on their own, who understand the region better, and that you don't need to be as involved because they can protect your interests effectively.

Pesach Wolicki: [00:44:13] The obvious. The obvious candidate for that role is Israel. The Israel U.S. relationship exemplifies that Israel is a reliable ally. That's why Israel is

pretty much the only. It's the only country around here that doesn't have a US based on it, because Israel doesn't need one. Israel takes care of its own business. So, you know, the, the, the, the retreat crowd has built in contradictions and they, they, they live in this fantasy world where we could roll things back to the original Monroe Doctrine and just sort of close up the Western Hemisphere, and we don't really care what goes on. But that means surrendering the world to the Chinese Communist Party and the Russians and, and the mullahs. And that's what retreat looks like. But I want to go back to something [00:45:00] that David was saying about President Trump being transactional and that he sort of gets it, but sort of doesn't, because at bottom it goes back to a male fashion. Himes. Haim's words to me that he really believes. You know, he believes he's he is a great negotiator.

Pesach Wolicki: [00:45:15] But at the at the bottom line, when he's going into a negotiation and looking at the people he's negotiating with, he still assumes that they want the things that he wants. He still assumes that they, you know, that that they'll that he thinks that the Iranians feel demoralized by the fact that all that they got bombed. He feels that the Houthis are demoralized by the fact that the that the Americans gave them a few, you know, a few kicks in the in the face and bombed them for a while and that he pulled out of there declaring victory. But as it was implying from their perspective, they're patient. They're historically patient. They play in terms of centuries, and we play in terms of years. And from their perspective, you know, if America blinked because they didn't kill Khomeini [00:46:00] and America blinked, that they didn't wipe out the Houthis. And it's just like America blinking and leaving Afghanistan without wiping out the Taliban. It's America blinking. And it shows. It shows a lack of resolve. And from their perspective, they did win. They're not kidding. I think, you know, David's right. Like all these memes you see on the internet, kind of making fun of the Iranians for declaring victory even though they got hit so hard.

Pesach Wolicki: [00:46:23] And companies in a bunker. No, they really do mean it. And you have not one, you know, to paraphrase what David said about breaking the will of your enemy, you have not won until your enemy decides you've won you. That's when you've won the war. So I know I'm kind of going around in circles talking about this, Frank, but I think that we have a, you know, the problem in Washington, D.C. the problem that we're having on our side of things is, again, I keep going back to this, the lack of appetite for victory, a lack of resolve, a lack of real belief that that is an enemy

who wants to kill us. And it is our [00:47:00] responsibility to destroy them because we're good and they're evil. It was a clarity that the World War Two generation had and we've lost it. I do agree with David that President Trump has that in him. He's a teachable person in this regard. And that could be that could be part of what we're seeing in this bromance that we're witnessing between him and Netanyahu that is so angering so many people in America. But it could be that he's getting it, I don't know. But you know, time will tell.

Frank Gaffney: [00:47:35] David, if you are in the shoes of, let's say, the Iranians and they're watching this play out in a manner that, at least at present, seems likely to ensure the survival of the regime. How is that, in your estimation, going to translate [00:48:00] into policies that the administration has embraced on a whole host of different fronts. I mean, it's, I think, made it clear, for example, that it stands against more conflict, certainly in the region and yet is seemingly going to tolerate it from the Houthis and perhaps from other proxies that are still not completely out of business. They may be hunkered down momentarily, but not out of business. And when you hear, you know, the expressions of resolve and that there will be costs and there will be. Well, in fact, I guess redlines, for want of a better term. And they're being breached. Can this be other than a formula for more of this pretty [00:49:00] endless war, this 1400 years of onslaught? The good versus evil that you spoke of. That comes to mind in this regard. A lot of us have come to view ourselves is not so good. But I think in this case, vis a vis the people who worship death, seek to bring it about, are more than happy, apparently, to experience it themselves in the furtherance of their agenda. This is a moment when, if you don't want more, endless war is what people are talking about now. Anything but a formula for it.

David Wurmser: [00:49:42] No, it is a formula for endless war. I mean, at the end of the day, we're not really in a war over freedom of navigation through the Mandeb straits. We're not even in a war over Iran's nuclear program. We're in a war for Western civilization against [00:50:00] a group of people who want to destroy it. And they have a 1400 year history of trying to do it. So we were really talking about epoch level conflict. And, and I think hit it right on when he said contempt. There's this sort of the far left, which unfortunately includes some in our camp like, like Tucker Carlson argue that it's this it's grievance that is driving the hatred for America rather than disdain and contempt. We are dealing with the supremacist ideology, which doesn't understand why

it's not more powerful than we are. So they're looking from the filter of disdain. Disdain? The lens of disdain. What is it? That's the sign that this great oak tree is really rotten to the core and easily defeated. So again, we're missing this. It's not driven [00:51:00] by grievance. It's driven by disdain and contempt of the West and the feeling of supremacy. Now, if you take that latter point of view.

David Wurmser: [00:51:09] Unfortunately, there are others in our camp that think we can just leave. And yet we're a great power. People trust the power of the United States. We project power. President Trump expresses seriousness I don't think President Trump is a very great bluffer. I think he means what he says 99% of the time, and he actually executes what he says, not. So it's not really a bluff, but for the region right now they're basically feeling if you withdraw from the region, you don't get a voice in the region. So our allies run for cover and our enemies say, look, you can say as much as you want of being a great power, but you're not there. You're talking about lowering your footprint, withdrawing. So you're not a player. So we have a fundamental contradiction on the right here that can only be, by the [00:52:00] way bridge by what Pesek said is have some allies who are willing to carry the water for us. The problem is there's such fear that if the allies do carry the water for us, that in defending the West, it really triggers the conflict with those who want to destroy the West. So we want them to pull back.

David Wurmser: [00:52:18] And you see that with some of our friends who want Israel to pull back and, and hunker down. But at the end, it really is what you're alluding to, Frank, which is this is an endless war that has been going on for very, very long time, will not go away with any momentary changes. These people that we're dealing with in Khamenei and Sinwar and so forth, Muslim Brotherhood, they are in a civilizational twilight struggle to the death with the West, which is why also they've carried the battlefield inside the West, because they've identified the strengths and powers and pillars of Western civilization. It isn't just Israel [00:53:00] is a strategic ally. It's Israel is the idea of the cradle of West, of one of the main pillars of Western civilization. It's Judeo-Christian core. They're attacking the European, the legitimacy of the European nature of the West. They're attacking the West from within to destroy it, including countries like Qatar who are spending inordinate amounts of money to try to wage this war internally in the West. Until we understand, we are in an endless war that is now global and inside ourselves, we can't win it until we recognize that.

Frank Gaffney: [00:53:38] Pesach, we've got four minutes left. Would you make quick closing comments before we break?

Pesach Wolicki: [00:53:44] Yeah, my closing comment is that there's one big issue that we haven't touched on at all, but I want to weave it into everything that we've said, and that is the issue of the so-called two state solution, a Palestinian state. What, you know, that whole thing which is rearing its ugly head again. President [00:54:00] Trump brought something up last week. But then there was a very nice moment, I think, in the in the dinner press conference where he kicked it over to Prime Minister Netanyahu, basically laid out terms that that really mean that there wouldn't be a Palestinian state. But I want to relate this whole everything that we've said here and we've been we've been saying the same thing in a number of different ways to that. I've said to you before, Frank, I said it on your show that one of the big mistakes that Westerners make is that there's this belief that terrorism is the is the product of despair, and it's actually just the opposite. Terrorism is the product of hope. When they believe that they have hope of some sort of success, even if it's very long term success. Remember, they think in terms of centuries, not years. Then terrorism continues. And carving up the land of Israel to give some autonomy to those who are trying to take the whole land of Israel away from us, gives them hope that they could eventually get the rest of it. And therefore the only way to bring peace. [00:55:00]

Pesach Wolicki: [00:55:00] Just like we've been talking about victory, the only way to bring peace between Israel and the so-called Palestinians, the Arabs who live here. The only way is for their if for it to be to put the final nail in the coffin and make it clear that there is no more negotiations, the conflict is over. We're not having any more conversations about this ever again. There will never be a two state solution. There will never be a Palestinian state. Done deal. Full Israeli sovereignty, including changing the status quo on the Temple Mount where Christians and Jews are limited. Once we do that and just tell the Arab world we're done, it's over. It will never be brought up again. That's the only chance we actually have for peace. Any, any what we call compromise. Compromise is valued in the West. Compromise to in the Middle East. Compromise to the Muslim mind is weakness and opens the door for them to take more. So it actually gives hope and encourages terrorism. So all the themes we've talked about tonight, you can use them as a template [00:56:00] to analyze all of these different fronts. And the

and it all goes back to what a meal. Anaheim said to me that night in the car 30 years ago. We think that our interests are their interests and that therefore economics and worldly interests and life trump their ideology and they don't.

Frank Gaffney: [00:56:19] David, a closing comment from you?

David Wurmser: [00:56:21] I just second what Pesach says. But I'd say it really focuses on - if you really want to focus it all the way - it focuses on Jerusalem. Jerusalem is the heart and center of both Christian and Jewish thought. In Christianity. It is both religious and it also a mystical evocation of Jerusalem means a lot to the Christian world. Obviously, Jerusalem is the center of Judaism. For Islam it's not important. Or as I think it was Queen Victoria when she was watching the first America's Cup, the her aide told her the Americans are [00:57:00] in first place. She asked who's in second place? And he said, ma'am, I don't believe there is a second place. That's essentially the role of when you get down to third place with Islam being seeing Jerusalem is important. And I think that's already an invention. It just doesn't mean that. And that's the real importance of Jerusalem to the Muslims is because Muslim control of it shows superiority over Judaism and Christianity. That's what's essentially on the dome of the Rock. The polemic on the dome of the Rock. It's a polemic against Christianity, basically ridiculing Christianity as a fallen religion. Now that they have Jerusalem in there on top of it, ridiculing the Trinity, ridiculing Immaculate Conception and so forth. So I really think this whole thing ultimately boils down to even more than just the partition of the Land of Israel. It [00:58:00] really Jerusalem. Partition of Jerusalem. Whether this is in the hands of a Western country, Israel, or whether it's in the hands not of the anti-Western civilizational forces.

Frank Gaffney: [00:58:12] Well said, as always. Let me just return to my sort of opening comment. I commend President Trump profoundly for the clarity of that speech that he made in August of 2016. It's still available online if you Google. President Trump, Youngstown, Ohio. August 15th, 2016. It'll pop right up. Read it. If you want an alternative understanding. That is, I believe, far more accurate and became the predicate for, I think, the president's approach in his first. Administration in particular, [00:59:00] and that we believe. I think the three of us are victory coalition, for sure. And I quite confident Israel 365 action as well, believe is the alternative to what is being done right now. I personally am of the view that that is in part at least because President

Trump is now largely surrounded by individuals who are in the restraint camp or even retreat. If you want to be more accurate about it, people who believe that decisive victory for Israel is not in America's interests that finding some kind of modus vivendi or even transforming These warriors supremacist ideologues into durable partners with us is [01:00:00] a real option. I would simply suggest to the president, with the greatest of respect. Get a second opinion.

Frank Gaffney: [01:00:13] The people who are dealmaking at the moment, or possibly going to be dealmaking, I believe, are not only Israel's enemies, but ours. They are the enemies of Western civilization. They embrace a death cult, anathema to everything we stand for. And they seek. More or less opaquely, but nonetheless our destruction and giving them a further lease on life, rather than subjecting them to the kind of decisive defeat that [01:01:00] not only is now possible, thanks in large measure to the Israeli US partnership to date under President Trump, but is absolutely necessary. That second opinion is as well. So with that, let me just say thank you to our partner in these briefings, Rabbi Wolicki, and his terrific organization, Israel 365 action. Doctor David Wurmser, one of our great allies in these briefings, as well as the Victory Coalition and more generally, an incredible resource. I commend to him to you his work rather across the broadest front. With that, let me just say, on behalf of our team thank you very much for listening and for your help in relaying the contents of this briefing. Far and wide. God bless you. Ded [01:02:00]e - back to you.

Dede Laugesen: [01:02:01] Thank you. Frank. A video of this webinar will be posted to VictoryCo.com within a day or so of the conclusion of this program. Please share this in our other programs with your elected representatives, colleagues and other networks. Follow us on X at Co4Victory, for updates, and for Israel 365 Action. They can be found at Israel365action.com and on X at Israel365act. Thanks for joining us today and goodbye.