

# Peace With Russia Is INEVITABLE. NATO Is In Terminal Decline | Ray McGovern

[Part 2 of 3] A general peace in Europe with Russia is not a question of if but when even if the neocons left and right of the Atlantic are trying everything to prevent it. The only question is how to get there faster to save thousands of lives. Ray McGovern, a former CIA analyst and long-time political activist for a sane US foreign policy explains why the way to peace might be one that gives Russia everything it demands (and would enforce anyhow) while packaging it as a "great deal" for Donald Trump. Ray McGovern online: raymcgovern.com Neutrality Studies is on Spotify and Apple Podcasts now! You can follow us here: Apple: <https://podcasts.apple.com/ch/podcast/neutrality-studies/id1791051233> Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/show/2vvTf44yckVz1hDggVolgB?si=03305b3fe8ad4cf3>

## #M3

And they work out a regime that satisfies the Russians that they're not going to be attacked from what's left of the old Ukraine. Okay. And then this sticky wicket: What about NATO? Well, NATO has fallen apart. Okay. What's NATO going to look like in 25 years? Okay. So I can see if I was advising Putin, I'd say, oh, all right. We won't insist that you commit not to put Ukraine in NATO. Let's revisit that. Let's put that in this contract. We'll revisit it in 25 years.

## #M2

Let's shift gears just a little bit to current affairs, which I want to ask you about. If Tulsi Gabbard actually becomes the head of the intelligence agencies, will she be primarily responsible for liaising with the president? Will other people compete for the attention of Donald Trump? And if you look at what happened in the last three or four days... with Netanyahu coming to Washington and then Donald Trump making this shocking announcement that he wants to empty the Gaza Strip and rebuild. And he read that from cards. These were prepared cards, right? This was a prepared affair with people around him, at least partially responsible for making sure that this is policy, not just a brainchild of the moment. He has a lot of those, right? He talks off the cuff. But this one was prepared. Who is running or is going to run this administration apart from the impulses of Donald Trump?

## #M3

I don't know. And that's the problem. Putin doesn't know. Nobody knows. Given the example of the last several days, it looks like Trump is going to just speak off the cuff and propose preposterous things that have not really been vetted with the bureaucracy or the specialists, such as they are. So

this is, I mean, there are adjectives to describe what he said about Gaza. The best ones I got from a friend of mine who said that he was deranged, delusional, and dangerous. Now, during the electoral campaign, Mr. Putin was asked, you know, who do you prefer? I mean, it looked like Biden versus, and he said, oh, Biden. Tongue in cheek. I read about that. Well, because he's predictable.

Sotto voce, we don't have to deal with this unpredictable guy that we know what's going to do. And then when it turned out to be Vice President Harris, he said, oh, yeah, now we're going to vote. We hope that Harris wins because Joe Biden told us to vote for her and they would be more predictable. Well, you know, that was tongue in cheek, but this is essential. I spent a long time putting myself in the shoes of Soviet or Russian leaders. What they hope for, what they yearn for, what they lust for is a president across the Atlantic Ocean who is predictable. After all, they have their fingers on the codes, for God's sake, the nuclear codes. So what is Trump to make of all this? Who's in charge?

It was bad enough when a person who was really non compos mentis, that would be Joe Biden, was deferring these decisions to the likes of Blinken and Sullivan. And the worst was prevented because every now and then the Defense Department would intervene and say, no, that's a little, that's a bridge too far. We won't go that far. And then they'd be overruled. And then anyhow, there was a real Donnybrook. Now, what's going on now? Trump is making these decisions all by himself. Now, what's the other side of this? He did pick Tulsi Gabbard to be his director of national intelligence. Now, that is big because he must have known and he must have been advised that she knows which end is up and she might even tell him things that he didn't want to hear.

Let's assume that she was picked for that reason. What's she going to tell him? Well, assume she's confirmed. I think she will be confirmed in the next couple of days. Well, on Israel, I think that is all run by the State Department and the ideologues and the Israeli lobby. And she has not been very good on Israel because I guess she felt that if she had any chance at all of getting approved, she had to repeat the Israeli line. On Ukraine, she does know which end is up. And she's going to be telling the president, look, Mr. President, I hate to tell you this, but it's not the case that Putin lost the war. As a matter of fact, Putin was very close to winning the whole shebang.

We could do a deal with him, but the deal will have to be much more negative for our purposes than the one that we worked out in April 2022 when we had an agreement that Ukraine would not be part of NATO and the whole business. So she's going to know this, and she's going to brief him. And the Mike Waltz and who else? Oh, the General Kellogg people who say, we're going to pressure Russia, we're going to come in strong. Well, Tulsi is going to be able to tell the president, look, that didn't work, okay? That didn't work since February of 2022. Now, it's in spades not going to work now that the Russians clearly have the upper hand. Putin is willing to deal with you.

Now, this is my concept of what Tulsi Gabbard might say in maybe her second or third session with the president. Mr. President, the American people have been trained to think that Putin is a danger because he wants to take over all of Ukraine and then Poland, and then the Baltic states. And God knows he won't stop there. Okay. Now, Mr. President, you may not know this, but Putin already

stopped. Okay. That was April 2022. He stopped. He withdrew forces from around Kyiv. They had a deal. He stopped. He was going to let Donbas remain part of Ukraine. It was just going to have some autonomy as had been promised. So, for your own information, you could say, well, you can feel, you can understand that he did stop.

What does that mean? Mr. President, just between you and me, that means that he doesn't want to take over all of Ukraine. My God, what a headache that would be—a Vietnam for him. There are people in Western Ukraine who hate his guts, okay? You don't have to deal with that, okay? Nor does he. Mr. President, you've been to Poland, right? You've been to Poland. Why would Putin want to take over Poland? So look, here's the deal, Mr. President. What you say is, you say, look, I talked to my friend Vlad. I extracted a promise from him, and he's not going to try to take over all of Ukraine. And he expressly signed this little piece of paper that says, I don't want to take over Poland or the Baltic states.

And so, Mr. President, to the degree that 80 percent of the American people were conditioned or brainwashed—not too strong a word—to believe that this was the case by the earlier administration, we'll play on that. Let's say they believe that. Well, you've got this great concession, okay? He's not going to take over the rest of Ukraine. He does have legitimate security concerns. My God, Trump has already said that. Trump has said, and this is a virtual quote, I can understand. I can understand why Putin and the Russians wouldn't want a NATO-armed and equipped-to-the-teeth nation on their long border with Ukraine. I can understand that.

That's the whole reason for the war. There are hints that Trump is not as ideologically or as wedded to these notions that Putin has to be defeated. I think there's room for negotiations. Putin has already said, and some of his people have said, look, we don't even want all of Ukraine that we could have easily now, like Odessa, like Kharkiv, you know. I mean, why do his people say that? Well, because they could work out, you know, deals where now Odessa, if Ukraine is bereft of Odessa, it's just a landlocked farm for the rest of Europe, right? It has no access to commerce out through the Black Sea. So a deal could be worked out.

You have multi-nation domain over the port. That's been done before. So there are all kinds of things that could be worked out. And the sticky wicket, of course, and this is what all my colleagues say, and everyone says, the Russians' one big no-no is no Ukraine membership in NATO. Now, do I agree with that? Do I agree with that? Yes, I do. But now, just let me continue for one more minute. So they come down to the end of the negotiations, okay? And they work out a regime that satisfies the Russians that they're not going to be attacked from what's left of the old Ukraine, okay? And then this sticky wicket. What about NATO? Well, NATO has fallen apart.

It's like, OK, what's NATO going to look like in 25 years? OK, so I can see if I was advising Putin, I'd say, oh, all right, we won't insist that you commit not to put Ukraine in NATO. Let's revisit that. Let's put that in this contract. We'll revisit it in 25 years. Not a yes and not a no, but let's put that on the back burner. I can conceive of that. These things can be worked out. If Trump has any merit, he

does do deals, and he's got the short end of the stick here, but there's still some flexibility on the Russian side, I am convinced, as long as he realizes that his hand is a pair of deuces and Putin's is four aces.

## **#M2**

I hope this is understood, but the craziness of the situation is that I think you're absolutely right. A pivotal part of whatever agreement is going to come out with the Russians has to include some clauses forcing President Putin to sign something that he always said he will never do, and then sell that as a win. Oh, we made him promise verifiably that he will never attack Poland, which he always said, we don't want that. We don't want Western Ukraine. We don't want that. But in this sense, I think he wouldn't have a problem signing that. He would probably have a problem understanding why that is in the treaty in the first place. But there's a line, and I think you're absolutely correct.

## **#M3**

Well, let me just add, Pascal, you're the only one among many interviewers or friends who have said that. In other words, there's this almost ideological firm position: no, no, no, Putin will always insist on a firm "no Ukraine in NATO." And I try to say, well, look, 25 years from now, no decision yes or no in NATO, but put it off for 25 years. This is all very, very speculative, but why not? If he wants a deal, and he thinks he does, and if Trump wants a deal, these kinds of rhetoric and these kinds of playing on the mistakes of what Biden and the others persuaded the American people to believe... You're the first one, I have to say, and I thank you kindly for coming forward and saying, yeah, that makes sense to you because it doesn't make sense to many other people.

## **#M2**

Because, look, there's one more very important element, which is that the United States of today is not the United States of the 1990s anymore in the global perception. I think the one thing that is utterly clear to the Russians and the Chinese is that no piece of paper that the United States signs is safe from the president that signed it or from the successor. None of them, not the North American Free Trade Agreement, not its successor, currently the new treaty that Trump himself made. I mean, any promise, anything on paper is and will be broken. So the only thing that actually matters is the verifiable mechanisms that you create.

And I think Vladimir Putin understands that very, very well. So whatever is on the paper is one thing, but the verifiable mechanisms to make that operational, that's, in my view, what the Russians are going to be looking out for. And that's something that doesn't play on the level of, you know, let's put it into the Washington Post and the New York Times and brag about it as a big win. So the question is really the mechanisms that you create, because anything else at this point, I'm sorry to say, is just not reliable because of the way the system works at the moment in Washington.

## #M3

Well, you're right. And I would cite the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty that Trump himself withdrew from during his last year in office, which gave a degree of stability to Europe and the European part of Russia that had not existed since the war. When I say war, I'm talking about World War II, right? Now, they destroyed a whole class of missiles. They destroyed missiles that were built and in place. They destroyed them, like all intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles because of this treaty. Now, this treaty was one of the "do verai, no proverai," okay? Trust, but verify, okay? And you probably have had Scott Ritter on your show. Scott is a really good friend of mine. He was a UN inspector.

And he was the first to volunteer to go in and verify Soviet compliance with the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty. He ended up in this god-awful place called Votkinsk for two years. He did his job. And there were a lot of people saying, oh, the Russians would cheat. The Russians would cheat. Well, they didn't cheat this time, and he was able to verify that. So this is the big thing. If they could do this again, if they could get a verification regime, the intelligence community can play a very, very valuable, not only valuable, but extremely valuable role. And I know that personally because I was involved in the negotiations of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in 1971. I'm sorry, in 1972 is when it was signed.

I had three people assigned to work with the delegation, to work with the military experts, and then to report to the director of the CIA on the negotiations that were going on. And I got to go to Moscow for the signing. I was there. What a terrific feeling, you know. I was one of those people who used to hide under my desk, right? And I used to walk around New York City and say, my God, don't they realize, building these new buildings, that, you know, one misstep, they're going to be reduced to ashes? And all of a sudden, there we are, May of 1972, Nixon, Kissinger. They say, if we can conclude this, can you verify it?

And I turned to our technical specialists, who are beyond terrific people, and I said, oh, you people running the satellites and all that kind of stuff, what do I tell Kissinger? Well, okay. We don't know if the Soviets will cheat or not, but if they do, we'll catch them within 12 days. Okay. That was enough. That was enough. Did the Russians cheat? Yeah, they did. They built this god-awful radar in a place called Krasnoyarsk in the middle of Siberia a couple of years later, and we caught them within 12 days. And we said to President Reagan at the time, here are the photos, they cheated.

Now, what did Reagan do? He said, take those photos, show the Russians we got the goods on them, tell them to tear down that radar. We did. Now, they didn't. They said it was not a violation until Gorbachev came in, and he listened to us. He said, OK, we'll tear it down, and they tore it down. That's the way we used to work. You know, we talked to these people. We said, all right, look, we caught you red-handed. And so that can happen. So the verification parts of this were extremely important, not only with respect to SALT and the ABM, Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, but with respect to the Intermediate Nuclear Forces Treaty, which, as I say, Scott Ritter helped to verify.

And so those were the two bedrock strategic agreements, which Bush Jr., in the first place, got out of the ABM Treaty, and then, I hesitate to say his name, Trump, he got out of the last one.

So there's plenty of maneuver there. I mean, there is some sort of bilateral agreement, a strange one, between the Federal Republic of Germany and the United States to put intermediate nuclear forces back in Germany, of the kind that were there before the treaty. I don't know why. It wasn't a NATO decision. It was sort of like a codicil, sort of an appendage. Oh, yeah, we decided this as well. And when Olaf Scholz was asked, well, what was it? It doesn't make any sense. He said, well, the Americans wanted it, and so we said, okay.

## **#M2**

It's okay. The Europeans are, at this point, a lost cause. Maybe they will get their stuff together at some point again, but at this point, I mean, they're a poodle. So it's okay for the US to treat them as poodles. I mean, if you make yourself a poodle, you will be treated as a poodle.