

# How the West Fell for its OWN PROPAGANDA | Amb. Chas Freeman

Today I would like to share another brilliant talk of Ambassador Chas Freeman with you. This one was recorded as part of a Zoom event on February 20th, 2025 by Mr. Eddie O'Brien of the Thinking Center, an Irish civil society organization. The video is a Q&A type of roundtable with Ambassador Freeman and all of his insights are, as always, very much worth listening to. Among other positions, Ambassador Freeman served as US Assistant Secretary of Defense, as US Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, and he was Richard Nixon's principal interpreter during his 1972 visit to China, which led to the normalization of US-China relations. Chapters 00:00 Intro 02:02 Was the Russian invasion unprovoked? 07:18 Was America and Western Europe part of the provocation? 13:38 Was the lack of diplomacy astonishing to someone like you? 15:38 Does the west not see the value of diplomacy? 20:00 What is the role of "Empathy" vs. "Sympathy" in diplomacy? 28:12 How does Israel have so much lobbying power over the US government? 34:52 Is there a genocide taking place in Palestine? 37:13 So, where are we headed?

## #M1

We've all been living in the midst of the most intensive information warfare the world has ever seen. You have people who thought that it was a good idea—this is the Biden administration—not to discuss anything with the adversary on the battlefield. How that was supposed to accomplish anything is unclear. But there was no diplomacy at all. There was only fighting. The fighting steadily escalated amidst claims that Ukraine was winning, which was palpably false, amid claims that the Russian casualties vastly outnumbered those of Ukraine, which is also false, and amid repeated claims that the introduction of some new weapon would cure everything on the battlefield in favor of Ukraine. None of those things are true. And so people who believe those things, which is the majority in both Europe and America, but not the majority in the rest of the world, where there was great skepticism, now confront reality. The reality is completely at odds with what they've been told for the last three years.

## #M2

Hello, everybody. Today, I would like to share another brilliant video of Ambassador Chas Freeman with you. This one was recorded as part of a Zoom event on February 20th, 2025, by Mr. Eddie O'Brien of the Thinking Centre, an Irish civil society organization. The video is a Q&A type of roundtable with Ambassador Freeman, and I assure you all of his insights are, as always, very much worth listening to. Among other positions, as you might know, Ambassador Freeman served as US Assistant Secretary of Defense, as US Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, and he was Richard Nixon's

principal interpreter during his 1972 visit to China, which led to the normalization of US-China relations. With this out of the way, here you go.

## **#M2**

Was the Russian invasion unprovoked?

## **#M1**

No, it was not unprovoked. We began to hear as early as 1994 from Boris Yeltsin, before Vladimir Putin came to power, that the expansion of NATO and the presence of hostile forces on Russia's borders was unacceptable and would draw a military reaction. That reaction was actually further signaled during the brief war between Georgia and Russia. And there should have been no surprise. The war began actually as a civil war between Ukrainian Russian speakers and Ukrainian speakers in 2014 after the coup d'état in Kyiv, when the new ultra-nationalist government in Kyiv outlawed the use of Russian, Hungarian, Romanian, and other minority languages at the local level. So the Russian speakers, who were predominant in eastern Ukraine—in some cases, well, 75% in Crimea, but sometimes as much as 90% in the eastern oblasts—rebelled, and Russia naturally supported them.

So they wanted the right to use Russian to educate their children and to communicate with the local administrations. This actually resulted in a negotiation, two agreements at Minsk, sponsored by France and Germany, which were agreed to by the Russians, confirming that the Donbass region, Luhansk, and Donetsk would remain part of Ukraine, but on a basis similar to that of Quebec in Canada. That is, they would be allowed to have their own language as an official language and educate the children in that language. That agreement was first vigorously endorsed by Zelensky when he ran for president. And then when he came into office, it was repudiated, at which point Zelensky, Angela Merkel of Germany, and François Hollande of France both said, well, we didn't really mean that agreement.

It was just a means of gaining time for us to arm and train the Ukrainian armed forces against Russia. So the provocation began with attacks by ultra-nationalist Ukrainians on fellow Ukrainians who happened to be Russian-speaking in the East. It escalated to a Russian intervention against those ultra-nationalist Ukrainians. That went on for eight years. Fifteen thousand people died from barrages of artillery into the Russian-speaking areas. And eventually, in December 2021, Vladimir Putin demanded negotiations on three topics. One was a halt to any talk of bringing Ukraine into NATO or the implication that American and other anti-Russian forces would be stationed on Russia's borders.

The second was to reaffirm the Minsk Accords and the autonomy of Russian speakers in the East, and by implication, Hungarians and Romanians as well. There are other minorities in Ukraine. And finally, of course, a broad discussion of European security architecture with Ukraine as a neutral

party to that, rather on the model of the Austrian State Treaty of 1955, which was reached at the height of the Cold War. This treaty guaranteed Austria's independence and democracy and required Austria to treat its minorities—the Italians in the Tyrol, Slovenes, and Hungarians—in the manner that the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe requires.

So those were the three items for negotiation. They remain the three items for negotiation. There's one major difference, which is that Russia, now having had to go to war against Ukraine and occupying all or part of the four Russian-speaking oblasts in the East, now demands to keep them because it does not trust guarantees from Ukraine that, in fact, anything like the Minsk Accords is now possible to be implemented. So I'll end here. And I think that's a very brief history of the thing. There are many, many twists and turns in this, of course.

## **#M2**

Were America and Western Europe part of the provocation?

## **#M1**

Yes. Essentially, Putin and his government demanded a negotiation. They were answered by both the United States and Jens Stoltenberg, the Secretary General of NATO, with a flat refusal to discuss any of these topics. The only issue that we were prepared to discuss was limitations on stationing missiles and other armaments in Ukraine. So basically, in statecraft, if you cannot obtain satisfaction for your national interests by peaceful means, the alternative is to use force, and that's what Russia then did. So the provocation was the refusal to discuss things. And now that has, for three years, been the case. We've just seen in Riyadh an end to that period with a meeting between Americans and Russians at the foreign minister level, which has agreed on four points.

First, the American embassy in Moscow and the Russian embassy in Washington will be restored to full functionality through a process of tit-for-tat expulsions. They had essentially been gutted and become very ineffectual. So the embassies will be restored to enable a normal diplomatic relationship. Second, there will be continued dialogue at the foreign minister level, accompanied by the appointment of negotiating teams by the two sides to try to hammer out the parameters of peace for Ukraine, normalized U.S.-Russian relations, and some sort of approach to a broader peace in Europe.

Not really clear what all that will mean. But basically, it's positive, even though it initially excludes both Ukraine and the Europeans, because this dialogue had to start, and there has to be some basic agreement on the principles that will guide further discussion. And then the final point is that the Ukrainians and the EU will be brought into this discussion once parameters have been agreed upon. There is a great deal of discord and anger at this development, which is unilateral. It is sudden. There was no prior consultation of any consequence with the EU or within NATO or with Ukraine.

On the other hand, Mr. Trump has been on record from the very beginning saying that this is what he intended to do. He won the election. The question is, on the American side, why is it that the Ukrainians and the European members of NATO did not initiate a consultation about what this meant? And the answer seems to be because they don't know what to do. We've just seen a rump meeting of a small group of EU states in Paris, with Britain joining the meeting, even though it's no longer a member of the European Union. And they labored for three and a half hours and, like the mountains, produced a ridiculous mouse, if anything.

## **#M2**

Sorry, they produced what did you say?

## **#M1**

Ridiculous mouse in Latin, a ridiculous mouse. That is Horace. Anyway, so we now have the most unseemly and, I think, utterly counterproductive exchange of diatribes, insults, and accusations between our mercurial president and Mr. Zelensky, who, in my view, was led down the garden path to disaster and doesn't like where he is. So there we are at present. What happens next is the meeting between the negotiating teams, and we will begin to see what happens. But I'll make a final observation, and that is that the shock within the EU and NATO, and especially in the UK, is the result of the fact that we've all been living in the midst of the most intensive information warfare the world has ever seen. You have people who think, who thought that it was a good idea—this is the Biden administration—not to discuss anything with the adversary on the battlefield.

How that was supposed to accomplish anything is unclear. But there was no diplomacy at all. There was only fighting. The fighting steadily escalated amidst claims that Ukraine was winning, which was palpably false, amid claims that the Russian casualties vastly outnumbered those of Ukraine, which is also false, and amid repeated claims that the introduction of some new weapon would cure everything on the battlefield in favor of Ukraine. None of those things are true. And so people who believe those things, which is the majority in both Europe and America, but not the majority in the rest of the world, where there was great skepticism, now confront reality. The reality is completely at odds with what they've been told for the last three years. So naturally, this is a shock.

## **#M2**

Was the lack of diplomacy astonishing to someone like you?

## **#M1**

It was an astonishing mistake. There is a military adage that one should never lose contact with the enemy because if you do, you're liable to be flanked or surprised somehow. The same is true in international relations. You should never lose contact with an adversary. The model here actually is

Chinese. People don't remember, but in 1962, when the Sino-Indian border war broke out, China kept its embassy in Delhi open and did not withdraw it, which is the European custom. Similarly, in 1979, when there was fighting along the Sino-Vietnamese border, the Chinese embassy in Hanoi did not close. Why? Because it's precisely during a war that you most need diplomatic contact.

## **#M2**

Lincoln was in office for four years.

## **#M1**

He never once visited Moscow. Sergei Lavrov, a very, very able foreign minister of Russia, capable of being charming and, if necessary, obnoxious—two sides of the same coin, perhaps—never visited Washington for five years. Blinken and Lavrov ran into each other, or I should say ricocheted off each other at various international gatherings, but never spoke for more than 10 minutes and never exchanged more than pleasantries about, you know, a dozen things they'd seen and done—the sort of thing you do at the dinner table with relatives you don't like. So this is a tremendous lapse. And it makes it, as an American diplomat, really quite astonishing to me.

## **#M2**

Does the West not see the value of diplomacy?

## **#M1**

I think we live in an age in which three things have come together. One is the habit of democracies to demonize their enemies in a war. That has happened with a vengeance. Mr. Putin is now regarded as the incarnation of evil. Actually, if you listen to him, which is very hard to do because media channels are blocked and censored in the interest of the information war, he often makes a great deal of sense. He's clearly a strategic reasoner, and he has a good grasp of history from the Russian perspective, which you might not agree with, but at least he has an informed perspective. The second thing that's happened is that our communication in the political sphere is now online and controlled by media oligopolies, which have been essentially encouraged by governments to censor the communications of those who use them.

So this has become a big issue everywhere. I think it was most unjust of J.D. Vance to accuse Europeans of doing this when, in fact, we are doing it in the United States, despite the First Amendment to our Constitution. So that's the second thing: that is demonization. The third is the advent of political correctness. So if you do not adhere to the herd mentality, if you express a dissenting opinion, or if you try to introduce facts that do not accord with the narrative, you are pilloried, as appears to have happened to Professor Robertson. So I think these three things are mentally deadening, and we know from psychologists that if you repeat a falsehood long enough, it

becomes an axiom that can't be questioned. And that is exactly what has happened to us in the description of this warfare.

I think it's notable that, you know, Russian channels of communication, of course, the Russians engage in propaganda. Everyone does. I wouldn't say their propaganda is particularly effective. But good propaganda has to have a fixed relationship with the truth. And the final thing that has happened, given all these issues that I've mentioned, is that we live in a world in which everything is plausible and nothing is true. And we can't tell what is wrong and what is right anymore. We have fallen victim to social media, which are like Petri dishes for conspiracy theories. They connect you. If you believe that there are trolls under the bridge about to come out and get you, and you're on Facebook or some other social media outlet, they will put you in touch with other people who share your belief.

And pretty soon, you will have a conversation with no one who disagrees with you on that subject. Even though the trolls are without any empirical evidence whatsoever, everybody will believe in them. And that is what has happened in this context, and it's happened in others. You can look at the cover-up of the genocide in Palestine, for example. You can look at the demonization of Iran. You can look, in the case of the United States, at the demonization of China. Many untruths are now regarded as axiomatic. So we have a grave problem, Eddie, when we try to introduce facts as opposed to what the first Trump administration called alternative facts, which are not facts at all, but statements masquerading as facts.

## **#M2**

What is the role of empathy versus sympathy in diplomacy?

## **#M1**

Empathy is the basis for diplomacy. The purpose of diplomacy is to persuade another party to accept your view of that party's interests and what would benefit that party. In other words, to persuade the other party to do what you want that party to do because that party has been convinced that it is in its own interest to do that. That's what diplomacy is all about. In order to persuade someone to see things your way, you have to understand how they see things and why they see those things. And that is empathy. It is very different from sympathy because sympathy implies agreement. Empathy does not imply agreement. It implies nothing other than understanding. The lack of distinction between these things is very evident in charges of political correctness against dissidents.

You explain something because you understand it, and it is therefore a charge that you are sympathizing with it. So if you look at Ukraine... You could say, well, of course, the Russian invasion of Ukraine was utterly illegal under international law. It should never have happened. And interestingly, apparently, initially, Mr. Zelensky and the Ukrainian establishment understood that. And so at Istanbul in March of 2022, barely a month after the invasion occurred, Russia, with the

mediation of Turkey and the then Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, reached an agreement and a draft treaty, which they signed. Initially, of course, it had a referendum. It was to be ratified in a meeting between Zelensky and Putin.

And our good friend Boris Johnson then suddenly flew to Kyiv and apparently delivered a message to the Ukrainians saying, well, you may be ready for peace, but we're not. This illustrates that the purpose of the war, to the extent it had any purpose, was not to do anything for Ukraine, which has suffered terribly in this war, but to, in the words of Lloyd Austin, the then Secretary of Defense, weaken and isolate Russia. So it was a strategic move. And we were prepared to fight to the last Ukrainian to achieve it. And we are now down to pretty close to the last Ukrainian, which is why Wunderwaffen, wonderful weapons of some major new kind, are not going to produce a setback to the Russians.

The problem Ukraine has is it's lost too many men and women, and it just can't carry on an offensive. This is why the incursion in Kursk into Russia is such a disaster, because Ukraine sent its very best surviving troops in there, presumably to prepare for a trade-off of territories in a negotiation, and they are being devastated. Their defense perimeter is steadily contracting, even without the North Koreans. By the way, we don't know. The North Koreans are supposedly fighting there until they're not. Then they come back. But the interesting thing is they very conveniently commit suicide rather than being captured. So who has seen a North Korean interviewed, a prisoner of war from North Korea?

You know, there may be North Koreans fighting there. Kim Jong-un, the dictator of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, has wanted to have his troops tested in combat and to be battle-hardened. And he's getting that if, in fact, his troops are there. But we really can't tell. This goes back to nothing being absolutely true and everything plausible. We don't really know. We don't have any evidence that the North Koreans really are there. So I think this is just an illustration of the way in which we've been deprived of realistic information about what is happening on the battlefield. And the final observation, of course, is that what you lose on the battlefield, you can't regain at the negotiating table.

The parameters, the outcome of the battlefield, determine what is possible in terms of post-war reconciliation. I think you understand this in Ireland very well. So that is a reality. When I hear people complain about us giving away everything to Putin, the fact is Putin's grabbed a lot, and we can't take it away from him. So we need to be realistic about this. If you look at the geography, there is nothing between Moscow and the Pyrenees except flat plains, which are easily crossed by armies and indeed have been by Napoleon and by Hitler. There is nothing to the east of Moscow, to the Kamchatka Peninsula, except frozen tundra, which is also easily traversed by armies, as the Mongols demonstrated in their takeover of Russia.

So if you sit in Moscow and you look at the world, you are very, very sensitive to the idea that you could be invaded from the east or west and that you should not permit it. You need a cordon

sanitaire, a sort of belt of neutrality between you and potential enemies. Ukraine ought to be such a neutral place. It should be both a buffer and a bridge between Russia and the rest of Europe. And that is exactly what it probably will end up being if things go right. But in the meantime, we don't know. Perhaps a million Ukrainians have died. Ukraine started its independence with 52 million inhabitants. By the time the invasion began—I'm sorry, not the war, but the invasion, because the war began in 2014. The invasion didn't happen until 2022. That number was down to about 32 million because Ukraine's birth rate is the lowest in Europe.

And many Ukrainians emigrated. Ukraine was in terrible condition for much of that period. So, 32 million, it's now down to about 20 million because two and a half million, three million people, have taken political asylum in Russia. And the remainder have taken political asylum in Europe, with a million and a half of them in Poland and almost a million of them in Germany, and so on and so forth. Not any in the United States of any note, which, you know, belies our history as a refuge for people in need of one. Something that the Trump administration, I'm sad to say, is doubling down on, and worse, with mass deportations. Of course, we all dislike having too many foreigners in our presence, I suppose.

## **#M2**

How does Israel have so much lobbying power over the U.S. government?

## **#M1**

Well, I think a great deal of this is explained, of course, by the horrors of the Holocaust, which was a phenomenon in Europe, not in America. We liberated some of the death camps, although the major work was done by the Soviet Union, which is, again, something we don't like to acknowledge. People feel guilty, or they're subject to being made to feel guilty because they allowed genocide. And the genocide, by the way, was not just of Jews. It was of Romani, Egyptians, liberals, and communists. It was a vast program of deliberate massacre of people whose only crime was to be who they were and to believe what they did. And now we're seeing this again. And in the United States, let me tell you a story.

I can't remember exactly when it was, but I was in Abu Dhabi in the United Arab Emirates. Or perhaps it was Dubai, I don't remember. But I did turn on the TV in my hotel room to watch the evening news in Arabic. And one of the items that was featured was a home movie from someone in Gaza, which at that time was still settled by the Israelis. They hadn't yet reduced it to a concentration camp, as they did later. And I saw two plainclothes Israeli police intelligence officers carry out about a 17-year-old kid from his house, beat the living daylights out of him, kick him in the head, and finally shoot him in the head and walk away laughing. And I thought to myself, when this hits the press back home, all hell is going to break out. But, of course, it never appeared.



And we are self-censoring. Our media is, as it has just shown in the case of Ukraine, entirely capable of preventing any opinion other than what is most convenient for the government or interest groups to hold forth. So we have a society in the United States now in which we claim to be a democracy, but in many respects, we are a plutocracy, and much of that plutocracy is Jewish and associated with Israel and sympathetic to it in the sense that I mentioned earlier. And we now have the odd phenomenon of people who grew up under apartheid in South Africa, in positions of authority, imposing racist policies on us. And of course, Israel and South Africa during the era of apartheid were great buddies and worked together to build the nuclear weapons that both have and test them.

So, I mean, I dealt with South Africa, which was under apartheid, which was fascinating but hardly a delight. Anyway, we now have these people. We've even gone in the United States so far that Mr. Trump has just declared that Afrikaners, white South Africans, are now in danger of persecution and therefore should be admitted on a priority basis as refugees, whereas no one else should be admitted as a refugee. And, of course, 7% of South Africans are white. They own 70% of the land. That is the result of apartheid. And so the government has passed a law which establishes a procedure for expropriating unused land and redistributing it to the black African farmers. But the fact is, no such expropriation has yet taken place.

And so what we have is the resentments of Elon Musk, Peter Thiel, and David Sacks, I think, who are all expatriate South Africans who went through the trauma of the dismantlement of apartheid, which, by the way, the U.S. Agency for International Development was heavily involved in. I think that accounts for a good deal of Mr. Musk's enmity toward USAID. So, well, you know, in that case, perhaps we got the wrong immigrants. But we do have a plutocracy that manipulates our elections. I'll make a final point here. I think, in a sense, all of this in the United States may be self-correcting. Only 60% of Americans voted in the last election. Thirteen million previous voters did not show up at the polls. Mr. Trump got 49.8% of those who voted, not a majority, but a very strong plurality.

Kamala Harris, his principal opponent, fell short. I think she got about 47%. And the remainder were protest votes for third-party candidates of one sort or another. So when he says he has a mandate, he has a mandate from something below 30% of adult Americans. And what he's doing is destroying government services, creating chaos, interrupting everything to the point where Joseph Stiglitz, a Nobel Prize-winning economist of world renown, says the United States is no longer investable, that he wouldn't advise any foreigner to invest in the United States, and that Americans should withhold their investments until things settle down, the dust clears. So we are in a parlous state, and that, I think, accounts for a good deal of the erratic behavior that you see.

## **#M2**

Is there a genocide taking place in Palestine?

## **#M1**

I think we need to pay tribute to TikTok, which for young people has been a mechanism for showing reality as they perceive it directly, without filters. And it is exactly why the Israel lobby has set an objective in the United States of banning TikTok. It's got nothing to do with Chinese espionage and everything to do with the fact that it has succeeded in changing American opinion among youth, at least, including Jewish youth, to a majority that don't want to have anything to do with Israel's behavior or to be associated with it, and recognize that we are entirely complicit in everything Israel's done. It couldn't conduct the war for a minute if we were not supplying the funding and weaponry. Final point: as to whether there is genocide or not, there were 2.3 million Palestinians, we believe, in Gaza at the start of this war of annihilation.

Mr. Trump has said that he plans to redevelop Gaza and turn it into a resort with a Trump Tower and Trump International Hotel, to which Palestinians need not apply for lodging. He says there are now 1.7 million Palestinians to be removed, ethnically cleansed. The other day, another estimate I saw from Israel was that there were 1.9 million Palestinians. But where did the 400,000 or 600,000 go? And so I don't think there's any question. I know that the International Court of Justice and the International Criminal Court have meticulously examined the evidence and concluded that there is. So has Human Rights Watch. So has Amnesty International. So has B'Tselem, the Israeli human rights organization. So I don't think there's any question here unless you are a true believer in Zionism, which many are.

## **#M2**

So, where are we headed?

## **#M1**

Where are we headed? First of all, we're headed into turmoil, obviously. Let me break that down a little bit. The message that the Trump administration just delivered at the Munich Security Conference, the main message was that we're reorienting ourselves toward the Pacific and away from the Atlantic. Therefore, you Europeans who have for 80 years depended upon us to keep order in Europe are going to have to find your own means of keeping order. That was the message. I note that António Costa, who's the president of the European Council, has said that Europe must now negotiate a new security architecture with Russia.

It will take Europeans some time to come to agreement with him because of the shock that we've been discussing, the fact that they had misperceived reality as a result of information warfare. But they will come to that conclusion. And since Ireland is part of the EU, you may be one of the rational voices that encourages realism where there has been delusion. Having said that, 27 countries are no better than 27 people at reaching consensus. And Europe apparently can't make decisions. We just saw this, as I mentioned earlier, in the meeting in Paris, which was truncated.

You know, Italy was silent. Germany was opposed to sending troops to Ukraine. The UK said it would send troops but then qualified it, saying only if the Americans went too, which we've said we won't. And, of course, the whole idea of NATO forces in Ukraine is exactly what provoked the Russians into the war in the first place. So there will be—I don't know what will happen in Europe. I'm not European. I lost that qualification 400 years ago when my ancestors moved here. And so that's one thing. It's not clear to me. There are other elements, of course, in play.

There is Mr. Trump's delusion that foreigners, not Americans, pay tariffs. Their attacks are on us, not on the countries from which we import. We're very dependent on imports. We have been abusing the strength of the U.S. dollar with promiscuous sanctions on virtually everyone, with the result that the role of the dollar as the universal method of trade settlement is now in jeopardy. We have created a gathering, initially the BRICS, now an expanded BRICS, which began essentially as a protest movement against American hegemony, but which is now developing into an actual rule-setting body and has created institutions like the New Development Bank to remedy the stasis, inefficiency, and lack of reform in the World Bank, for example.

And we have China creating institutions like the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, which the United States is almost alone in boycotting. Interestingly, the AIIB follows precisely the same rules as the World Bank, with one difference. In order to apply for project finance at the AIIB, you don't have to be a member, whereas you must be a member of the World Bank to get the benefit of its financing. So the world is changing when new institutions are being created. There is a call for new institutions, new security arrangements. I guess, you know, one could go on and on. I don't want to do that.

So I will just say that I don't think the characterization that the Biden administration has put forward on world affairs, namely that they are organized around two great struggles, one between democracy and autocracy and the other between great power rivalries, is correct. And on the latter point, great power rivalry, one of the most interesting phenomena that we're observing is the reemergence of middle-ranking powers as forces in their own right. It's not an accident that Saudi Arabia, which aspires to such a role globally, was the site of the Russian-American meeting a few days ago. And we can look at, you know, Turkey as another example, and Brazil.

You know, what we're seeing is the emergence of what I call a multinodal world order, not multipolar. A pole is a line between two points. You know, the ends of the line are called poles. But what we're experiencing is the emergence of nodes, which are three-dimensional, not two-dimensional, can evolve, can turn, can accommodate thick connections and thin connections, and operate in three dimensions. So this is why we see countries, some European, who still pretend to be world powers, the French, for example. They're not world powers. They're not even able to hold their empire together in Africa these days. But they are a force as a middle-ranking power.

**#M2**

Japan is similar, re-emerging from its shell after the American occupation, becoming not just an economic player in

## **#M1**

Pacific Asia, but an increasingly active political and military player. So the world we knew, the bipolar order that you referred to in the Cold War, is no more. And that had its defects, but this is vastly more confusing and requires a nimbleness in diplomacy that we didn't have during the Cold War. Diplomacy in the Cold War resembled nothing so much as trench warfare. Once in a while, we'd do a little reconnaissance over the line. There was no expectation we could expand into enemy territory, and we fought in no man's lands. In the Third World, we had proxy wars. We were very careful not to have a direct war. We now face the danger of direct war, nuclear war. And you can see this in China's recognition that it can no longer afford to have a minimalist sort of strike force that would take a bite out of some other country that attacked it with nuclear weapons.

It now has to embrace mutual assured destruction, very appropriately spelled out M-A-D. And so, in a few years, we'll have 1,500 Chinese nuclear-armed ICBMs pointed at the United States, which is enough to totally destroy us, and then some. So this is another world that we're familiar with. It could resemble Europe in the 19th century in a sense. And this is my hope: that just as happened at the Congress of Vienna and the Concert of Europe, which managed a balance of power between multiple parties, kept the peace more or less, with a few hiccups like the Franco-Prussian War and the Crimean War, but kept the peace more or less for a century until 1914. I'm hoping we can learn from this. We can have an inclusive order.

We can have an order in which no one is allowed to exercise overall hegemony. And here, I guess I'll finish this. I see Mr. English has a question then. I'll finish this by just noting that we made a terrible mistake. The world made a terrible mistake. Ireland was a bit preoccupied at the time, I understand. But after World War I, instead of including everyone with power in Europe in a gathering, we decided to excommunicate Germany and Russia. And the result was World War II, and I would argue also the Cold War. We can't afford to do that. We need to emulate what Metternich and others did in Vienna in 1815: include the enemy. The French were brought back in even though they had been guilty of enormous disruption of European order and many, many killings.