

INTERVIEW: *Jeremy Kuzmarov*

# People Must See Through Their Differences To Outsmart the Oligarchy

*The following is an edited transcript of an August 7, 2024, interview with Jeremy Kuzmarov. Kuzmarov is a researcher, author and, university professor. He holds a PhD in history from Brandeis University. He is also the managing editor of Covert Action Magazine. He is best known for his well-researched and provocative assessments of the unpublicized agendas of the Obama, Clinton, and Biden administrations. He is the author of four books, including his most recent book, [Warmonger: How Clinton's](#)*

[Malign Foreign Policy Launched the U.S. Trajectory from Bush II to Biden](#) (Clarity Press, 2003), and numerous articles on these subjects. Kuzmarov is a cohost of "Left-on-Left," a show broadcast on Pacifica Radio in New York City and the Progressive Radio Network, and works with many peace and anti-war organizations.

*The interview was conducted by Cloret Ferguson of the LaRouche Organization. Subheads have been added.*

**Cloret Ferguson:** Your recent remarks, as guest speaker of a well-known anti-war organization, impressed me for identifying an important shortcoming plaguing organizations of this type: the left wishes only to speak with people who agree with their position. I think this is a big obstacle to unifying the peace movement around alternative policies that have a real voice and force to make a difference.

**Jeremy Kuzmarov:** Yeah, well, that's true. And I've lived in a conservative state for the last 15 years. So I think that kind of changed my view a little bit. I think there are a lot of people on the conservative side that you can engage with that actually may not be that



Jeremy Kuzmarov Facebook page  
*Jeremy Kuzmarov*

far away from where you are. And a lot of them want peace, they're not in favor of tax dollars going to these foreign wars—they see no benefit, and they're outraged too. So, you may have some difference on some issues, but I think ... people can come together on key issues like war and peace....

**Ferguson:** I would like to hear what you think about undoing this surveillance state. I'm concerned because as an associate of Lyndon LaRouche, I'm looking at today's situation, post

9/11, and asking why people are so surprised that we're in a surveillance state? People like Assange and others—Snowden, these people—came after what was done to my organization, where 400 armed personnel—FBI, you name it—descended on LaRouche's home, and would have probably killed him had it not been for his quick thinking, and calling Reagan and saying, you need to call this off, because I'm not some fly-by-night person, and you will be held responsible for this.... Then there are the letters between Kissinger and his friend former FBI Director William Webster saying, this LaRouche guy is giving me problems.

**Kuzmarov:** Firstly, the surveillance state is nothing new as you point out. LaRouche was one victim, and there are many victims going back decades. The FBI set up the operation COINTELPRO in the 1950s to not only spy, but to harass and dismantle any opposition political movements. And a target was leftist groups, like the Socialist Workers Party, the American Communist Party—these were legal parties that were dismantled. Many of their leaders were arrested on false charges; they had things planted on them. A target became the Civil Rights groups, particularly more radical ones—like the Stu-

dents for a Democratic Society, which was an anti-war organization—and they used all kinds of dirty tricks, and a lot of those are well documented now. They were trying to get Martin Luther King to commit suicide. Unfortunately, this has gone on for decades, and I think you have to look at the class interest.

I think Americans sometime loathe to acknowledge that there are huge class divisions in their society and that the country is really run by an oligarchy. It's not a functioning democracy. I mean, that's evident today. The Democratic Party anointed Kamala Harris—she was not selected or voted on in any kind of primary process; she was anointed. In the last primary she had only 1% I think. During the 2020 primary she actually stood with other candidates. She got about 1% of the vote. So this is not a popularly selected candidate, and that just underscored what has been going on for a long time: and that is that we are ruled by an oligarchy and a wealthy elite that is able to rig the political process, that resorts often to authoritarian methods, and that roots out opposition groups, whether it was the LaRouche group, whether it's a Students for a Democratic Society, whether it's the Socialist Workers Party.

What we can do to combat this, I think the first important step, is education. A lot of the public is not aware. The oligarchs control the media and indoctrinate people, so education is very important for independent political organizations. And they also control the education system increasingly, and I've experienced that directly. Faculty who promote iconoclastic views, especially on key issues, are purged these days—kind of Soviet-style purges—so this is a big problem. And yeah, we need independent education; we need independent media to try and better educate people. And then I think people need to come together along class lines to challenge this ruling oligarchy and the oppressive method that it uses to sustain its power, and the violence that it uses, whether against people here in the United States or abroad—the permanent warfare it wages abroad, which is a disgrace.

People really could come together, and that's why they play the game of divide and conquer. They artificially elevate partisan divisions and make people try and hate each other, or with the LaRouche group, they demonized that group—you're supposed to hate them or think that they're terrible people; not associate with them. But really, we need to forge a really large popular movement to restore democracy in the country.



CC/Smallbones

*The FBI's COINTELPRO program was discovered when anti-Vietnam War activists broke into the local FBI office in this building in Media, Pennsylvania, March 8, 1971.*

## The Role of Economics

**Ferguson:** I think that's a huge task, especially now. We had a big fallout in the financial markets recently. The primary focus of Lyndon LaRouche was the physical economy. And the fallout in the market a few days ago was much worse than 1987, from our standpoint. We look at that as the driving motive underlying these “forever wars” and the kind of clamp-down on freedom of speech and education and knowledge in places like the United States.

**Kuzmarov:** Yeah, I think that's a very good, interesting analysis that you present. And yeah, I think a turning point in modern U.S. history was the Federal Reserve Act of 1913, which gave a small collection of bankers control over the money supply. And they've continued to dominate the U.S. economy and buy off politicians, and we see waves of financial instability; we see growing financialization of the economy, and this underlies, as you point out, a lot of the violent foreign policy that we see, along with a lot of the erratic domestic policy. The move toward neoliberalism in the 1970s is another major turning point that's fueled huge, wider and wider class divisions, and the cutting of public services, the financialization of the economy, the decline of manufacturing. And there's really no loyalty to the nation-state. They've offshored a lot of the business, and they've gutted the manufacturing strength of the country, and that's something that needs to be revitalized....

I had discussions with others in your group, who promote the idea of returning to the Hamiltonian model

of cheap credit to support manufacturing in the country to revitalize the economy—a healthier economy—because right now the economy is ruined, and these financial interests—Wall Street speculation, speculative measures, arms production—that’s not healthy at all. That’s one thing that fuels the permanent war, because you have what Eisenhower warned about, the military-industrial complex, and how these top arms manufacturers warp the political structure, and sell arms to the worst dictators all around the world and fuel wars.

So we need to return to an economy rooted in civilian manufacturing, and Hamilton had outlined a vision for that. I mean, that is what made America great originally, as far as its economic growth, was the investment in manufacturing, and the establishment of a bank that provided loans on reasonable bases for companies that were involved with manufacturing. Back in the Kennedy administration, he provided tax incentives for manufacturing firms. So, I think those are some of the policies we can return to, to restore some of the balance. But again, I would agree with that assessment: that you have these runaway financial elite and narrow interests of Wall Street firms, like BlackRock and JP Morgan, and they fuel a lot of these wars. Look at Ukraine:

I was just on a program yesterday. They were discussing the reconstruction efforts and how Zelensky is being pushed to privatize Ukraine’s economy. BlackRock already has huge investments in Ukraine, and BlackRock also has huge influence in the Biden administration; even some top officials come from BlackRock. It’s increasingly brazen that these companies dominate the operations of the United States government, and this policy is



*BlackRock headquarters in New York City. BlackRock is one of the financial giants profiting from the “forever wars” of the United States and Global NATO.*



*Larry Fink, the CEO of BlackRock.*

that there’s no interest in peace at all. You have negotiations starting, and then they assassinate the chief negotiator. Imagine if things were reversed, if Hamas or Iran was assassinating an Israeli leader or an American leader. Imagine how our media would portray them and that act. It’s a heinous act and it showed the true nature and lawless character of this leadership. They clearly

wanted the war. From the beginning, the Netanyahu government, from the time he came in the late 90s, was intent on sabotaging the peace process that had developed in the 90s. And that was not a perfect process, but it was a start. But his party was committed to destroying that process, and they bragged about funding Hamas, the most militant elements of the Palestinians. They wanted to divide the Palestinian people, and they didn’t want a negotiating partner. This is just taking that to another level. To add insult to injury, they assassinated him on Iranian soil, threatening to trigger a war with Iran.

For years, they wanted regime change, and I think they’re delusional to think that they could achieve re-

terrible for Americans and for humanity.

## **No Interest in Peace**

**Ferguson:** Look at the assassinations that have occurred in the last two weeks, and how Netanyahu was given standing ovations before the U.S. Congress. This is unheard of, the assassination of this negotiator for peace, Haniyeh. We’re on the brink of a possible confrontation between the superpowers, or a breakaway ally scenario with Israel threatening to use nuclear weapons against Iran.

**Kuzmarov:** Well, I agree with your assessment. It’s kind of lawless behavior and it shows that there’s no interest in peace at all. You have negotiations starting, and then they assassinate the chief negotiator. Imagine if things were reversed, if Hamas or Iran was assassinating an Israeli leader or an American leader. Imagine how our media would portray them and that act. It’s a heinous act and it showed the true nature and lawless character of this leadership. They clearly wanted the war.

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gime change, and that military operations against Iran could somehow change the political situation in Iran. Again, this is delusional, because Iranians will fight to defend the revolution of 1979, and ensure the sovereignty of Iran. Before that, Iran was ruled by the Shah, who was a puppet of the United States and West, and who sold off the country's assets and oil interests to Western corporations. The Iranian people are not going to allow that, whatever the flaws of the current Iranian government.

These are the same neo-cons who marched into Iraq and said it would be a cakewalk. And I heard these people as a graduate student in 2003. These were professors—people supposedly to be respected—telling me that the Americans are “liberators” and we’re going to “liberate” Iraq; that they would be greeted with flowers and this is a great cause of our time. I raised some questions to a guy in the political science department and he was kind of angry at me—and he was so wrong. I mean, this guy’s a fool and they make him this distinguished professor. The school is a fairly prestigious school, and a lot of professors were advocating that position. So again, it’s the same delusions. It’s going to lead to catastrophe for humanity. It’s already caused the deaths in the Gaza war.

The *Lancet* magazine has said as many as 186,000 Gazans may have been killed, and others have been starved and displaced. This is a horror show, and the Biden administration is deeply complicit. They provided massive weaponry. They escalated the arms supplies which were already massive, and vetoed any effort at ceasefire at the United Nations—before this assassination—and the whole world wanted a cease fire.

The other point I can make is that the Netanyahu government betrayed the Jewish people. They betrayed the hostages. Those hostages that are still in captivity could have long been returned if there was any commitment to peace, but many may be killed now. Netanyahu has made Israel a very unsafe place to live. There will be reprisal attacks by Iran, by Lebanon, for all his aggressive acts. Israel has become a pariah state, hated around the world for what it’s done. And that’s sad for Jewish people. Jewish people have been persecuted historically, and the idea of Israel was to be a haven for Jews, not a state that would carry out these murderous operations against neighboring populations, armed to the teeth by the world’s greatest empire.

I think it’s sad for Jewish people that they’re unsafe because of these reckless and criminal leaders, and

the U.S. is deeply complicit. The U.S. uses Israel as a proxy to try and achieve its goal of dominating the Middle East and controlling the oil supply, and that’s why they continue to arm Israel. And they support the far-right, as much as Biden may at times try and distance himself, the reality is they support the project of “greater Israel.” The Israeli far-right wants to forge a greater Israel. They want to basically ethnically cleanse the Palestinians and expand Israeli power and control over the occupied territories, which will strengthen Israel’s economy—they believe. And the U.S. basically supports that project because Israel’s their proxy in the Middle East. The U.S. has bases in Israel. The U.S. has intelligence sharing, and Israel does a lot of America’s dirty work going back to the Six-Day War where they took out Nasser. The CIA had been trying to assassinate Nasser and get rid of him because he was viewed as a problem. He wanted to assert Arab control over their natural resources, oil, and he nationalized the Suez Canal. They wanted him gone. They like a pliable leader they can control, and they couldn’t get rid of him. Then Israel did the job, and the Six-Day War weakened him and humiliated him.

So, that’s just an example of how Israel does America’s dirty work, and they reward them with these massive weapons supplies and immunity from prosecution for criminal activity.

### **A Tipping Point for Israel and the Broader Region**

**Ferguson:** Even though Iran has gone by the book and notified Hungary and others that they intend to retaliate against Israel, the fact is Iran hasn’t done anything. Have you picked up or do you know what the atmosphere is like now? What is the temperature of the situation there vis-à-vis Israel?

**Kuzmarov:** That’s a good question. I don’t have any special insights. I mean, Iran is obviously in a very difficult position, because they don’t want to be attacked or invaded. As much as they would be confident their people would defend the country, the last thing they want is to be bombed by the Israelis and the United States. They have to proceed very, very cautiously. Of course, it’s intolerable that a foreign country would assassinate a leader on their soil, just as their embassy was attacked in Syria. I don’t know what their government is planning to do. It’s a very difficult decision for their government.

In Israel, Netanyahu seems to need these wars to sustain his own power. A lot of Israelis are upset. There have been a lot of protests. He was facing indictment on corruption charges, and the war was really a way to divert the attention of the population. It's an old trick of ruling elites. During the First World War, Randolph Bourne, in *War Is the Health of the State*, wrote about how war is used to diffuse class conflict and opposition. Netanyahu used October 7, which clearly could have been prevented. But he and his ruling circle wanted those attacks to go forward. They wanted a wider war, and part of that may have been just to sustain his own power and to divert these protests.

A lot of those protests centered on the economic divide in Israel, much like in the United States. Israel's kind of a mirror image of the United States, with its own military-industrial complex, its own financial elite and billionaire class that own the politicians, and widening social inequalities and difficulty in living standards. Regular people in Israel are struggling to get by and jobs are increasingly scarce, even for college graduates, who can't get the same kind of job as existed generations ago that gave the comfortable middle-class lifestyle. The working class is struggling to pay its bills, working harder and longer hours.

That was brewing into major protests in Israel against Netanyahu's neoliberal economic model and diffused for a time. My understanding is the protests are developing and they're getting pretty big—and the signs I saw are demanding peace. Some are calling for a return of the hostages. My point is that Netanyahu has betrayed the families of the hostages, who could have been returned if there was a peace settlement early on. Those people could have been returned safely. Instead, he's pursued this aggressive militaristic policy.

So that's some of the demands, and this could develop into a kind of revolutionary movement. Israelis are suffering, their economy's worsening, they're becoming more isolated internationally. How long can they endure this permanent warfare? They're now a target; they can be a sitting duck ... if Iran responds. The Houthis already attacked Tel Aviv. They're becoming sitting ducks. Why would Israelis want this? This is like a Vietnam; they can never defeat Hamas entirely.



OrBaren Facebook page

*An Israeli protest in Jerusalem, July 25, 2020 against Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.*

The goal of completely taking control of the Occupied Territories is an illusionary one. So, we may see growing civil unrest in Israel, and that would be welcome, given the horrific nature of that government in Israel.

### **The Alternative of 'Peace Through Development'**

**Ferguson:** This past year, Helga Zepp-LaRouche, wife of Lyndon LaRouche and founder of the Schiller Institute, initiated with several other organizations the International Peace Coalition as an attempt to unify the peace movement and the anti-war movement, around the idea of "peace through development." Mr. LaRouche, back in the 1970s, developed the Oasis Plan, a plan for water and power development for the region of Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza. Are you familiar with these initiatives, and with this dialogue process, which has brought together leaders, diplomats, such as Chas Freeman, and others from across the political spectrum?

**Kuzmarov:** I have not reviewed the plan. I know Chas Freeman because I interviewed him when I published a book on Obama's foreign policy. We were discussing the Pivot to Asia policy.... He had been interpreter to Richard Nixon when he opened to China, which was a very enlightened policy of the Nixon administration, in contrast to that of the Obama administration—and Trump and Biden have had really the wrong approach to Southeast Asia. This pivot to Asia moved a lot of U.S. military forces from the Middle East into Southeast Asia to encircle China. Freeman was telling me, quoting Xi Jinping—I quoted this in a chapter of my book—Xi Jinping had called for a "win-

win” strategy. Freeman said this should be the approach; that China is not a threat. Its economic growth could actually be positive for the American economy, and we should try and harness their growth to our own growth. And there’s really a lot of opportunities for economic collaboration and growth on both sides, for both countries, if they work together.

The opposite approach, the tendency to view as a threat China’s growing economy, which is challenging the United States because they’re growing and will supersede the U.S. economically—the view that this is a threat and that China has to be contained militarily could lead to a world war. Western interests are basically planning for world war, revitalizing old military bases in the Pacific Islands that had not been in use since World War Two. They’re creating the infrastructure where they could attack China or attack another country, in a kind of proxy war reminiscent of Vietnam. So it’s a very dangerous situation.

Freeman has eloquently offered an alternative vision that I would hope, in the future, political candidates and parties would embrace. He’s worked for years in Washington in the diplomatic corps, so he has an “insider” perspective on how things work. He’s a very, very smart guy.

I think these development plans are important, to develop alternative policies to this policy of permanent warfare; to show people that coexistence is possible—a benefit to Israel and Gaza—that both people could potentially flourish. It’s not necessarily favoring one or the other. Israel does not need to conquer Gaza and steal its



*The Oasis Plan*

Asuka Saito Burke, April 2024

resources to develop this canal or to improve the water situation in Israel. There’s a way for cooperation, where both people can live in peace and prosperity together; that’s the ultimate goal. And I think, yes, it’s important to advance concrete plans that people can see how it works practically; to push those plans and hopefully to get policymakers—either get people into elected office or to coordinate with people in the policy arena who can try to push this, and to bring it to the public as an alternative; to build these coalitions for peace and against this criminal oligarchy that runs the country in the United States now and in Israel.