

## III. Interviews

Interview: *Professor Jeffrey Sachs*

# Tell Your Government—Stop These Wars

*This is part 2 of EIR's interview with Professor Jeffrey Sachs. Prof. Sachs is currently a Professor at Columbia University, has held positions around the world as an economist, and has become one of the most outspoken peace advocates in the United States. The interview was conducted on October 14, 2024, by EIR's co-editor Michael Billington. Subheads have been added. The video is available [here](#).*

**Michael Billington:** Speaking of Russia, I was quite struck by your description, when you did this interview with Tucker Carlson, of this really incredible moment, sitting in the Kremlin across from Boris Yeltsin, when he came in and announced the end of the Soviet Union. But most interesting was that, you said he then asked you, "What's the U.S. response going to be?" And you answered that you totally believed at that moment that in fact the U.S. would say, "Great, we'll help any way we can for you to become a normal country," which is the term that Yeltsin was using for what he aspired for Russia to be. And of course, you didn't get that response in Washington. What happened when you came to the U.S. with that proposal?

### How the U.S. Betrayed Post–Cold War Russia

**Prof. Jeffrey Sachs:** The story in brief was that I became, through lots of quirks, twists and turns, an advisor to Poland in 1989, as Poland was making the transition from the Soviet-style system to a democracy and a market economy. I worked with both the government, which was the last of the communist governments, and then with the new post-communist government after elections took place on June 4, 1989.



Gabriella C. Marino, 2022

*Economist Jeffrey Sachs*

I was in a very central role. I was kind of a kid, but I had ideas that were helpful for them. And one of the ideas, for example, was to cancel a lot of Poland's debts, which had occurred during the Cold War period, so that Poland could have a fresh start. And I had another idea of helping them to stabilize their currency to avoid a high inflation. I had the idea of creating a special fund to stabilize the Polish currency. And when I presented that to the U.S. government in 1989, it was accepted within eight hours. I said, Poland needs \$1 billion, and I presented the case to the National Security Adviser, General [Brent] Scowcroft, one morning in September 1989. And

by the end of the day, the White House said, "Okay, tell your friends they have a \$1 billion stabilization fund." Then Poland stabilized, and it became integrated quickly within the Western European economies. It was a difficult period, for sure. This was a tumultuous era. But Poland began economic growth and stability, and it got Western financial help, and it got a large part of its debt canceled.

Well, [then-Soviet Premier Mikhail] Gorbachev's economic advisor was watching, going to Poland. "What's going on here?" And then he contacted me and said "We'd like to do the same thing; what do you think about Western help for us?" I said, "Of course, of course there'll be Western help. Gorbachev's a man of peace. He's talking about a common European home. This is a dream that the U.S. has hoped for, for decades. Of course, there will be help for Gorbachev." And so I worked with a small team at MIT and Harvard in the spring of 1991 to make a proposal to make a plan for help for Gorbachev's reforms. The leader of that, who

was the one who was closest to the White House—to President George H.W. Bush—took the plan, which was a very good, sensible plan, to the White House in the spring of 1991—and it was flatly rejected. “No way we’re going to help the Soviet Union.” Complete dismissal. Gorbachev went back from the G7 summit in 1991 empty handed, and he was abducted in a putsch attempt. And that was basically the end of his power—and within a few months, the end of the Soviet Union itself.

Now, then, that was in August. In September, Yeltsin was now the ascendant politician of Russia, not the Soviet Union. His economic advisor called me and said, “Okay, Jeff, come to Moscow; help us.” And I said, okay. So I went to Moscow and Boris Yeltsin was already President of Russia, but there was still the Soviet Union. And he said, “We want to be normal. We just want to be cooperative. We want to end this communist system. We want to just be a normal country; normal foreign policy” and so on. I said, “Great! This is unbelievable. We’re living through the dream world of history. It’s not the Soviet Union even; who could object?”

### **Yeltsin Declares: ‘The Soviet Union Is Over’**

So it happened that in December, mid-December 1991, we had a meeting in the Kremlin, and I was the head of the delegation, a small delegation of Western economists. And Yeltsin and his economic team were to meet with us. We sat in a room in the Kremlin—this was the Cold War; this was 33 years ago; this was the mortal enemy. And here I am—I just have to say, it was 1991, so I was 37 years old—there I am, and Yeltsin comes across this giant room in the Kremlin, and he sits down face to face and literally, he says with a big smile on his face, “Gentlemen”—because we were all men, actually—“I want to tell you, the Soviet Union is over.” And to hear this with your own ears in the Kremlin. This was through a translator, of course, just to be clear. And he pointed to the doorway in the back where he had just come out, and said: “Do you know who is in that room?” Of course, we didn’t know. And he said, “The leaders of the Soviet military, and they have just agreed to the dissolution of the Soviet Union.” So, I heard it with my own ears; that moment, real time.

Then we had a one hour or so meeting, and Yeltsin was pitch perfect. He said: “We want peace. We want to end this whole era. We want to be a normal economy.

We want normal relations with everybody. We want peace with the United States.” Then they turned to me. I was head of the delegation, and, you know, I’m floating at this point because this is the end of the Cold War, and you’re sitting there watching this in real time. And I said, “Mr. President, this is the most wonderful news. This is the chance for peace in our era. We will help you. We’re here to help you, Mr. President. And I am determined to go home, back to my country, to the United States, to relay your message and your words that Russia wants peace. Russia wants a normal relationship.” Russia needed financial help because this is a real crisis right now economically. And I assured him, I said, “I can’t imagine this. Of course, this is the dream we’ve been waiting for, for generations: the chance for peace; the chance to end the Cold War.” I really believed it.

I flew home and I went straight to Washington and straight to the IMF, actually, because they were the coordinating group. The deputy managing director told me—someone I knew: “No, it’s not going to happen.” “What do you mean, no?” And he stood there kind of with just a cold face. He was a messenger explaining, “No, it’s not going to happen.” I’m pretty stubborn, pretty optimistic, you could say naive at that moment, but I thought, “You just don’t understand. The Cold War just ended—all that we’ve been working towards for decades. It’s over. Make peace. Give a little help.” And I was sure that it would happen; and I persisted.

In January 1992—February 1992; I think it was March 1992, I’m not absolutely sure—but somebody recently just sent me the tape when I appeared on the MacNeil-Lehrer Newshour, on national television, together with the acting Secretary of State at the time, Lawrence Eagleburger. We were on together, and I made the case: “Of course, we have to help these people. Are you kidding? This is the greatest moment of world peace possible.” Eagleburger was saying, “No, no, we’re not going to do that” and so forth. “We have to be very careful.” I don’t remember exactly his arguments, but I found it incredibly frustrating. And at the end of the show—the lights went off, the cameras went off—and he said to me very nicely, “Jeff, can I give you a lift back to the District?” We were in Alexandria, Virginia, the PBS studio. I said, “Yes, Mr. Secretary.” And we got in his car and he said to me, “I want to explain something to you, Jeff. You know, all the arguments you gave—it’s interesting. But the Polish Finance Minister was here last week, and he

said the same thing you're saying. And so I want to tell you, even if I agree with what you're saying, I do want you to know it's not going to happen."

I was a little perplexed, because he just said, "even if I agree with you." And I said, "I don't understand. Why?" He said, "Do you know what year this is?" I said, "Yes, I do. It's 1992." He said, "Do you know what that means, Jeff?" I said, "Well, do you mean that it's a presidential election?" He said "Yes. It's not going to happen." Well, I thought, anyway, that it would happen because it was necessary to happen, that we would help, that we would stabilize, that we would have normal relations.

### **Rise of the Neocons**

But there were two senses in which it wasn't going to happen. One was the short term political sense. The other was a much more serious one that I didn't really appreciate at the time, even for years afterwards. That was the very moment that [Paul] Wolfowitz and [Dick] Cheney and others were plotting what they decided would be U.S. hegemony. They didn't want to help Russia: Russia was still an enemy; Russia was a big state; Russia was a challenger; Russia was a threat, in their view. So, what they wanted was U.S. power; U.S. dominance. And this is, of course, what they put into action; what we call the neoconservatives.

And they were there already in 1992 in the White House. By the time [President Bill] Clinton came in, I had high hopes. "Okay, maybe it'll change with Clinton." So I tried one more time. But just before Clinton took office, the person who had been advising Clinton on Russian affairs wrote to me or called me and said, "Jeff, I'm quitting. I'm not going to join the administration because they're not interested, either, in helping." I said, "No, it can't be!" In retrospect, it's amazing. I went in; I met the new team under Clinton. I explained how urgent it was to give financial help and to have normal relations. This was Strobe Talbott, who was the lead Russia adviser of Clinton, and Clinton's roommate during his time at Oxford. The deputy was Victoria Nuland, who became one of the leading neoconservatives for the next 20 years. Clinton had the same attitude: "We're not going to help. We're going to expand NATO."

So, what turned out, Mike, over the next 30 years, was that the U.S. had no intention of having normal relations with Russia; the U.S. wanted dominance. It wanted dominance through NATO expansion; it wanted

dominance by leaving the various nuclear arms control agreements—like the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty or the Intermediate Nuclear Force Agreement or the Open Skies Agreement. The U.S. said, "We're doing it our way: We don't need these treaties; we don't need you; we don't care about your objections to NATO enlargement; we don't respect you. Basically, this is our show: We'll take out [Iraqi President] Saddam Hussein; we'll take out [Syrian President] Bashar al-Assad; we'll take out the government in Afghanistan; we'll overthrow [Libyan President] Muammar Qaddafi; we'll overthrow [Ukrainian President] Yanukovich. This is the U.S. show, thank you very much. This is not the UN Charter; this is not mutual respect; this is not collective security. This is a U.S.-led world, what we call the "rules-based order," which means, "We rule, that's the order."

### **Weaponization of the Dollar**

**Billington:** One of the main weapons they used in this process was the weaponization of the dollar, with these massive sanctions all over the world, and secondary sanctions, and you name it—in addition to the regime change wars, when the sanctions didn't work well enough. But as I'm sure you know, the BRICS meeting, which is coming up in just two weeks, is formulating new policies in this process on how to deal with the collapsing Western economies and how to run a more sane system.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, on October 4, at a meeting, interestingly, of the Russian Security Council—not the economics team, but at the Security Council—used these words: "I suggest that we discuss measures for establishing an international payment system—one of the biggest challenges we face." And again, this was a meeting on security, which certainly demonstrates that he knows that the war policy is driven by the collapsing Western financial system and that new systems are urgently necessary. So, as you've just described, you've been deeply involved with Russia. I think you've had similar relations with China and other nations on ideas for new systems. What do you expect from the BRICS meeting and what do you recommend?

**Prof. Sachs:** Basically, like you say, the U.S. weaponized the dollar. And what that means is that most payments for international trade are actually denominated in U.S. dollars. They're made in banks that hold dollar

reserves. And they use a clearing system called SWIFT, which is based in Belgium. The U.S. dominates that system, of course, because it's the U.S. dollar. The Federal Reserve is the ultimate issuer of the dollar and, geopolitically, the U.S. controls the SWIFT system. So, what the U.S. has been doing now for a couple of decades with countries that it doesn't like—it's a growing list because those countries don't like what the U.S. is doing—but countries like Iran, Afghanistan, Russia, Venezuela and others that the U.S. aims at, is putting on financial sanctions that in various ways prevent not only U.S. trade with those countries, but any country trading with those countries that the U.S. targets through this dollar based trading system.

So, if a country wants to—let's say a Chinese company wants to import something from Russia—you'd say fine, they don't care about U.S. sanctions. But it's not so simple, because when the Chinese company wants to make a payment, it would usually make a payment through its bank, which would then have a corresponding relationship, say, with a Russian bank, and the payment would be made. But the Chinese bank, typically, is a major bank in international commerce. And it would also use dollars, even if the particular purchase of the Russian good was denominated in rubles or in renminbi, the Chinese bank would also be engaged in dollar-based trade, because that's how most trade is run. And then the U.S. would say, "Ah, you're dealing with Russia," and the bank would say, "Yes, but it's not about you." "It doesn't matter. You're violating our sanctions. So we're going to cut you off not only for the Russia business, but for anything you're doing in the international system." These are the secondary sanctions that you're talking about. So what happens is that even if countries don't agree with the U.S. sanctions, even if they want to stay out of this, they cannot trade with Russia right now, because the banks that they would use to make payments are vulnerable to the U.S. sanctions.

I was recently in Mongolia, which is a country that lies between Russia and China, and naturally, a lot of the economic trade is with Russia. They cannot trade right now on a normal basis—not because they don't want to; of course they want to. They even need to. Not because there aren't things to sell and things to buy, but because the banks are afraid to have transactions with Russian counterparts, because the U.S. will sanction the banks not on those transactions, but on Mongolia's transactions with Europe, with the United States, with any place that uses the SWIFT

account, which is most of the world trade.

### **U.S. Sanctions Are Illegal**

So, what should Russia do? What should countries do that don't want to be vulnerable to U.S. sanctions, which, by the way, are illegal under international law because you're not allowed to do this—the U.S. is not allowed under international law to tell Mongolia you can't trade with Russia. You can have sanctions, but they have to be voted on by the UN Security Council. Those are the only legal sanctions. Every year the UN General Assembly votes to say "no country can unilaterally tell other countries how to have their third party trade." That's illegal. But the U.S. does it anyway because it doesn't care about international law, it cares about U.S. power. And so, if countries want to have trade and not be subjected to this illegal system that the U.S. foists on these countries that it doesn't like, it has to have non-dollar payments. That sounds easy—and it is easy in one sense. So, don't trade in dollars; trade in rubles, trade in renminbi, trade in rupees.

But the problem is, you also need banks or institutions that are not also doing normal dollar business, which is most of the world's banks, because they become vulnerable to the U.S. if they're going around U.S. illegal sanctions with some non-dollar part of their business. So, the long and the short of it, Mike, is that there needs to be a set of banks or other related institutions that just have no dollar business. They can be special vehicles that are established just to say, "No, we don't like your sanctions. They're not legal. And you can't touch this institution because it has nothing to do with your SWIFT system. So how are you going to punish it?" I think that this is the direction that they're heading, because they actually don't want one country, or even one country and its NATO allies, deciding how they trade with other countries. If the U.S. says such and such country is a bad actor, take it to the UN. Go to the UN Security Council; see how far you get. If you win the unanimous vote, you can put on sanctions, because UN sanctions are perfectly allowable. The Security Council has that power, but you don't have the power to do it just by yourself.

### **Alternative to SWIFT Urgently Needed**

**Billington:** So, you're optimistic that the BRICS will come up with a resolution to this?

**Prof. Sachs:** They will, yes, because this is not an enormously complicated technical problem. This is not

some magic technology that only the U.S. has so there is no way to trade other than through SWIFT. The SWIFT system actually is a little bit antiquated in the digital age. The way that SWIFT makes clearances is basically out of date, 10 or 20 years, perhaps. And so, there are all sorts of technical solutions that the BRICS can do. And my view is they'll do them, because they need to do them. They don't want to live in a system where the U.S. is able to crush their economy at will.

It didn't work with Russia because Russia has a highly fungible set of exports, mainly oil, that it could continue to trade, and a lot of the world wants their oil. And so, the sanctions didn't work to crush their economy. But when similar comprehensive sanctions were put on Venezuela to try to topple the government of President Nicolás Maduro back in 2017, especially 2018, it did crush the Venezuelan economy—not because they couldn't ship oil, by the way, but because they couldn't get spare parts to keep the oil production going. And so Venezuela's oil production collapsed with the U.S. sanctions and the Venezuelan economy suffered a catastrophic decline.

Interestingly, by the way, it didn't lead to the toppling of the government, because the sanctions don't have that political effect that the U.S. dreams they do. They just have a nasty effect of impoverishing people; of making children die because they can't get health care, because the hospitals can't stock basic antibiotics and basic materials. So, they create a lot of suffering. They don't achieve America's political goals. So, they are weapons that go wildly off their aimed trajectory, but they do a huge amount of damage. They are plainly illegal, but a country like Venezuela couldn't get around them. Russia was able to get around them.

**Billington:** I'm going to bring up a philosophical issue. In July, you published a proposal for ten principles for Perpetual Peace in the 21st Century. This began with the Five Principles of Peaceful Coexistence, which had been proposed by China and was adopted by the Asian-African Conference in Bandung in 1955. You proposed five additional principles which called for, among other things, eliminating overseas military bases and ending these regime change wars that we've discussed, a nuclear restraint and general disarmament, restraint on security policies, and reform of the UN. Helga Zepp-LaRouche also issued what she called [Ten Principles of a New International Security and Development Architecture](#). And while I think she would generally agree with the importance of your proposed

principles, she believes that underlying the global crisis we face today is the moral and cultural decline in the majority of the populations of the Western world, which you sort of hinted at yourself.

**Prof. Sachs:** Yes.

### Human Creativity as a Force for Peace

**Billington:** Helga addressed the economic development of all nations, including the education and health care for all people. But more importantly, she added a philosophical point. Several actually, but especially the 10th Principle, which I'll read: "The basic assumption for the new paradigm is that man is fundamentally good and capable of infinitely perfecting the creativity of his mind and the beauty of his soul, and being the most advanced geological force in the universe, which proves that the lawfulness of the mind and that of the physical universe are in correspondence and cohesion, and that all evil is the result of a lack of development, and therefore can be overcome." So that's her 10th Principle.

This is something that most people can accept only with deep reflection. It's not obvious. But, she said, it is in fact a common thread in all the world's great religions, and is necessary if populations can be raised to a higher level of human creativity, as is needed if there's going to be a truly global solution. So what are your reflections on this?

**Prof. Sachs:** Well, I like it, a lot. It is almost a quote of Mencius, who was the leading disciple of Confucius, although two generations away, but the great brilliant thinker who followed Confucius. He said, "Human nature is good." That was his argument. But he made a point, and I think it's very similar to what we just heard. He said, "Human nature is good, but it doesn't mean all people are good. The goodness has to be cultivated." And he said, "People are like sprouts. The seed has the potential to become the healthy plant, but it has to be nurtured in order to develop the right way." So, human beings are good doesn't mean they're automatically good, or that all humans are good, but that they have the potential for good.

Aristotle had a similar point. Aristotle also said that human beings have the potential to be good, and actually have the human nature that aims for good. His idea was, we have to use our heads. We have to be rational; learn to think rationally and train ourselves not to be carried away by hostile emotions, or by

impulses, or by instinct—but learn to think. And he called that practical wisdom. And there’s an ancient Greek term for it called *phronesis*, which is the ability to use reason, to choose well, to make peace, to behave as good citizens, to be friends.

And just like Confucius and Mencius, Aristotle said, we have the potential, but it’s not guaranteed. There obviously are a lot of bad people, but we should cultivate the good. And so, the idea of an ethics is—and I think it’s exactly the statement you read—it’s not to say the world is perfect and wonderful and human beings are good; it’s to say we can develop the good side of our human nature. We have bad tendencies. We have tendencies to cheat, to lie, to follow impulses, to become addicted to power or to other things. But we can cultivate the good side with practice, with mentorship, with reading good books like the *Nicomachean Ethics* by Aristotle or the *Analects* by Confucius, and reflecting on what they teach. We can become good people.

And that was, of course, Confucius’s life mission, going around from kingdom to kingdom. It did not work very well in his lifetime, trying to convince the rulers to be good people and to rule by virtue rather than to rule by force or by greed. But he had the long term success that even hundreds of years after his death, a new emperor in the Han dynasty arose and said, that’s the philosophy I want to follow. He got the Confucian-learned scholars to come to his court and built a Confucian philosophy of governance in China. This was already 2,000 years ago, and it lasted, basically, until today. And so in this sense, this idea that we need an ethics of the good to underpin what we’re doing, I think is very correct, very real.

### **Stop the Crazy and Cooperate**

I was trying to make a list of how do we end these useless wars by direct action: Stop! The U.S. has 750 overseas military bases. Are you kidding? That’s already a kind of craziness. How can a country have 750 overseas military bases? Who do they think they are? What are we doing? Why are we spending hundreds of billions of dollars a year on this? And so I say, stop that! Stop all of this CIA led regime change operation business, which has gone on for decades, where you have these secret operations to overthrow governments. This doesn’t work. It destabilizes countries. It makes wars and danger. Very importantly, the U.S. walked out of several nuclear arms control agreements. We basically barely have a nuclear arms control framework at this point. And all indications are

we’re heading closer and closer to nuclear war. And so I think that this also deserves urgent attention. And then I point out at the end of my list that we actually have a lot of things we need to do together that we’re not doing—if we want to have prosperity, if we want to have safety—we have to cooperate.

And so we should also be directing attention to win-win ideas. Now, by the way, China has put forward these five principles and I add these five of my own. But China’s five principles are really attractive. They start with mutual respect. They call for non-intervention in the internal affairs of other countries. That’s also a basic standard of international law. They call for win-win cooperation. In other words, they’re smart Confucian ideas of how to get along. And I’m hoping, practically, that given all of these wars, these disasters, I want the countries in the UN actually to vote a list like this in the not too distant future. In other words, to reflect not just as an op-ed piece or a thought piece, but actually to put a set of principles together that at least can show the world this is a standard of good behavior; of statecraft. This is how we think countries should act so that we don’t blow ourselves to pieces. I think it will make a difference because even though not everyone behaves according to principles that are set, it helps people to understand what’s possible. I hope the General Assembly will do this in a very practical way. At least I’m trying to push the point; suggest the point to the governments right now.

**Billington:** We’re going to have a special event on October 26 in Manhattan. If you’re going to be back in New York, I encourage you to attend. We’re getting a large hall. We’re going to try to do sort of a shock effect conference with a thousand or more people. It’s going to be leading speakers of the sort that we’ve been having on our International Peace Coalition weekly meetings. But we’re also going to have a Classical music concert; Classical music including spirituals.

**Prof. Sachs:** Sounds great.

**Billington:** Musicians like Marian Anderson and others showed that the spirituals are more than folk songs or something. They are Classical in nature. They come from the heart and the mind.... The idea here is to sort of insist that a higher level of culture, and especially Classical music, is essential if people are going to change the way they think. And you said before, we have to make people think in a different way, and this is the intent of that event.

## Classical Music ‘Touches the Heart’

**Prof. Sachs:** I’ll still be in Europe, traveling, so I’ll miss that. But it sounds like a glorious occasion. Yes, I watched, by the way, in 2017, 2018 when the G20 was hosted by Germany in Hamburg. German Chancellor Angela Merkel called for a concert for the leaders, and I happened to be sitting in the audience in a balcony just over the world leaders of the G20. And of course, the last piece on the program that evening was Beethoven’s Ninth, with the *Ode to Joy*. You should have seen the faces of the world leaders, because even the most hardened—everyone just lit up, because it’s a universal language. If we could get a little Beethoven into this, a little bit of *Ode to Joy*, and “All men are brothers,” “*Alle Menschen werden Brüder*,” it does work. It touches the heart. So, it’s a great idea.

**Billington:** Which was Beethoven’s intention.

**Prof. Sachs:** Exactly. It worked.

**Billington:** That’s why we call ourselves the Schiller Institute.

**Prof. Sachs:** Yes, exactly. And the great Schiller *Ode to Joy*—so it really works.

**Billington:** Unfortunately, that’s not what our colleges are teaching their children these days. You’re still a professor at Columbia, I believe. As you know, there were major peace demonstrations at Columbia in the Spring and many other campuses. Of course, the situation has gotten far worse since that time. And yet there appears to be very little protest at the universities, even though they’ve opened up and so forth.

Rep. Steve Scalise said just a couple of days ago that Congress is “acting to stop the anti-Israel protests on the campuses,” telling them, quote, “Your accreditation is on the line. You’re not playing games anymore, or else you’re not a school anymore.” And he added, “We’re bringing legislation to the floor to continue to confront it, to stand up against it, to show we support Israel.” Is this suppression working, or are there other causes that there has not been a resurgence on the campuses this fall?

## Universities Should Be Moral Communities

**Prof. Sachs:** Well, look: Basically, the students who were calling for justice for the Palestinians had the police called on them. That’s it. So they were arrested. That happened last Spring. That shuts down

a lot of activity. The university took an extremely hard line. It forgot that it’s a university. It forgot that it is a community of students and professors who are also not only an educational community, but a moral community. It forgot all of that because the police were basically called from the start. It was dreadful. And of course, administrators across the country are bullied and cowed by what Congress is doing. Not just Congress, but by their own boards, their own donors, and so on. I’m very proud of our students. I’m very proud when they demonstrate. I think that universities also should respond to this by all sorts of lectures and workshops and discussions and debates and learning about the history, and using the intellectual qualities of the university to help educate. And very little of that has happened, and it’s really a disappointment.

**Billington:** I appreciate this very much. I think this will have a very big effect around the world.

**Prof. Sachs:** Good to speak with you about all these issues. It’s really troubling and very dangerous times.

**Billington:** Do you have any final thoughts that you’d like to give to our readers and supporters?

**Prof. Sachs:** Well, I think everyone needs to tell your respective governments everywhere: make peace. These are wars. The war theorist von Clausewitz said, when he wrote his magnum opus, *On War* in the 1830s: “War is the continuation of politics by other means or with other means.” And so, when you see war, think politics. When you look at the war in the Middle East, the politics there are that Israel has blocked a State of Palestine—and that’s the way to peace. When you think about the war in Ukraine, the politics is that the United States insisted that Ukraine be in the U.S. military alliance, rather than a neutral country, which would have kept Ukraine safe, and which would make Ukraine safe now when that proper position is taken. So, all of these fights can be resolved through sensible politics.

And yet we’re in a war mongering era, and it’s extremely important that our governments hear from us. They’re not listening, they’re not asking our opinions, but we should give them our opinions. We want peace. We want solutions to this. We want to avoid this very dire and very real nuclear threat, above all. And so I want to thank you for what you’re doing and for also the discussion we’ve just had. And people everywhere should be working for peace.