



## **EXCLUSIVE: Noam Chomsky on Ukraine, Russia-NATO, Assange, Shireen Abu Akleh & COVID-Measures**

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**Zain Raza (ZR):** Thank you guys for tuning in today and welcome to another episode of The Source. I'm your host, Zain Raza. And today we'll be talking to renowned linguist, activist, intellectual, Professor Noam Chomsky. Noam Chomsky is also the author of more than 150 books, the latest being "A New World in Our Hearts". We'll be covering a lot of topics today from the case of Julian Assange, the situation in Ukraine, the assassination of Palestinian-American journalist Shireen Abu Akleh, and much more. But before we begin, we're going to take a small break, so stay tuned. We'll be right back.

**[BREAK]**

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**ZR:** Professor Noam Chomsky, thank you so much for joining us today. How are you?

**Noam Chomsky (NC):** Oh, I have to ask you to talk slowly and clearly, because I'm not hearing very well.

**ZR:** I will talk very slowly and clearly. I would like to start with the situation in Ukraine. The war in Ukraine has been going now for 111 days and Russia is focussing mainly on the eastern regions. Western countries led by the United States are supporting Ukraine financially and militarily with more than missile launchers, helicopters, armoured personnel carriers, anti-aircraft missiles. Even Germany decided in April to break with its policy of only sending defensive weapons and is now supplying Ukraine with offensive weapons. How do you assess the policy of the US and its allies so far?

**NC:** There's a very simple fact that we have to keep in mind. A war ends in one of two ways, either one side or the other capitulates, or else there's some kind of diplomatic settlement. That's a truism, can't debate it. What's a diplomatic settlement? A diplomatic settlement is something that each side tolerates, even if they don't like it. That's the nature of a diplomatic settlement. Now let's look at policy. US policy, which guides NATO, is to refuse a diplomatic settlement. Therefore that's very explicit. It was recently reinforced at the Ramstein Air Base in Germany, where the United States called together the NATO powers and others, called the Contact Group, and basically laid down the directive. The war must continue until Russia is severely harmed. In fact, harmed so severely that it will not be able to undertake any such aggression again. Now, think about that for 30 seconds. It means Russia must be harmed more than Germany was at the Versailles treaty because that obviously wasn't enough to stop Germany from returning to aggression. So that means Russia has to - basically be - can't even describe it - maybe something like the Morgenthau Plan, which was not accepted, but it was an effort to turn Germany into an agricultural society. Well, that so much is logic. Let's turn to fact. Fact is, Russia is never going to accept this. Never. If that's the position that NATO is taking, then Russia will certainly use the weapons that we all know it has to devastate Ukraine and set the stage for a possible nuclear war which may wipe out everything. That's official policy. Official US policy. Well, there is an alternative. Try to seek a diplomatic settlement. Now, before the invasion, that was quite possible. But as the US publicly stated, the State Department stated, we will not take into consideration any Russian security concerns, no concerns about joining NATO in particular. In fact, US policy was to move toward what was called an enhanced programme for laying the stage for Ukrainian integration into NATO. Every high US official who knows anything about Russia for the last 30 years, long before Putin, has made it very clear to Washington that Ukraine joining NATO is a red line that no Russian leader will ever accept, Yeltsin, Gorbachev, Putin, anyone. Well, George Bush the first lived up to that. The second George Bush dropped it, he invited Ukraine into NATO. That was vetoed at the time by France and Germany sensibly. But US power was so overwhelming that it stayed on the agenda and now it's moving forward. Well, that means no diplomacy. That alternative is what I just said. Russia will, if the need comes to that for them, may not, they will use the weapons that, of course, they have, we all know that,

to devastate Ukraine to set stage for international war. That's basically the situation as it now stands. So just talking about sending weapons is okay. Ukraine needs weapons to defend itself, but it's missing the major point. Can we prevent total devastation? And there's only one way to do that. That's by pursuing diplomatic options. They have narrowed now. They were broader before the invasion. Now, of course they've narrowed, but still there's some openings.

**ZR:** The war has also driven up military spending in Western countries and increased calls for other countries such as Sweden, Finland, etc. to join NATO. Germany is now investing hundred billion euros in its own military, including buying American F-35 stealth fighter jets that can also carry nuclear bombs capable of attacking Russia. Can you tell us about the impact that military spending at home and abroad has? And will NATO expansion serve to protect the West?

**NC:** Well, there's an interesting situation developing in the Western European countries, Sweden, Finland, Germany, and others. On the one hand, they are gloating over the fact that the Russian military, who was demonstrated to be a paper tiger, couldn't even conquer cities a couple of kilometres from the border, defended by a mostly citizen's army. So all the talk about Russian military power was exposed as empty and they are all now gloating about this, how wonderful it is. That is one idea. The second idea is that we have to be so terrified of the paper tiger that we have to vastly increase military spending. Germany alone will, under current projections, that Germany alone will probably spend as much as Russia does on military spending and it is a far more advanced society of course. That is Germany alone, not the rest of NATO; not of course the United States, which overwhelms everyone by a huge margin in military power. So there are at least two ideas. One, the Russian military is totally incompetent, can't conquer cities a couple miles from the border. Two, we have to be terrified of this paper tiger and rearm to the teeth. Actually, George Orwell had a name for that, he called it Doublethink. The capacity to have two contradictory ideas in mind and to believe them both. He thought that was a property of ultra totalitarian societies, 1984, obviously was wrong. Seems to be perfectly possible in free democratic societies. If you can think of any other explanation for that, I would like to hear it. There is no conceivable possibility that Russia will attack anyone. They can barely handle this. They had to back off without NATO involvement. But we can ask ourselves why. Why believe this? Well in Sweden it is perfectly obvious. Sweden has a very substantial military industry, Saab industry is a major producer. They'd love to have a bigger market. Furthermore, for both Sweden and Finland, a further militarisation and deeper integration into NATO. Sweden and Finland are already integrated into the NATO command, joint exercises and so on. But if they move towards joining NATO totally, that means accepting US domination - that's what NATO is- then that helps move them further to the right to dismantle what's left of social democracy. And of course, powerful business forces. Right wing forces in both countries are delighted with this. I should say the United States is ultra delighted. Putin, apart from the criminal aggression, also acted very stupidly. What he did was drive Europe into Washington's pocket, the greatest gift he could give to the United States. All through the Cold War, there have been basically two

options for NATO. One was what's called the Atlanticist option; joined NATO to become subservient to the United States, kind of a vassal community. The second option was for Europe to become an independent force, sometimes called a third force in international affairs. That's de Gaulle. The Willy Brandt's [Former Chancellor of Germany] "Ostpolitik", Gorbachev's common European home. Actually George Bush the first proposed a partnership for peace, which was not very different from this. Clinton dismantled it when he violated Bush's promise not to expand NATO to the east. And then the second Bush violated it radically when he invited Ukraine into NATO. But these options were still available before the invasion. Emmanuel Macron had made some tentative gestures towards accommodation. Putin, in his stupidity, totally rejected them and instead drove Europe into the hands of NATO. From the Russian point of view, utter imbecility apart from the criminality of the invasion. But the United States is utterly delighted. If you go to the offices of Lockheed Martin they are euphoric. Finally they've been trying for years to get Europe to raise its military spending. They wouldn't do it. Now the fossil fuels. They've also been trying to get Germany to end NordStream. But it didn't get anywhere. Now Russia has handed it to the United States on a silver platter. I mean, from Russia's point of view apart from the criminality of the aggression, it's completely stupid. But that's the way small groups of autocrats behave. Russia is now apparently run by a little clique of tough guys in Putin's close circle. They're interested in themselves, it is a kleptocracy. They are robbing the country blind. That's all they're thinking about. And they couldn't think through the fact that they're handing the United States a major gift. The United States is euphoric. Fossil fuel companies are delighted. They can now increase fossil fuel production, wrecking the environment, destroying the prospects for human life, and they're even praised for it. What could be better? So Putin just- it's almost unbelievable the stupidity.

**ZR:** Understanding the situation in a historical context like you are attempting to do, or even talking about the dangers of nuclear war, is quickly dismissed as whataboutism or peddling Putin talking points or justifying the Russian war. This has been happening on the mainstream media as well as social media. It seems that the only answer we can give here at the moment is to escalate it. How can we overcome this discourse of trying to justify the Russian invasion when, for example, you are trying to and many others are trying to simply provide context and the role that the West has played?

**NC:** One of the very striking features of the modern age is the serious decline in simply rational discourse. The kind of commentary that you hear across the board is just unbelievable. So one of the leading figures in, apart from the official US policy, you find people like Richard Haas, a major figure in foreign policy, the Council on Foreign Relations and so on, making speeches in which he says we have to ensure that Ukraine wins the war. You hear the same from people in Germany. What does that mean? How does Ukraine defeat Russia? You can pour all the arms you want into Ukraine, it's not going to defeat Russia. Everybody with a brain knows that. Well, let me just say that I mentioned the Council on Foreign Relations, leading figures talking total nonsense. The same in Germany. What you

hear on social media that you're referring to is another form of total nonsense. There is no way to justify the invasion. None. You can say correctly that there was provocation. Yes. Kind of provocation that I mentioned. When the US says it's not going to consider Russian security concerns when it's been moving to integrate Ukraine into the NATO military command against the advice of just about every high US official that knows anything about this, including the current and past CIA directors, that's all provocation. But provocation does not yield justification. There is nothing that can justify criminal aggression. A kind of crime that ranks with the US invasion of Iraq, the Hitler- Stalin invasion of Poland. These are what the Nuremberg Tribunal called the Supreme International Crime. Different from other war crimes in that it includes the totality of evil that follows. That's the Russian invasion. No justification. Plenty of provocation. No justification. Now again, it takes a few minutes thought to understand this. But a few minutes of thought is apparently beyond the capacity of much of the social media, just as it is beyond the capacity of the leading figures in Germany, the United States and others who are talking perfect nonsense. When you ask, how do you proceed to get Ukraine to defeat Russia, short of Ukraine being totally devastated? Perfectly obvious. But apparently beyond the capacity of thought. I should mention maybe something else here. I'm sure you're familiar with the famous Doomsday Clock of the Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists, now saying 100 seconds to midnight. They give three reasons. One is the growing threat of nuclear war. Two is failure to deal with the crisis of climate destruction, both made worse by the Russian invasion. And the third is the collapse of an arena of rational discourse. That was before the invasion. Now, it's worse.

**ZR:** I want to shift gears now and focus on Israel-Palestine. Shireen Abu Akleh, an American Palestinian journalist, was allegedly killed by an Israeli sniper. The Palestinian Authority investigation concluded that Abu Akleh was hit by a bullet fired by the Israeli soldiers. And the Israeli forces are still conducting an investigation. The Palestinian authority has ruled out a joint investigation. Although the US and the EU have condemned the attacks and called for an independent investigation no action such as sanctions have been taken. Can you talk about the significance of this case?

**NC:** It's very significant. What is most important, most striking, is the behaviour of the Israeli army at the funeral. I mean, bad enough that they assassinated a journalist. But take a look. I'm sure you've seen the videos at the funeral where the IDF [Israel Defence Forces] attacked the funeral. Even attacked the pallbearers, made them drop the coffin. What was striking about that is how brazen it was. They simply don't care. One of the leading Israeli journalists, Gideon Levy, covers the West Bank, simply described it, frankly, he said, IDF storm troopers, his word, just attacked the funeral because they don't care. They are confident of US support and therefore they'll do anything. Doesn't matter anymore. They're not trying to pretend. Now there are other cases like the Supreme Court just ordering a thousand Palestinian villagers to leave their homes because Israel wants to take them over for settlers. I mean, that Supreme Court judgement was given at midnight in the hope that people wouldn't notice it too much. But that's as bad as attacking the funeral, and they're doing it brazenly. It's much more than

this. Long ago Israel annexed the Syrian Golan Heights and what's called Jerusalem, actually an area about five times the size of Jerusalem, including many Arab villages. Israel annexed them in explicit violation of Security Council orders, ordering them not to do it. They did not care. They did it. They assumed the United States would support it, which it did. And under Trump, the United States has formalised its support. It is now said, Yes, you can annex any territory you want in violation of the Security Council orders. Well, in those circumstances, apparently, Israel feels the need to do just about anything. You read this morning's newspaper, this morning they pretty much conceded that they just poisoned two Iranian nuclear scientists. What happens when somebody else does that? Well, when Israel does it, it's applauded in the United States. Why shouldn't they assassinate people they don't like? Okay. As long as the United States continues to back this and Europe sits very quietly and says, We don't care, Israel will simply become more and more brazen. And then comes another issue. You'll notice that in the Shireen Abu Akleh case, the US media really for the first time gave extensive exposes of the crime. CNN, Washington Post, New York Times. That's a change. Israel's actions are becoming so blatantly intolerable that even the mainstream media in the United States are beginning to complain about them. And in fact, if you look at polls, Israel is losing its support. If you go back ten or 20 years, Israel was the darling of the liberal community. Not anymore. The liberal opinion is more supportive of Palestinian rights. Support for Israel in the United States has shifted to the far right. It's not in the Democratic Party. It's in the right wing of the Republican Party. Evangelical Christians based on their theology of the second coming. Ultrnationalists, military and security forces that's the base of Israeli support. That could lead to a change in US policy. That's the most likely salvation of anything for the Palestinians, the rest of the world given up. This morning, you may have noticed that the leading Israeli writer Avraham B. Yehoshua died, a lot of obituaries for him, including his final statements about how he had given up on an effort for a diplomatic settlement. It's important that he said that a couple of years ago, but it's a sign of the shift in Israel amongst more or less liberal opinion, which is now shrinking. It's becoming a very reactionary state. Today again, another poll in Israel reported in Haaretz [Israeli newspaper], the majority of Israelis don't want to have any Palestinian participate in any government. The Country is becoming more racist, more reactionary. It's established close relations with Hungary, the outlier in the European Union, a liberal democracy. They have shared racist, anti-Muslim doctrines. They both feel aggrieved because they're not treated in a friendly fashion by Europe. And they both think they have every right to do what they want. So they're establishing a closer relation. That's part of the world system that's developing. Incidentally, just to add to that, I'm sure you followed the meeting in Hungary a couple of weeks ago of the reactionary neo-fascist elements in Europe. The leading participant in that was the American Conservative Political Action Committee. That's the core of the Republican Party. Former President Trump gave a glowing speech expressing his great admiration for Hungary's destruction of democracy and racist christian nationalism. Tucker Carlson who is the leading television personality in the United States, simply worships Hungary. He gave a speech, done a major documentary on how wonderful Hungary is. Notice this is the United States, it's not Andorra. It's the most powerful country in human history.

And these are the groups that are going to take Congress in November. They already have the Supreme Court. They're gearing up to block Democratic procedures so that they can pick up the presidency in 2024. That means something for the world, for everyone in the world, a lot. It means we are on a course to disaster.

**ZR:** In Germany it's a very difficult environment to talk about Israel and Palestine, to use terms like apartheid, because always the history of Germany is invoked into this discussion, drowning out any debates, discussion, discourse on this issue. For us, for example, in our organisation, we have been accused for anti-Semitism for just reporting on Israeli apartheid, whether Amnesty International is reporting it or Human Rights Watch. How do you overcome this, given the difficulty and past of Germany?

**NC:** Well, Germany is a special case because of its utterly hideous record. So yes, I can understand why there'd be special sensitivity about this in Germany. Nevertheless, we should be honest about it. For 50 years Israel has been explicitly trying to use the Holocaust as a propaganda weapon to justify crushing the Palestinians, occupying Palestinian territory illegally, practically destroying Gaza, almost unliveable now. A million children can't even get portable water. The constant atrocities in the West Bank. You read journalists like Gideon Levy, Amira Hass, others daily reports. They think they can get away with this as long as they can wave the Holocaust in front of people's eyes. I should say this is explicit. So if you go back to 1973, Abba Eban, leading Israeli statesman, highly respected, wrote a very interesting article in the more liberal Jewish Journal in the United States "Congress Weekly". In this article, he said the duty of American Jews is to show that any criticism of what he calls Zionism, meaning the policies of his government, any criticism is either anti-Semitism if it comes from non-Jews or neurotic self-hatred, if it comes from Jews. He actually mentioned two people, I was proud to be one of them. The other was, I. F. Stone, committed Zionist, critical of Israel. Therefore, a neurotic, self-hating Jew. That makes 100%. Nobody can criticise Israel. It's explicit. Perfectly explicit. It's interesting if you take a look at the famous definition of anti-Semitism by IHRA, it's used all the time. According to that Abba Eban is a leading anti-Semite, because one of the criteria for anti-Semitism is the claim that all Jews have to be associated with Israel. So Abba Eban is one of the leading anti-Semites in the world. The Israeli Supreme Court is totally anti-Semitic. They've stated that Israel is the sovereign state of the Jewish people. Like it's my sovereign state living in the United States, not the sovereign state of its population. Perfect example of anti-Semitism by the standard definition. Well, again, I can understand hesitancy in Germany to talk too much about that, but they shouldn't fall for it. And everywhere else it should be ridiculed.

**ZR:** I want to examine some socio economic issues. Inflation is running high in Western nations. The US experienced the highest rate in 40 years at 8.6% in May, whereas Germany experienced 7.9%. What in your assessment is driving this? Is it the war in the Ukraine? Western sanctions, workers wages, or the fossil fuel cartels' grief of profitability? Some even claim social spending during COVID is now causing inflation. What can be done to protect

the public and how do you assess inflation?

**NC:** Well, first of all, the high inflation was prior to the Ukraine invasion, that exacerbated it, but not by very much. You look at the figures, it was almost as high before. There's a lot of debate amongst the economists of what's causing it. But the basic consensus, I think, is that the main factor that's causing it is supply chain disruptions. The globalisation, the neoliberal globalisation project, followed business principles. That means try to be as efficient as possible. Don't waste anything. Well, that's a programme for disaster. It means if anything goes wrong, everything collapses. We're seeing that dramatically in the United States with the health system; not so much in Germany. The United States has a scandalous health system, it is run on business principles. No excess capacity, no excess beds, because that's not efficient. So what happens when COVID comes? No beds in the hospitals. No resources for testing. You work by business principles, you can be efficient as long as nothing goes wrong, as soon as it does it is a disaster. You have container ships piled up in the Los Angeles harbour and can not unload them. Well, all of this is combining with the fact that during the pandemic, the worst of the pandemic, people were cutting down on spending. Now there's a tremendous amount of demand, supplies aren't coming in. Yes, you get inflation. There's another factor. Monopolisation. That was the result of the neoliberal programmes and the German equivalents of that and so on. Austerity. These have all led to sharply reduced regulation and increased concentration of economic power on almost every domain. Agriculture, manufacturing, energy. Sharp move towards monopolisation. Well, monopolisation means you have the capacity to raise prices, and they're doing it. There's tremendous corporate profits in the last couple of years. Large part of it is just, they're free to raise prices as much as they want. That's a major factor in inflation; energy, agriculture, just about every area. Well, all of these things combined, you have serious economic problems.

**ZR:** We received some questions from the public. One of the questions, we asked the public to send them some questions, and one question is here from Facebook. It says, Last year, Professor Chomsky, you said in an interview, and I'm paraphrasing here, that unvaccinated people should not be forced but should isolate themselves voluntarily and, quote, food is their problem. Are you still of that opinion, given that the vaccine has been shown to be only for self-protection and not for the protection of others, particularly when it comes to the Omicron variant.

**NC:** Unvaccinated people are free to do whatever they want except harm others. Nobody has the right to walk around with an assault rifle and shoot randomly. That's not freedom. Similarly, if some business, say a restaurant, decides they want customers to be masked they have a right to do that. They have a right to protect themselves against people who want to feel free to harm them. So therefore, people who don't want to be vaccinated are perfectly free to do whatever they want except to violate restrictions, which when people try to defend themselves, like the workers in a restaurant have a right to defend themselves against people who want to come in and infect them. It is as simple as that. It's true that it aroused a huge



furor; more sign of the irrationality. In fact, the whole anti-vaccine hysteria that's developed, mainly in the United States, but also in Germany and elsewhere, is another sign of the growing radical irrationality. There's simply virtually no doubt that the vaccines are very effective. In fact it is a triumph of contemporary science, and the stories about the harm that they do to you is unbelievable nonsense; they're implanting a chip into you that's going to allow Bill Gates to control you. It's one thing after another. I mean of course, there's an element of uncertainty, that's life. There's an element of uncertainty about anything. But the evidence is simply overwhelming about their positive effect. Every national academy in the world, every academy of science, without any exception, every medical journal in the world, without any exception, I think all just take this for granted. But there's a big popular movement saying we don't believe anything. Actually that has sort of its roots in the neoliberal assault against the population, which is 40 years of a major attack on the general population. And actually, just to give you some figures, in the United States there was a study by the highly respectable RAND Corporation, quasi a governmental investigation corporation. They studied the transfer of wealth from the lower 90% of the population; working class, middle class. Transfer of wealth from them to the top 1% during the neoliberal years. Their estimate is about \$50 trillion. That's pretty effective highway robbery. And it's had an effect all over the United States, all over Europe, with the same things, not to that extent, but similar things have been happening that led to anger, resentment, distrust of authority, distrust of government, undermining of democracy. The anti-vaccine hysteria is one lethal aspect of that.

**ZR:** I'm not sure if you've heard about this, because as I have read that you don't look at Hollywood a lot, but this is another question that I would like to ask you from the public. There was a big trial on this Hollywood actor Johnny Depp and his ex-wife, Amber Heard. The trial was followed by millions and even billions of people worldwide. Almost all major media outlets gave razor sharp coverage of the trial. By contrast, however, the press freedom trial of the century, the case of Julian Assange, who may be extradited to the US soon, has not received even a fraction of this coverage. Can you explain why people are so disinterested in the case of Assange? And why the media ignores it and gives something like a Hollywood scandal much more coverage than a scandal involving press freedom and democracy.

**NC:** Well, Julian Assange committed a major crime. He acted as an honest journalist. Can't have that. There are things that systems of power want to be concealed from the population. Assange violated that. He brought to the general population information that they have every right to have and that power systems don't want them to have. Information about war crimes, for example. That's a crime. You have to be punished for that. So he's been kept in conditions of virtual torture for six years now. First isolated in an apartment, the Ecuadorian embassy is a small apartment. I visited him there. He had fewer rights than a prisoner on death row who can at least walk outside and see the sun; not Assange. Then the British put him in a high security prison for the crime of not paying bail. The UN Rapporteur on Torture simply described this as torture. He is personally frankly destroyed. Now he's facing extradition to

the United States where he could spend the rest of his life, such as it is, in a high security prison. Well, that's punishment for a major crime. You don't tell citizens things they ought to know, but the powerful don't want them to know. And the failure of most journalists to defend him is outrageous. They're the ones who should be right in the front defending him. Some are, very good ones, but too many are not. It's a real scandal. Also a scandal in Australia. He is an Australian citizen. Australia should have been pressing hard for him to be released to Australia at the very beginning of this. Everyone in the world is afraid of stepping on the toes of the United States. Might as well face it the world is, you know, international relations specialists can publish their essays, but the fact is that the world is run very much like the Mafia. If the Godfather lays down orders, you better follow them or you're in trouble. We see this all over. Like take the Iran situation. The United States pulled out of the joint agreement, the nuclear agreement, in violation of Security Council orders. It imposed very harsh sanctions to punish Iran for the fact that the United States is violating the agreement. Europe doesn't like it. Europe opposes the sanctions and it's been spoken out strongly against them, but it follows them. It adheres to them. Because you don't anger the Godfather. Pretend whatever you like, but that's the way the world works. Same on the Cuba sanctions; 60 years of torture of Cuba. The whole world is against it. You look at the UN votes, the 184 to 2, United States and Israel, but everyone adheres to it. The same reason; you don't anger the Godfather, he has plenty of weapons to punish you. More weapons, thanks to Putin's stupidity.

**ZR:** It seems we got another question from the public again about COVID. This time someone is asking Professor Noam Chomsky, given all the costs that the economy, that the children, that the businesses and everybody had to face, do you think that the COVID measures were to some degree an overreaction by the government, or did you consider them to be adequate?

**NC:** Price on the economy, doesn't have to be much of a price on the economy. Take New Zealand, which imposed maybe the harshest measures in the Western world. Economy did fine. In fact it improved, because the pandemic receded. It was controlled. People were going to get back to normal life. My feeling is, the measures weren't strict enough. If they were done, I mean, it's kind of a rule in the United States and to some extent Europe, that you have to denounce China for everything. So one of the things we have to denounce China for is that there are a few thousand deaths in the United States, a million deaths. China has five times the population. So per capita deaths are minuscule as compared with the United States. So we have to denounce China for the policies it used to save a couple of million people. Well, that's the way a deeply indoctrinated society works. But as far as the measures were taken, some of them were probably mistaken. Remember the situation when the COVID epidemic came? Nobody knew much about it. You had to take experimental measures to see what would work. And some of the experimental measures were wrong, naturally, but most of them were basically correct and probably should have been done more strenuously.

**ZR:** My organisation, acTVism Munich, was built on the criticisms that you expressed in Manufacturing Consent. We strive to develop a media outlet that is independent, non-profit, grassroots, that does not take money from advertisements, corporations or governments. How important is it for people to support independent and grassroots media in this day and age?

**NC:** How important is it to support popular organisations and change government policy to benefit them rather than to benefit the super rich? That's the basic question. It's not only important, but it's essential if we're going to survive. I mean, just remember what the neoliberal policies of the past 40 years have been. I gave the rough estimate for the United States, stealing \$50 trillion from working people and the middle class to enrich the ultra rich and the corporate sector. Well, that goes on. And of course, much else, like climate denialism under the impact of the banks, the fossil fuel industries and so on. They say, let's make as much money as we can and who cares what happens?! Well, that's a recipe for total disaster; species annihilation. If all of that isn't changed then soon there isn't going to be anything else to talk about. It'll be over, literally over. That's if we don't get nuclear war first. And it's very dangerous. Now, I'm just repeating what the Doomsday Clock analysts repeated and every sensible analyst knows, if you look at current policy, it's astonishing. So it's easy to think, take Ukraine again, it's very easy to think of scenarios that could lead on to nuclear war. So, so far, Russia has not attacked supply lines, the supply lines that are bringing in massive supplies to Ukraine. Actually, Western analysts have wondered why they are not doing it. Well, sooner or later they might do it. In that case, they run into a conflict with NATO. At that point, your imagination can move very quickly up the escalation ladder. Let's take another case. There's a tremendous problem of starvation all over the world, caused by the closing off of one of the major sources of green fertiliser and so on, the Black Sea region. Well, there's a Russian blockade. Again, there are two ways to deal with that. One way is violence, which comes naturally to the United States and its allies. The other way is negotiation, diplomacy. What do we see? 100% talked about escalating violence. So the Wall Street Journal, a major business Journal, just had a major editorial in which they said the United States Navy should break the blockade. What happens when the US Navy starts confronting Russian ships? Do the Russians say, Oh, that was pleasant?! Why don't you sink our fleet? Not very likely. So you may not like it, but you have to recognise the real world and the business community. The Wall Street Journal apparently can't. Fortunately, the Pentagon can. So it blocks these efforts. They're the peacekeeping force in the United States at this point, literally. Another proposal is to send sophisticated advanced anti-ship weapons to sink the Russian fleet. They already managed to sink the flagship; so let's go on. Again what happens?! Does Russia react? Well, if it does, we're finished. There's even leading figures like Hillary Clinton, for example, or lots of people in Congress who say we should impose a no-fly zone. That sounds nice. Again, the Pentagon blocked it because the Pentagon understands what the heroic postures don't understand. Namely, if you want to have a no-fly zone, you have to have control of the air. Control of the air means you attack and destroy any aircraft installations which are inside Russia. Then what happens? Well, if you want to make fancy speeches, fine. Nothing will happen. If you think about the likely future, what'll happen is we're finished.

This is going on all over. It's beyond belief.

**ZR:** Professor Noam Chomsky, intellectual, activist and author. Thank you so much for your time today.

**NC:** Thank you. And sorry for the hassle about Skype.

**ZR:** Absolutely no problem. It worked out well. And we are very thankful for your time. And thank you guys for tuning in today. Don't forget to subscribe to our YouTube and Rumble video channels and to donate so we can continue to produce independent and non-profit news and analysis. I'm your host Zain Raza, see you guys next time.

### **[Closing Video]**

**Textfield:** Don't Extradite Assange

**Yanis Varoufakis in Video:** Well first, they're getting Julian. Then they will get you, me, everyone. This is a clear struggle for freedom of the press and for the right of citizens to know what governments are doing behind their backs, supposedly on their behalf.

**Textfield:** Will Press Freedom Survive?

**Yanis Varoufakis in Video:** The circumstances in which he's held in there, are an affront to civilization.

**Abby Martin in Video:** [00:02:54] I think this case has absolutely devastating, horrifying and wide reaching implications for press freedom and journalism as a whole. And unfortunately, people have already made up their mind about Julian Assange. They're not taking a stand the way they should be.

**Jill Stein in Video:** He is being punished, as is Julian Assange and Edward Snowden for releasing the truth.

**John Shipton in Video:** Every single single human right of Julian's has been arbitrarily broken. Distortions of procedure, falsification of witness statements, the lot, the whole rotten, a lot of it.

**Textfield:** Will The Truth Be Free?

**Tariq Ali in Video:** He's on death row. He will be on death row, if he is extradited.

**Nils Melzer in Video:** If this man gets extradited to the United States, he will be tortured until the day he dies.

**Jennifer Robinson in Video:** It may now be Julian and it may now be Glenn Greenwald, but who will be next?

**Stella Assange in Video:** Julian is a publisher. Julian is also a son, he's a friend. He's my fiance. And a father. Julian needs his freedom and our democracy needs a free press.

**Textfield:** Can We Save Julian Assange?

**Nils Melzer in Video:** Yes, it is about Julian Assange, but it is much more also about all of you and your children and your families. And 20 years from now, will you still be able to know the truth about what your government is doing? Or when it has become a crime to inform you about what your government is doing with your tax money to other people that have not done anything wrong in their lives.

**Textfield:** Past Work of acTVism Munich on Julian Assange

**Taylor Hudak in Video:** Hi, everyone, I'm Taylor Hudak with acTVism Munich. I'm in London outside the Old Bailey courthouse.

**Taylor Hudak in Video:** Hi, everyone, I'm Taylor Hudak and I'm outside London's Belmarsh Prison.

**Srećko Horvat in Video:** We are all Julian Assange. How would you know about all the crimes committed in our names, if there weren't the billions of leaks published by WikiLeaks?

**Angela Richter in Video:** If wars can be started by lies, peace can be started by truth.

**Abby Martin in Video:** We're going to lock people away facing 200 years in prison for exposing war crimes. What kind of country, what kind of world are we going to live in? So we have to stand up and collectively say, no more.

**Glenn Greenwald in Video:** If you're an activist of any kind, right, left, center, an animal rights activist and environmental activist, a socialist activist, any kind of an activist against global institutions and you're not capable of setting aside whatever emotional feelings you have for Julian Assange to defend basic press freedom and stand opposed to the efforts of Trump's government and Boris Johnson's Tory government to criminalize the activities of Julian Assange and WikiLeaks and publishing information in the public interest, you are

going to create a world for yourself in which the presidents you're now acquiescing to or cheering out of some misplaced hatred, Julian Assange are going to be used against you.

**Nils Melzer in Video:** When you're in a dark room, one person switching on the lights will make everyone see. Don't look for the light somewhere else. Go and switch it on yourself.

**Noam Chomsky in Video:** We should all thank Julian for his courage and integrity in providing us with this precious gift at great cost to himself, much to our shame.

**Edward Snowden in Video:** Think about the opportunities that you have, right. Because there are no heroes. Nobody's going to save you. But there are only heroic actions. There are only heroic choices. There are only people who moment by moment see bad things and recognize, maybe I can do something, maybe I can't fix everything, but maybe I can make progress. Maybe I can make things better. Maybe I am the one that I'm waiting for. And as soon as you start thinking like that, you'll realize that you are.

**Vivian Westwood in Video:** Free Assange, Rock and Roll.

**END**