

Darren Beattie Reveals U.S. Role In Lawfare Against Pakistani Leader Imran Khan

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Glenn Greenwald (GG): Let's get to Pakistan because it's something I've been wanting to talk about. Just for those people who don't know, Imran Khan was this and is this major celebrity, a beloved national figure in Pakistan because he was a huge star in cricket. The government of Pakistan has always been very important to the United States. It's a nuclear power. It's obviously in that region with Afghanistan. We've cared a lot about who runs that government. We usually can control them or at least have pretty close relations with them. And then suddenly, Imran Khan ran for president. The country had an outpouring of love and elected him. And part of what he was doing was declaring independence from the West and the United States. And suddenly he gets charged with lawfare and convicted and removed from the presidency and put in prison. And two of my former colleagues at The Intercept, Murtaza Hussain and Ryan Grim, were actually the ones who broke the story based on leaked documents that the CIA gave the green light to and even encouraged the Pakistanis to remove and then imprison him. In other words, to implement a coup. It got very little attention. It was done under the Biden administration. But I didn't know until recently that this is something that you were so interested in. I do remember that you did interview Imran Khan and you made very clear your kind of admiration for him at the time. This was when he was under house arrest, but before he went to prison. But tell us what we should know about this and why this has become so interesting to you.

Darren Beattie (DB): Well, it's a fascinating and very important story with a lot of critical interlinkages to our own situation in the United States. And, you know, it's kind of remarkable – my interview with Prime Minister Khan, that was the last Western interview, I believe, before he was imprisoned. And his story is a remarkable one. You know, my introduction to the interview, I kind of teared up by saying, okay, he was an 80s Playboy and celebrity who left all of the glamour and fame to a brutal and difficult life in politics, where he challenged two of the most established and corrupt political families in his country. He

won in an astonishing populist upset. But the deep state of his regime and the military industrial complex and intelligence community still hated him, and did everything they could to get rid of him. And ultimately, you know, he was put out. And if you hear that, initially, you're going to think, is he talking about Donald Trump? But no, it's the story of Khan that has a lot of remarkable parallels. And he is absolutely a beloved figure. He was pro-Trump. The story gets really – there's a lot of interesting intrigue here. Because the thing that you mentioned of your former colleagues at The Intercept who did a great job on this, there is this so-called cipher, this encrypted diplomatic cable, whereby shortly after Khan, who had a little visit to Russia that inconveniently coincided with Russia's invasion. But he didn't know this. This was a preplanned trip. And that kind of became a pretext for the US state Department to say: hey, it would be really great if you got rid of him. Reading between the lines, something to that effect. And literally the next day, there was a no-confidence vote. He was ousted. And then based on his defiance to the regime, he was not only ousted, but much like Trump, buried in an avalanche of politically motivated charges. And unlike Trump, thankfully, he was imprisoned. He's in prison now. And part of the urgency of talking about this is that his situation has deteriorated dramatically. And it's very possible that he could even die in the coming months if something isn't done. In my view, he is, next to Assange, who thankfully is now a free man, this is now the number one political prisoner that we should be concerned about.

And the other part of this story beyond the parallels with Trump is that he has a lot of the same enemies as Trump does. One thing that I've reported on is that the sort of hidden hand behind his ouster was a woman that I think you and a lot of your viewers are familiar with – someone called Victoria Nuland, who is a nefarious figure, one of the premier architects of colour revolution and regime change operations overseas. She was instrumental, for instance, in the Euromaidan and a lot of the operations in Ukraine and other Eastern European countries. She's deeply connected with that Atlanticist, Russia-obsessed faction of the intelligence community that is particularly incensed and combative with Trump. She is speaking of the Neocons. Her husband, who recently resigned in disgrace from The Washington Post – he was pissed off because Bezos dared to say, okay, we're not going to endorse Kamala this time. And so he resigned in protest. Her husband Robert Kagan was one of the architects of the Iraq war. And Imran Khan, before all of this, was very well known as one of the most effective and vocal critics of the Iraq war. And it just so happens that one of the Iraq war architects' wives is behind his ouster and ultimate imprisonment. And, of course, Trump, in one of his earlier policy statements, called out Nuland and her nefarious activities by name. And Nuland herself actually resigned in disgrace within the past few months because Biden refused her a key promotion that she was counting on. So very interesting connections here. A lot of the same Russia-obsessives, the Atlanticists, the colour revolution operative, the very people like Victoria Nuland were absolutely key to ousting this pro-Trump – he got along with Trump great – leader, who is a populist leader, who has already kind of aggravated the military industrial establishment of Pakistan. Which, that's a whole other story, but the intelligence community of Pakistan is very much connected with our sort of neoconservative establishment because we basically built them up tremendously in the immediate aftermath of 9/11 because of all of the Taliban stuff going on. Of course, the

Taliban are back to controlling Afghanistan. So a lot of good that did us. But that's a short bit of the history.

GG: Bin Laden was hiding pretty securely in Pakistan when we found him near a military base. But in any event, Darren, I'd love to have you back on and talk about this a lot more once this election is over. You know how it is when there's an election approaching. There's not a lot of space to talk about things not directly related to the election, although you make a very good case. One hadn't previously realised that the situation in Pakistan with Imran Khan is actually quite relevant to the treatment and reaction to Trump here in the United States. So I'd love to explore that more with you in detail. Once this election is done, we have the space to do it. I really appreciate your time and coming on.

DB: Absolutely great to be with you.

GG: Yeah, good to see you.

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