

Personal Interview: Scott Ritter

HELP ENLIGHTEN YOUR FELLOWS. BE SURE TO PASS THIS ON. SURVIVAL DEPENDS ON IT.

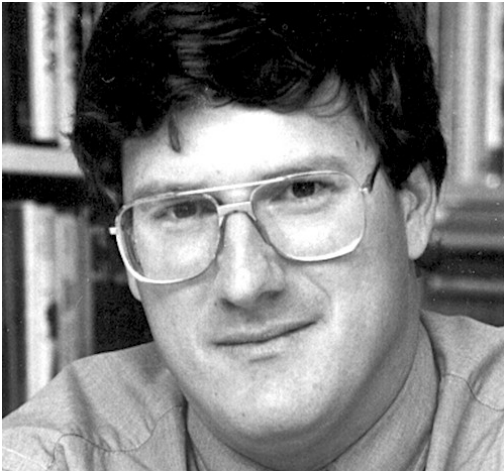


IMPERIALISM IS ONLY THE DEGENERATE, MONOPOLY PHASE OF
CAPITALISM

Select Language ▼

Interviewed by John Rachel

Events are unfolding at a quickening pace. Facing an alarming escalation in tensions around the world, we are looking to our most respected and renowned thought leaders for an honest assessment of both U.S. foreign and military policy to offer their most current thoughts and insights. We know they have some ideas for improving the prospects for peace.



Ritter

Scott Ritter served as a former U.S. Marine Corps Intelligence officer (1984-1991), in the Soviet Union as an inspector implementing the INF Treaty, in General Norman Schwarzkopf's staff during the Gulf War, and as a UN weapons inspector in Iraq (1991-1998). He is author of SCORPION KING: America's Suicidal Embrace of Nuclear Weapons from FDR to Trump, "Iraq Confidential" (Nation Books, 2005), and "Target Iran" (Nation Books, 2006). His responses below are exactly as he provided.

The questions here are not philosophical or abstract. They focus on the realities of the international power struggle unfolding in real time. They directly address the role of the U.S. in the escalating tensions and its capacity to reduce them. We also probe the role of everyday citizens in affecting the relationship the U.S. now has and will have with the rest of the world community.

Here is what Scott Ritter had to say.

Q. The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists has recently put the hands of the Doomsday Clock to 100 seconds before midnight. Midnight means all-out war, probably nuclear holocaust. This is the closest it has ever been. Do you agree with this dire assessment?

A. No. There have been occasions in the past where the confluence of geopolitical posturing and military hubris combined to make the conditions favourable for nuclear conflict greater than those that exist today. We have reduced the amount of forward-deployed nuclear weapons and have altered our military doctrine so that the use of nuclear

weapons is not assumed, but rather seen as a separate, deliberate action above and beyond the military mission at hand. This does not mean that the threat of a nuclear conflict isn't real, or that the world should not be concerned. The point here is that it doesn't matter where you set the Doomsday Clock; if the decision is made to use nuclear weapons, it means we are at zero, and we failed. So long as nations possess nuclear weapons and have corresponding nuclear postures that postulate scenarios for which the use of nuclear weapons are considered a viable outcome, we will always be one second away from global annihilation. The Doomsday Clock should be set at one second until all nuclear weapons are eliminated—that's the true state of play. Anything else is simply an exercise in self-deception.

Q. The U.S. always portrays itself as the greatest force on the planet for peace, justice, human rights, racial equality, etc. Polls tell us that most other nations actually regard the U.S. as the greatest threat to stability. What in your view is the truth here?

A. Peace, justice, human rights, racial equality, etc...these are very subjective topics which mean different things to different people at different times. The human condition is not conducive to any utopian notion of universality. There will always be competition between groups of people, whether organized as states, coalitions, alliances, etc. There was a time when the confluence of global conditions positioned the US as the foremost power in defence of nations sharing similar value sets. But we should not pretend that the US is a nation which embraces the very notions it proclaims to defend. No nation lives up to the promise of its own propaganda—none. The nations that oppose the United States are not paragons of virtue themselves. Many of them are actively engaged in a competition for resources and access with the US which colours their outlook. The truth is humanity has not learned how to peacefully coexist with itself. The US has done much to help

nations survive and prosper, but only if those nations are useful in the pursuit of American goals and objectives. We don't support those who are aligned against us...we are not a benevolent nation. No nation is.

Q. Here's a chicken-or-egg question: The U.S. accuses both Russia and China of rapidly expanding their military capabilities, claiming its own posturing and increase in weaponry is a response to its hostile adversaries, Russia and China. Both Russia and China claim they are merely responding to intimidation and military threats posed by the U.S. What's your view? Do Russia and China have imperial ambitions or are they just trying to defend themselves against what they see as an increasingly aggressive U.S. military?

A. Where do you start the clock when answering this question? The US, Russia, and China have always been involved in a version of the "great game" that incorporates military power as a means of gaining and maintaining control over objectives deemed to be in the national interest. Picking an arbitrary point in time as your starting point and drawing conclusions based upon the resultant fact set ignores the fact that at one point or another in the past two centuries, Russia, China, and the US (along with France, Germany, the UK, Italy, Japan, and others) have all sought to use military power as a means of gaining a geopolitical advantage over others. Greed loves a vacuum, and humans are perpetually greedy; that's one way of saying if you don't maintain sufficient force to defend yourself, someone will take advantage of that. The US didn't invent wars of aggression.

Q. The U.S. always denies that it has imperial ambitions. Most unbiased experts say that by any objective standards, the U.S. is an empire – indeed the most powerful, sprawling empire in history. Does the U.S. have to be an empire to be successful in the world and effectively protect and serve its citizenry?

A. All one has to do is look at the disparity between the rate

of consumption of the American people and what we produce. The reality is that we are dependent upon resources that come from other nations to maintain the lifestyle we enjoy. Empires operate the same way. We are an empire.

Q. The highest ranking commanders of the U.S. military recently sounded the alarm. They have concluded that the U.S. – widely regarded as the most formidable military power in history – can't defeat either Russia or China in a war. These military commanders are saying we need to dramatically increase our military capabilities. What do you make of this claim and the resulting demand for more DOD spending?

A. Russia has built a military that can defeat the US and NATO in a stand-up conventional fight, and yet Russia spends a fraction of what the US does on defence. The problem with the US defence system isn't how much we spend (which is too much, by the way) but what we spend it on, and how we spend it. We have a bloated defence acquisition system geared more toward generating profits for the military defence industry than producing capable defence products. The F-35 fighter stands out as a case in point, but it is not unique. If I were Congress, I'd find a way to streamline acquisition at the same time as revising doctrine so that the US could field a lethal military force at half the cost. But then again, Congress is married to the defence industry, which underwrites their political campaigns. Military commanders always want more without ever admitting they could make do with far less.

Q. In 2009, Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton announced a reset with Russia, heralding greater cooperation and understanding. By 2014, Obama had made a sharp reversal. A sweeping regime of sanctions has since been imposed on Russia to cripple its economy. Hillary Clinton and the Democrats now relentlessly demonize Russia and Putin, blaming them for every imaginable ill. Both in the media and from official pronouncements by government officials, Russia has become the favorite whipping boy for both the U.S. and its "special friend", Great Britain.

Why? What happened?

A. We had a moment in history, between 1988 and 1991, where we could have worked with Mikhail Gorbachev to make his vision of perestroika succeed. Instead, we allowed him to fail, without any real plan on how we would live with what emerged from the ruins of the Soviet Union. Save for a short period of time during the Second World War where we needed the Soviet Union to defeat Germany and Japan, we have been in a continual state of political conflict with the Soviet Union. Even after the Soviet Union collapsed, we viewed the Russian Federation more as a defeated enemy that we needed to keep down, than a friend in need of a helping hand up. Yeltsin's Russia was useful to the US and NATO only to the extent that we could exploit it economically while controlling its domestic politics in a manner that kept Russia in a perpetual state of weakness. The Obama "reset" was simply a ploy to remove Vladimir Putin, who rejected the vision of Russia projected by the West, and replace him with Dmitri Medvedev, whom Obama believed could be remade in the figure of Yeltsin. The fact that Putin believes in a strong Russia has upset the plans of the US, NATO, and Europe for post-Cold War hegemony, predicated as they were on a weak, compliant Russian state.

Q. The number of spy missions, nuclear-armed bomber flights, and war games near Russia's borders have vastly increased over the past year. Same with China. Is all of this just business-as-usual geopolitical posturing? Or does it represent a dangerous escalation and a new ominous direction in U.S. strategic positioning? What is the justification for what Russia and China see as provocations and aggressiveness, if not actual preparation for a war?

A. To be honest, the level of intelligence collection today pales in comparison to what we were doing during the Cold War. It's all a matter of perspective. We are engaged in a global geopolitical competition with both Russia and China that has a military component attached to it. The intelligence collection

and military posturing is simply a ramification of this reality. I think the Russians and Chinese are mature enough in their own assessments to distinguish between simple intelligence collection and posturing, and actual preparations for war.

Q. Between the FONOPS in the South China Sea and the recently expressed enthusiasm for Taiwan's independence, the risk of military conflict with China keeps increasing. Where is this headed? If People's Republic of China decides to use military force for full reunification of Taiwan, do you see the U.S. going to war in an attempt to prevent it?

A. You can't have two competing major powers operating in the same space without conflict. The US will either have to retreat from the South China Sea, and stop supporting Taiwan, or there will be a military conflict. I don't see the US retreating, so the question is what level of conflict will ensue. The US lacks the capacity for meaningful military engagement on either front. China will probably seek some form of low-level conflict that can be contained as a way of compelling a US retreat. But unless the US changes course, there will be a war.

Q. The U.S. against the clear objections of the government in Syria is occupying valuable land, stealing the country's oil, and preventing access to the most agriculturally productive region, effectively starving the population. The world sees this for what it is, a cruel game sacrificing innocent people for some perceived geopolitical advantage. Is this the kind of reputation the U.S. wants? Or does it simply no longer care what the rest of the world community thinks?

A. The US doesn't care, and frankly speaking neither does the rest of the world. Arab life has become virtually worthless in terms of generating sympathy when it is lost. The world has come to accept the cheapness of an Arab life. That the US is involved in policies that harm Arabs simply does not shock the

global consciousness the way it should, if for no other reason than the Arabs themselves behave as if Arab life holds no value. How else do you explain the sectarian violence, the Saudi assault on Yemen, etc.?

Q. In a democracy, at least in theory citizens have a say in all matters of public policy. Yet, in the end none of the recent military campaigns and undeclared wars seem to achieve much popular favor or support. What is and what should be the role of everyday citizens in determining the foreign policy and military priorities of the country? Or are such matters better left to the “experts”?

A. We should stop pretending that the US is a functioning democracy; Citizens United proves we are not—when the courts grant citizenship powers to corporations, money and greed become the nations lifeblood, not the will of the people. The American people have allowed themselves to be dumbed down to the point that their opinions are easily manipulated by corporate owned and controlled mainstream media. The inability to function as a viable component of government has resulted in the “people” fracturing into competing ideological and socio-economic fiefdoms. American democracy is little more than feudalistic plutocracy. Its an unsustainable model doomed to collapse in on itself.

Q. Related to that, the citizenry and most of Congress are kept in the dark with respect to special missions, proxy funding, CIA operations, and swaths of unknown unknowns constituting psyops, cyber ops, and regime change ops, all done in our name as U.S. citizens. The funds to support this sprawling “dark world” of sabotage and terror being inflicted on the rest of the planet, is also a secret. Now there’s pervasive spying on U.S. citizens right here at home. What place does any of this have in “the land of the free”? Does this mean the government of the people, by the people, for the people is just a sham?

A. While there is a role for secret operations in the conduct of legitimate defence-related activities, every effort should be made to minimize that which is defined as secret, and to ensure that anything deemed secret is eventually revealed so that the American people can be fully informed as to what is being done in their name. Secrecy is the death of democracy. That we live in a police/military state where everything is classified is proof positive of the decline of the United State as a functioning democracy. American cannot cure itself until it reveals all of its secrets to its citizens; otherwise, we are only pretending to live in a democracy. Democracy thrives in sunlight, nor shadows.

Q. Recently we've seen some token but precedent-setting direct payments to citizens in the form of Covid relief. There is also the ongoing discussion about reparations to descendants of slaves. If it could be unequivocally established that the government has abused DOD funding, misused and squandered vast sums of money to promote unjustified wars, purchase unneeded equipment, unnecessarily expand U.S. military presence across the globe, and regularly lied to the American public to manufacture consent for these misadventures and fraudulent activities, practical and political considerations aside, do you see any constitutional or other legal barriers to the public identifying, expecting, or even demanding proper compensation? A cash refund or citizen reparations for massive, authenticated abuse of power?

A. The House of Representatives controls the purse—it alone can make determinations regarding the allocation of financial resources. The American people have the ability to elect new Congressional representatives every two years. The answer to all of our problems could be solved by electing the right people to represent us. And yet...look at Congress today. It is fundamentally broken, divided along ideological lines, and in the pockets of corporate sponsors and special interests. The answer is no—beyond some token Covid-like bribes, the American

people will never see compensation for the mismanagement of their taxpayer dollars so long as they have a Congress configured as it currently is.

• • •

We are grateful to Scott Ritter for his thought-provoking views. The interview was arranged by John Rachel, Director of the Peace Dividend Project. This effort embraces a powerful, unprecedented, end-to-end strategy for challenging the tyranny of neocon warmongers in Washington DC, ending the endless wars, and reversing the self-destructive foreign policy and military paradigm which now poisons U.S. relations with the rest of the world. Scott Ritter has also agreed to be interviewed for the full-length Peace Dividend documentary film, a devastating indictment of the corruption and fraud built into our excessive military budgets and imperial overreach. This movie will inform, unite and empower everyday citizens to have a voice in determining the future they want for themselves and their children.



John Rachel has a B. A. in Philosophy, has traveled extensively, is a songwriter, music producer, novelist, and evolutionary humanist. He has spent his life trying to resolve the intrinsic clash between the metaphysical purity of Buddhism and the overwhelming appeal of narcissism. Prompted by the trauma of graduating high school and having to leave his beloved city of Detroit to attend university, the development of his social skills and worldview were arrested at age 18. This affliction figures prominently in all of his creative work. His latest book – [LIVE FROM JAPAN!](#) – is a collection of anecdotes about his life in a traditional, rural community an hour northwest of Osaka. The print version is a deluxe, full-color, large-format (8.5" x 11") volume with over 450 photos. We highly recommend it.

The views expressed herein are solely those of the author and may or may not reflect

those of The Greenville Post. However, we do think they are important enough to be transmitted to a wider audience.

If you find the above useful, pass it on!
Become an "influence multiplier"!

The battle against the Big Lie killing the world will not be won by you just reading this article. It will be won when you pass it on to at least 2 other people, requesting they do the same.

**Did you sign up yet
for our **FREE**
bulletin?**

It's super easy! Sign up to receive our FREE bulletin. Get TGP selections in your mailbox. No obligation of any kind. All addresses secure and never sold or commercialised.

First name or full name

Email

By continuing, you accept the privacy policy



Don't forget-
**Only you
can keep
us alive!**



If you find
The Greenville Post's
work valuable and
appreciate
its high quality, please
consider making a
donation.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-sa/4.0/)

ALL CAPTIONS AND PULL QUOTES BY THE EDITORS NOT THE AUTHORS
