

Wilkerson & Jay: Don't Despair, Organize

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Paul Jay

Now, joining us to talk about the election results in the United States, which is the beginning of a new era of a return- was that back to the future? Now, joining us is Larry, who doesn't need any introduction to our normal viewers and to most people who follow the news. Thanks for joining us, Larry.

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

Good to be with you, Paul. By the way, did you get my cheque?

Paul Jay

No.

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

I mailed it about 10 days ago, so it should be getting there.

Paul Jay

Oh, well, thank you. Yeah, that's terrific. If people want to donate, that'd be great. All right, so let's talk about what happened. I'm blown away at what an awful campaign the leadership of the Democratic Party conducted. It wasn't something I said once I saw the results. I was saying it all through the campaign. Kamala Harris simply would not answer in any straightforward way almost any real question, but particularly the most important economic question. She would not answer why inflation is coming down, but the cost of living is not on the whole, especially food, rent, and other basic necessities. She never answered why that's happening, and she never said what she would do about it. There's some talk about price gouging, but she actually never said how she would stop that and more or less stopped talking about that as the campaign came to its conclusion.

The most important things that need to be talked about, i.e., the existential threats facing America and the world, the climate crisis, almost not a word, and the issue of the threat of nuclear war. In fact, the only person to mention it at all, really, was Trump, and only when he's talking about his crazy Iron Dome proposal to create a new anti-ballistic missile system, which we'll talk about as we get into the interview.

In the course of this, let's talk about these three things I'd like to talk about. But first, just your basic reaction, and then we can get into these three areas.

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

Frankly, I was stunned by the results, and not because I wasn't watching the polls. I was, but I don't trust the polls anymore. They're too much aligned with interests that back them. I was stunned by the fact that so many Americans are apparently so dissatisfied with their country and with everything that's happening around them that they're willing to go to the polls and vote for a chief executive who is clearly, obviously, without any doubt whatsoever, even in the stupidest person's mind, a crook and more. That's what stunned me most of all, was that the margin was significant in my view, given the polls and given what I thought was going to happen. Significant enough to where there will be, I don't think, any debate or any real court cases or anything. Trump has won both the Electoral College and the popular vote. That's shocking to me.

I knew America was in trouble. I knew we were having enormous domestic problems. I knew those problems were translating into foreign policy and foreign policy into domestic problems. They feed each other. I knew we were at a point where, as I've said many times, the empire was looking very shoddy, as if it were approaching some denouement. Some end. I didn't think we'd come to the point where we'd elect Donald Trump as President again, and we did.

Paul Jay

The campaign made a strategic decision, unlike Biden when he ran. Sanders had had such a strong primary campaign, Biden created a platform committee or working group with Bernie Sanders and ran to the left-of-center and beat Trump with a campaign somewhat to the left-of-center. The Harris campaign hated the Left, really, and spent all its focus on trying to shave off Republican votes or center-right votes, and barely mentioned the climate crisis. They had mealy-mouthed responses on economic questions and lost. What do you make of that? The campaign had no substantive guts to it.

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

I would say that probably right now, knowing myself personally, how spiteful Joe Biden can be and thinking that in his elder years, he's become even more so, that he's crowing right now about her being so defeated. That's his first and personal reaction. His professional and political reaction is, "Oh, God, what did we do?" he's probably thinking, "If I'd stayed the candidate, this wouldn't have happened." There might be some evidence for that. Nonetheless, it's happened. I think, as I said before, as I tried to imply anyway, I think this is more a comment on America and the state of the empire than it is a comment on either candidate, party, or the political process in general, though they aided and abetted this denouement.

I think we're in trouble, Paul. I think we're in deep trouble economically, financially, and culturally. I think we are poised on the brink of a potential domestic collapse as well as a foreign policy collapse, if you will. That's a recipe for, in our world, I think; we aren't the British. We aren't the people who can absorb this loss over a 70-year period and come out of it on the other end, still clicking somewhat. We're the people that go down catastrophically. We're the kind of empire that goes down catastrophically. I'm seeing the signs, and I'm seeing the telltale indications that we have seen our day in the sun.

Unlike previous empires of similar wealth, breadth, and power who managed to hold on for 100 years after clearly the rot had set in, I don't think we're going to hold on that long. Not just because of the decay that's happened but also because of the conditions around us that are making this happen externally. They aren't going away. They're going to deepen, they're going to widen, and they're going to become more powerful. Of course, we're throwing fuel into that deepening, widening, and becoming more powerful against us. We're actually helping it. So, this could be very sudden, very traumatic, and very destabilizing. Nationally destabilizing.

Paul Jay

The fundamental structural issue is the incredible concentration of wealth that's happened over the last few decades. Now, this election, I think more than any previous, the billionaires [crosstalk 00:09:21].

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

Before you get away from that, let me say, wealth that doesn't necessarily like us.

Paul Jay

The billionaire class came out so openly in this election, particularly on the Republican side, with Musk and people like Peter Thiel and others. Of course, the Democrats have their own billionaires. The billionaire class overtly fought each other, decided who would be the president, and elected—talking about a new king, I think it's better to say a new Emperor. I was reading somewhere they've elected Nero. This is the guy who's going to fiddle as the Earth burns. The billionaires have just decided that they're in this crazy metaphysical space. Whether it's Peter Thiel and the far-right Christians who are doing God's work and want to start a new crusade to save Judeo-Christian civilization or you have Musk who wants to start a civilization on Mars. These guys are living in crazy cuckoo land, and the most critical issue of the climate crisis and the threat of nuclear war is not even being talked about.

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

If you want to really be shocked, I started about a year ago collecting everything I could get my hands on; I have some people helping me with this, on the climate crisis. Every kind of scientific article. I've got headings like hurricanes, tornados, rain, and all of the pieces that have come out. Scientific journals and such, and *The New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and others occasionally in there. I've now got over a thousand articles in it. When I go over it and look at the headings alone, like, for example, geoengineering, and go down through geoengineering and see the crazy-ass things that are going on right now, funded by many of these billionaires, inadvertently or indirectly, I should say, or directly, and threaten us as much as the climate crisis. It's going off.

Maybe the *LA Times* will pick it up if it's happening in California. Maybe *The New York Times* will pick it up if it's happening on the East Coast. Maybe my Climate and Security Working Group picks it up if it has real national security implications, but no one's really talking about this. No one's congealing it and saying, "Look at all the things that are going on right now that not only corroborate that we are in deep shit but also show the morons out there who are putting tons of money behind methodologies that won't do a thing except waste their money, waste people's times, and maybe are dangerous." It's really shocking when you go through the list.

Paul Jay

The extent to which the billionaires backed and openly campaigned for Trump, Musk and others. It's clear how the Harris campaign was tailored not to offend big donors, meaning they're billionaires. There's no way to explain Harris's position on Gaza. Not to let a Palestinian woman legislator speak at the Democratic Convention. A small token. Her campaign, Harris, wouldn't even do that because it would piss off some of the donors that are so pro-Israeli genocide and on the issue of climate change.

They're terrified to piss off the fossil fuel companies. She has to go pro-fracking in Pennsylvania. Even if you're going to pander to only around half of the people of Pennsylvania that want fracking, you could at least actually talk about a just transition and tell the people of Pennsylvania, "Listen, we got to get off fossil fuel. Maybe you'll frack right now." I'm not saying I'm for fracking, but I'm saying she could have argued this. "You don't have to bear the burden of this alone." The whole country has benefited from fossil fuels. So, if we're getting off it, the whole country has to help the people of Pennsylvania and other states that depend on fossil fuels to have a just transition to sustainable energy. None of that. It's not like they don't know that argument.

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

Well, you've just outlined a major incentive that I've noticed for the past decade in particular, of politicians of whatever party or stripe, even independents like Angus King, and their inability or lack of willingness to tackle the tough issues because they think the politics divide evenly or are enormously against them, like AIPAC and the billionaires that fund it. They just don't have the courage to take it on. We have a courageless legislative branch. They shout and scream like Ted Cruz, Lindsey Graham, Josh Hawley, and that guy from Louisiana, and Kennedy. They try to make themselves look smart. They're making themselves look like the biggest cowards on the face of the earth. There's not a single one of them that will tackle any of these problems, and it's mainly because of what you just described. It has either balanced political implications, and they don't want to touch it because they can't get it on one side of the other with a majority, or it has enormously for them in their position, negative implications. So, no courage. No tackling tough problems.

Paul Jay

Now, if anyone's going to say, why am I spending my time trashing the leadership of the Democratic Party in this interview, let me explain for two reasons. One, listen to everything I've been saying the last few months and watch our video, *Trump's Unholy Alliance*. I've spent a lot of time critiquing, and for the next four years, I'll mostly be critiquing the Trump administration. I think the inability of the leadership of the Democratic Party, the people who ran the Harris campaign, and obviously, Harris herself. She seemed to be almost like an actor performing a script that had been prepared for her by some kind of marketing company.

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

Very close to the truth, probably.

Paul Jay

I think so because she had her talking points. She was very disciplined, and it didn't matter what anybody asked her. She would go back to it. Somebody would ask her about what she was going to do about high prices, and she would talk about growing up in a working-class family. It just never made any sense. The reason I'm focusing on that is because as dark and dangerous as I believe the Trump administration will be, I think the people who consider themselves supposedly on the Left, progressive, or something, that somehow thought or think this is a good thing that Trump wins, I think they're completely nuts. I do think how discredited the Democratic Party leadership is now, how impotent they were, is an opening. If there's any silver lining in this, and I'm not trying to diminish how dangerous the Trump administration is going to be, but there is an opportunity here now for a broad, progressive, united, democratic front of people to do what Trump did to the Republican Party, but do it to the Democratic Party. Take the thing over at every possible local level, whether it's a city or whether it's states. The Democratic Party has to be in disarray right now.

I just saw Adam McKay, who did that great film, *The Big Short*. The film director said he is done with the Democratic Party. He wants to join, or he's going to talk about the Greens or something. I don't think so. I think actually now is the time to take advantage of how weak and disorganized the Democratic Party is going to be. Also, try to really primary the hell out of these right-wing Dems on both climate because they're afraid of fossil fuel money and on Gaza because they're afraid of pro-right-wing Israeli money. They were left with nothing as a campaign, except she smiled and had a campaign of joy. I don't think anyone's feeling the joy right now.

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

Well, you make some sense there, I think, in a very real way. Climate change, for example. I think the admonition I got from a senator some years ago, now it must be a decade almost ago, when I confronted him on the national security implications, a Texas senator, of all things. He listened to my pitch because the Iowa Senator, Joni Ernst, had set me up with him because she had just listened to my pitch, even though she's not really in the ball game either. He said to me, "When it's 16 feet of water in Wall Street, we'll react." Well, I think we're coming to a point where the climate is going to do that sort of thing all across the country and the globe. Militaries are well-seized of this. They know what's coming and they are just shuttering about the prospects of their humanitarian assistance and disaster relief budget, dwarfing everything else, including new weapons acquisition and such.

Once that hits, then you've got the impetus, the political space, and the political motion, if you will, to do something about this that won't be antagonistic with your voters because they're going to be in the water.

Paul Jay

But why didn't they do it? Trump says, "God, save me. It just hit my ear. It was a message from God." Well, how about the hurricanes that hit Florida? Why wasn't that the time [crosstalk 00:19:32] to go and say, this is a climate crisis?

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

People are still saying this is just a bad period. This isn't the climate crisis, bang, bang. This is just a bad period of weather. We've had bad periods of weather before. There's some justification for that. You have to dig into the data, and you have to see how the data is the same year after year after year. It's getting worse and worse and worse. Whether it's the 3.5 that we now pretty much are sure we're going to hit by mid-century and really go out of the realm of possibility of survival for the long term after that. If we do that, and we're going to do that. We're certainly going to do that.

Paul Jay

We've already hit the 1.5, which the Paris Accords were supposed to have stopped. Now we've elected a climate science denier.

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

Yes, and a fossil fuel lover.

Paul Jay

Drill, baby, drill.

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

Yeah. I'm afraid, as I implied in my earlier remarks, I'm afraid that this is going to get so bad. Take the senator's metaphor, for example; it's going to be 28 feet of water on Wall Street, and we are going to be unable to recover. That inability, whether it's real or perceived, is irrelevant. The American people will be distraught and at each other's throats, and we'll have battles over these things. You had tornadas in Oklahoma yesterday that pretty much wiped out the state. One will say to another. The other will say, well, look at what I had in Oregon or Washington State. We'll have all this contention across the country about anybody doing anything about it that is significant and worthwhile.

One reason why me and some other people are trying to build a whole database right now of people, spatial epidemiologists, emergency medical people, water experts, flood experts, damage control

experts, refugee law lawyers, refugee camp managers, over 100 skills we're looking at to put together in something like FDRs CCC. Call it a Climate Crisis Corps, if you will. We're looking at having to conscript or whatever, maybe somewhere between 10 and 15 million people.

When you think, well, that's preposterous. We had 140 million in 1941, and we conscripted over 12 million. So, it's not a huge amount of our population. They're going to have to comprise this Climate Change Corps that's going to have to act. We're not talking about going overseas with it, we're talking about doing domestic tasks that fit these skillsets, from fighting fires to fighting floods, because it's going to get that bad.

As far as running refugee camps on the borders, I mean, our simulation showed that in 2050/2060, we're running huge, 100,000-plus people refugee camps all along our Southern borders, and then we tire of it. After a decade, we tire of it, and we put troops on the borders and shoot people. Now, that's a worst-case scenario, but that's what we're looking at. It's very dangerous to get to that point, though. It may be the point of no return. We may not have any alternatives after that. We may be in chaos. We may be fighting each other in the streets. We're trying to do our best to get enough people involved to understand this. I must say, most of these people are under 40. Most of these people that are under 40, they get it. They understand what's happening, and they understand the national security implications.

If we don't do something significant, I mean, forget about nuclear weapons; the climate will wipe us out. Even if we're able to control the absolute insanity that reigns right now about nuclear weapons. The ABM Treaty that he's talking about [crosstalk 00:23:27].

Paul Jay

Not a treaty.

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

Yeah, I wish you were talking about a treaty. That's just the last straw. Ted Postol talks about this all the time. We've already got this improvement in our MIRV warheads that allows them now to present the President of the United States with a first-strike capability, even a capability to denude the opponent in that first-strike that they might think about doing it intentionally. So, you throw some kind of shield into this, too, even if it's only half-ass like the Israeli Iron Dome is only-

Paul Jay

It has to be half-assed. There is no shield that's going to stop ICBMs coming out of the sky.

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

You got that. Which Israel has discovered.

Paul Jay

Yeah.

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

We all discover.

Paul Jay

The Israeli thing can deal with ballistic missiles that are flying more or less straight over, and maybe they go up a little bit and down, but they're not intercontinental ballistic missiles.

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

They're not coming down at 33,000 kilometers an hour.

Paul Jay

They're not coming down surrounded by thousands of decoys. I mean, the whole thing is total nonsense. The only thing that makes sense about the Trump Iron Dome is if you're Elon Musk and Peter Thiel, you will make a shit load of money out of this boondoggle.

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

Precisely what Lockheed Martin did off of THAAD and other elements of the existing shield material. They made tons of money off South Korea and tons of money off Saudi Arabia and other Gulf States by selling them this very expensive equipment that probably will hit one out of 10.

Paul Jay

There's an underlying strategic thing that seems to pervade everything. It's not just on the Republicans side. It's very much amongst the billionaires and leaders of the Democratic Party, too, although it's more aggressive on the Republican-Trump side. Everything seems to start and end with how to defeat China. The drill, baby, drill thing isn't just about pleasing fossil fuel companies. It's about having some strategic advantage against China. The idea that if there's going to be a legitimate climate plan, there's got to be cooperation with China. Well, they don't want cooperation with China. They want to somehow reassert American hegemony in the world, and they're not going to succeed, but that's the plan.

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

It's a major detriment, if not a showstopper, to a nuclear weapons treaty regime that might curb some of this and get us back into a relatively sane world with respect to those heinous weapons. We're looking at both of those things, the climate crisis and nuclear weapons, and they require cooperation and collaboration, not animosity. You're going to have strategic competition economically and so forth, but you can't have this animosity and deal with these two challenges that the world has because they are global challenges. They are not as challenged to the state of America or the state of China.

Here's a scary thing, Paul. I'm hearing talk that because we're up to 22 million barrels a day now. Dwarfing even combined Russia's and China's production. Because of that, we're actually considering that we could go ahead and allow the Israelis to strike the oil facilities in the Persian Gulf, weather the storm, and get it over with. Take out Iran and get it over with. I don't know if that was on the National Security Advisor to Mohammed bin Salman's mind when he just concluded his visit and apparently inked a bilateral treaty. Remember, we're going to have a multilateral treaty, including Israel. No, a bilateral treaty was inked between him and the administration here for the defense of Saudi Arabia. We've already done that under different names, but they're basically bilateral treaties with Qatar, with Bahrain, and with the Emirates.

We're obviating the GCC now, the Gulf Cooperation Council, in doing these bilateral treaties. Was the conversation that Jake Sullivan had with his counterpart from Saudi Arabia a couple of days ago, did that involve this? I can't imagine that Saudi Arabia is going to accept their own facilities being counter-struck by Iran and some really productive capacity going on. But it wouldn't bother us. Not for a while.

I've got news for you. If 20% of the world's oil, maybe not the U.S., but the world's oil, including Japan and others, goes through the Strait of Hormuz and stops; I've done the war game in Beijing in 2009. We did the war game. The simulation, we call it. Oil goes to \$300 a barrel overnight. Insurers

will not insure, and shippers will not ship. We had to send half the American Navy to the Gulf before we, and that was a couple of weeks it took to quell those rising oil prices, and they didn't stabilize very well. They stabilized around 170. That's very disruptive.

The Chinese were in this game. The Japanese were in this game. The Koreans were in this game. The Lloyds of London was in this game. The Maritime Commission was in the game. All these experts were there. We moved oil all around the world with global cooperation in order to quiet the markets, quiet the insurers, quiet the shippers, and get things back on an even- we were shipping essentially Alaskan oil to Korea, and Korea was shipping other things to Japan and Japan to Korea. We really mucked with the energy. We didn't muck with it. We really redistributed the energy grid across the globe in order to deal with this crisis. That's how deep it was. So, why would we be thinking about going ahead with an attack on Iran? Authorizing Bibi to do it, him getting in deep tension, and then us following up with the so-called killer blow. I got news for us there, too. It isn't going to be a killer blow.

This is a development that could happen between now and the inauguration. I could just see the Biden administration leaving Trump with this dilemma. That is to say, we're mired in a decision that has not quite been made yet as to whether or not we let Israel topple or we go in and help them. That would be a real kicker between now and January and the inauguration.

Paul Jay

Well, it would certainly serve Trump's interest if Biden were to do it because he can blame it on Biden, but it's not like it's not something Trump wants anyway. Milley said Trump wanted to start something with Iran as one of the things to stop the transition of power back in '21. The right-wing forces around Trump would love to see an attack on Iran. I don't know whether Biden wants to make that part of his legacy, of what there is left of that legacy. I do want to [crosstalk 00:30:59]. Sorry, go ahead.

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

You may not have any choice, though, if Netanyahu senses that he has to get himself in a real trick bag in order to entice the United States into what he's always wanted them to do.

Paul Jay

Well, he's already talked to Trump, hasn't he? So, if Trump says, go ahead, now, he doesn't need Biden to say, go ahead. Yeah, you're right. He could put Biden in the corner.

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

Zelenskyy's talked to Trump, too. That was weird, at least the message that I got that he delivered. "Please support my victory plan," or something like that.

Paul Jay

Well, Peter Thiel makes a lot of money. Palantir, Peter Thiel's company, is making lots of money in the Ukraine war, and Musk is making lots of money with his Starlink. He's going to make lots of money. I don't know how much he's been paid yet, but he's expecting to get paid a lot. It's not like there isn't some billionaire interest on the Trump side to keep the Ukraine war going, although they'd rather focus on China.

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

This is one reason why I'm not so sure that all my compatriots who are saying, "Well, at least Trump will stop the Ukraine conflict," are right.

Paul Jay

I mean, that's the one thing I actually hope. When Obama got elected, I said, "I have only one real hope that there'll be something really different, and that is he'll be rational about Iran," and he was. They came to this agreement, the nuclear agreement. I don't have any hope for the Trump administration, except one. I would like to see that war ended. There are other ways to fight the Russian occupation of Eastern Ukraine if the people there want to fight. It doesn't have to be all-out war and slaughter as it is. There are general strikes. There are all kinds of things that could be done if that's what people want to do, but I have no other hope for this administration that anything good will come out of it. Let me return to [crosstalk 00:32:56]. Go ahead.

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

No, go ahead.

Paul Jay

I was going to say, I want to return again to this issue. People who are feeling deflated, depressed, and overwhelmed by this result, and I certainly understand why, take a few days to feel that and then get going. I want to say, again, that there is an opportunity here to break the hold of the pro-Democratic Party Wall Street that especially the Harris campaign was so dependent on, but so was Biden. Maybe slightly less. There was a little more pro-union content. There was a little more climate stuff in the Biden administration and a little more inclusive of the Sanders kind of forces. The Harris campaign simply ignored all of that. But because of this historic defeat and what's coming, which will be very draconian.

What Trump said in his victory speech, "Promises made, promises kept." Well, mass deportation that's one of the promises. Getting rid of the Leftist vermin is one of the promises. What's coming is not going to be the first Trump term. If it looks like they've got the trifecta and the whole of both houses, look out for what's coming.

In states that are controlled by the Democratic Party, and I would particularly point to Michigan, where there's a centrist or center-left governor, they control both houses of the legislature. There's a big Union, UAW. In states that, even though Trump won, I guess, Michigan by a hair, there's real anti-Trump power, people need to take advantage of this moment and really get organized. California, New York, and Illinois take advantage because there's a war coming. The people of the big cities who did not vote for Trump are going to hate what's coming. There's an opening here where a mass movement may emerge. Some people argue, "Let's have Trump because it creates the possibilities for that." I don't think that was a reason to vote for Trump, but it doesn't mean there wasn't some truth to it. Maybe there is an opportunity so we got to get over feeling completely dismayed by all of this and get organized.

One more thing to get concrete about it. It can't all be done within the Democratic Party. There does need to be an independent political movement of some kind that makes its own decisions and its own plans but does primary the hell within the Democratic Party out of right-wing Democrats.

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

I don't disagree with you. I think it is an opportunity, but for that specific purpose, a revitalization of the Democratic Party and a more balanced Democratic Party that accommodates its progressive wing and accommodates in more than just a perfunctory way. The Bernie Sanders wing, if you will. I also think, and this is where my pessimism and even cynicism clicks in, that we're going to fight each other in the streets in this country. Trump is going to relish that. He said he's going to make the Department of Justice a wing of the executive branch. He said explicitly he doesn't believe it should

be the American people's Attorney General. It should be his attorney general. He's going to use the FBI and other instruments to oppress us if we object to what he's doing.

I wouldn't be surprised in the first six months that he rounds up Puerto Ricans, for example, and puts them on boats, whether they're legal or illegal, and gets rid of them. He'll pick some group that his people will tell him is manageable, and he will be very demonstrative about the way he does this. That is going to challenge what I just said that he declared in the campaign he would do, but I think the challenge is going to be answered on his side. He's going to own the FBI. He's going to own the Justice Department. He already owns the Supreme Court for most practical purposes, and he's going to own the Congress in a significant way. He's going to be majorly cowed by this. So, I'm waiting for this first move that he's going to make against the immigrants to fulfill his campaign promise. If it's successful, even moderately successful, even partially successful, he'll move on to the next group and the next and the next. That's going to cause chaos in this country, domestic chaos of the first order.

Paul Jay

I think you're right, but I just want to return to this idea. If there's fighting in the streets, the big cities are not pro-Trump. The big cities are massively anti-Trump. Even though he increased his vote a hair a little bit [crosstalk 00:38:17].

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

I saw that in New York. We held this big riot there.

Paul Jay

When they start implementing this far-right, theocratic, religious agenda, this ain't going to go over well in the big cities. Even the mass deportations, I don't know how serious he is really about that. Corporate America needs all these "illegal migrants" because it puts downward pressure on wages across the board. It's hard to see them really going to do that, but they might do it in places that voted against Trump, but maybe they'll focus on those sorts of places.

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

It may start out as just cosmetic numbers to show he's fulfilling his promises. If he's successful, I think it'll become more than cosmetic.

Paul Jay

One thing that the states that are controlled by the Democratic Party, if progressives, even center Leftists or centrists, in those states, well, let's remember, they have guns, too.

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

Remember the last time we had a real problem in this country, a big problem that caused a lot of blood and a lot of casualties, was when the states decided they didn't like things. Whether they band together or not is really immaterial. You've got some pretty powerful states out there with pretty powerful militias and National Guards.

Paul Jay

Who don't like Trump. I don't know what the militias think, but the political leaderships are anti-Trump, and the legislatures, to a large extent, are anti-Trump and anti this far-right theocracy. People need to understand there's some real power there, and the focus needs to be, electorally, on the midterms. We're only two years away.

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

If we have any.

Paul Jay

Well, that was my next sentence. I mean, Trump did promise, “My dear Christians. I love you, my Christians. Vote for me now, and you won’t have to vote again in four years.”

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

Exactly.

Paul Jay

I take that in all seriousness because, as I said in the video we did about this, people should watch *Trump’s Unholy Alliance*. It’s even more pertinent now. Peter Thiel and some of the other far-right billionaires that are connected with Opus Dei, the far-right of the Catholic Church, the far-right evangelicals, don’t want elections in four years. They want a monarchy. Mark Cuban said that’s what the billionaires like Musk and others want. Except they wanted it [crosstalk 00:40:59].

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

Don’t doubt it for a minute. Don’t doubt it.

Paul Jay

It’s not a time to be completely deflated. It’s a time to see this as a new stage where there’s going to be a big struggle. Everyone needs to learn how to talk to people about climate and how to talk about the hypocrisy of wrapping this Trump agenda in Christianity. We need to get past the siloed media because most of the people who voted for Trump only watch and hear media that reinforces the Trump message. The only way to get around that is you talk to people where you live, you talk to people in your Union, in your Church, and you go out and you, in a very organized way, knock on doors.

I’ve been talking to some friends in Michigan. We want to start a school for door knockers. People need to relearn how to talk to people about these issues because I know when people were out campaigning and knocking on doors now, they didn’t knock on doors of people who might vote Republican. They only knocked on doors that they thought were going to vote Democrat to get them out to vote. Very little was actually done to persuade people. That’s understandable because the Harris campaign didn’t have any bloody substance to persuade people with.

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

Yeah. Well, one of the first mantras of dictatorship is you take over the media. Look what Sheldon Adelson did for Bibi Netanyahu, for example. He bought most of the important newspapers around Tel Aviv and made them Bibi Netanyahu mouthpieces. *Haaretz* was about the only one that held out and is still holding out against that momentum. We’ve had the same thing happen in this country, I think, to a certain extent. So, you’re right. It has to be a grassroots level or grassstops level, whatever you’re going to call it, that gets out there, spreads this message, and communicates.

The power is still in our federal system in the States. Now, that has a recipe also for the repetition of 1859 and 1860 type, but it also is the instrumentality, if you will, politically and organizationally, that could turn the country around. I don’t think it’s going to happen. I think it’s too monumental a task. I think it’s too complex, and we’re too fragmented.

Paul Jay

I think it can happen at some state levels if you can break through, for example, in Michigan,

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

It could.

Paul Jay

Mao Tse-tung was wrong about a lot of stuff. He was right about a few things. He was right about political power coming out of the barrel of a gun. I don't think he's wrong about that.

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

He was right about nuclear weapons being an anathema.

Paul Jay

Yeah, and another one, "A spark can start a Prairie fire." Maybe in one state, you could have a breakthrough that could really start something. There's not going to be a great victory at the national level any time soon. It's not out of the question in the midterms. You could at least take over one of the houses, but a real breakthrough might happen at a state level.

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

If it looks like you could take over one of the houses in the midterms, I don't think they'll have them.

Paul Jay

Well, that's certainly the question, but that will increase pressure even more on what's going to happen in some of the big states. As everybody knows, if you take out fossil fuel from Texas and Oklahoma, say, the only states that produce much wealth in this country are the states with big cities and are anti-Trump. I mean, that's where the wealth of the country comes from.

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

What you said earlier, it's not a clear demarcation, but it's certainly a demarcation. The cities versus the elsewhere. You want to call it rural. You don't call it the suburbs, usually, because now the suburbs are pretty much a part of the city. Maybe not wealth-wise and intellectually, but they more or less, I think, vote that way for different reasons. You could have the battle lines be rural America. That's not a really good term anymore, but other than big city America and big cities. I think that's what many of these oligarchs detest are the big cities because the big cities have proven to be havens for the opposite party, the Democrats. I'm talking about oligarchs who largely support the Republicans. So, we've got all the ingredients for domestic conflagration.

Paul Jay

There's another side to that, which is we got to get out of the big cities. We who advocate these ideas have to get into the rural areas. We got to talk to people. It won't be very long.

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

They'll shoot you. They'll shoot you coming up the walk.

Paul Jay

Well, I don't think so. I think we have a lot of people living in rural America that watch *theAnalysis*. I get lots of emails. At least 20-25 % of rural America.

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

It's not clean-cut.

Paul Jay

The people who can talk to rural America are progressive rural America. There are lots of them—same thing with evangelicals. At least 20-25% of evangelicals did not [crosstalk 00:46:33].

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

There are hard-core, conservative, Republican types, Trump supporters in some of the big cities, too.

Paul Jay

Exactly. Here's the other thing, and this is in looking ahead to the midterms and to what we need to do in terms of getting active to change this situation. I haven't seen the final numbers, but normally 30-40% of people don't vote at all, and they're mostly poor and mostly working poor. Why the hell? The Democratic Party doesn't focus on the registration of the working poor who don't vote because they don't want that giant awakened. It would change the character of the party, but that's exactly what has to happen. If one of the things we do is wake up, organize, talk to the working poor who don't vote and get them out and vote and get them organizing.

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

Trump is going to do his best to declare them non-citizens and deport them.

Paul Jay

A lot of those people are born [crosstalk 00:47:41].

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

We had that move in Virginia. Youngkin did that in Virginia at the last minute. I thought the courts were going to stop him for no other reason than it was last minute and so close to the election. All these roles had to be cleansed of those who might not really be eligible to vote because they are not even green card owners. Of course, the span of time in there that he covered meant that some of the people started at the beginning of that time and were citizens midway or fully through that time. Yet, they were going to be included in that "Oh, well, you can cast a provisional ballot, and we'll check later to see if you really were a citizen." We got that happening in Virginia. We barely squeaked by in Virginia.

Paul Jay

Well, I know you have to go. You gave me a hard-out, and you're almost there. So, let me just say to end this, I'm going to try to do once a week or once every two weeks, an interview, a commentary, but it's all going to be along the lines of, "Get over the despair, let's get organized." Let's talk about how to face up to the urgency of the situation. Urgency in climate, urgency in terms of the threat of nuclear weapons, nuclear war, urgency in terms of this theocratic right-wing dictatorship, which is being formed right before our eyes. You want to have a last word there, and then I'll let you go.

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

What you just described is the only rational way to come back at it. I mean, that's what we talked about last night, for example, with Medea Benjamin and Anne. We have to fight. We have to fight back, and we have to do it strategically and wisely, not stupidly.

Paul Jay

And I think there's something in our relationship, you, Larry and me, Paul. You volunteered to go to Vietnam, and I was out in the streets protesting against the Vietnam War, and we ended up in the same place.

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

Yeah, you were smarter than I.

Paul Jay

I was lucky to grow up in a family that gave rise to somebody who would protest the Vietnam War. It was completely random.

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

That's a pertinent point because I grew up in a family where everyone had served: my father in World War II, my father-in-law in World War II, and their parents before them had served. My grandfather on one side. It was just the thing to do.

Paul Jay

Well, it's very hopeful, I think, how you and I can talk about what needs to be done. Anyone watching this who wants to get in on this conversation about what we need to do and get over the despair and get organized, write and comment. Maybe we'll do some of these live so people can talk. Let us know how you'd like to proceed or how we at *theAnalysis* can help this process. Thank you very much, Larry.

Col. Lawrence Wilkerson

Thanks for having me, Paul.

Paul Jay

Thank you, everybody, for watching *theAnalysis.news*. Please remember the donate button. We can't do this for free. Bye-bye.



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