



John Kiriakou: War, Diplomacy and What Comes Next

Part of the upcoming “World War III” documentary

Claudio Grass

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For many years and by many administrations, Americans have been told that endless overseas interventions, ballooning military budgets, and an ever-expanding intelligence apparatus are the price of freedom, security and global leadership. However, what they were not told is that this approach has hollowed out the nation's institutions, eroded the civil liberties of its own people, and placed it on a perhaps irreversible path of self-inflicted decline. Few people are better positioned to speak to this reality than John Kiriakou, the former senior CIA counterterrorism officer who blew the whistle on the agency's torture program and paid for it with his career, his freedom, and nearly everything else.

In the [interview](#) that follows, Kiriakou reflects on his fifteen years at the CIA and the profound shift that took place after 9/11. What was once an organization focused on recruiting spies, stealing secrets, and providing analysis to policymakers essentially transformed into a paramilitary organization, as Kiriakou described it, that routinely sent teams abroad to kill people who had never been charged or convicted of any crime. At the same time, the agency deepened its ties with private contractors and Big Tech, with its venture arm In-Q-Tel seeding companies like Palantir and partnering with figures such as Elon Musk and Jeff Bezos. Kiriakou argues that American oligarchs now effectively run the economy, the media, and large parts of the government itself. He sees US foreign policy as the behavior of an empire on the downside of its power: every new sanction and every new deployment further weakens the country while China builds influence through infrastructure, loans, and economic engagement rather than endless military adventurism.

Kiriakou is also very critical of the Western role in setting the stage for the ongoing Ukraine war. He points out that both Boris Yeltsin and Vladimir Putin had previously sought NATO membership only to be dismissed, and that Western provocations, particularly the 2014 overthrow of a democratically elected pro-Russian government in Ukraine, pushed Russia into responding by crossing the border. In his view, continued escalation serves neither American nor European interests.

On the topic of Israel, Kiriakou also pulls no punches. He describes the US-Israeli relationship as inappropriate and dangerous. He points to the ongoing destruction in Gaza and the West Bank, calling Israeli policy there a form of collective punishment that amounts to genocide and is unique among nations: the deliberate leveling of entire city blocks and the killing of thousands of civilians to eliminate a single target. He also highlights a point that is rarely discussed: the fact that Benjamin Netanyahu is the longest serving Prime Minister in the history of the country, but he has never received more than 27% of the vote: “In his best year, 73% of Israelis opposed him. But if you or I oppose him, we are antisemites.”

[Watch the video here](#)

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