

Ralph Nader Radio Hour Episode 137

Noam Chomsky

Steve Skrovan: From the KPFK studios in Southern California, it's the Ralph Nader Radio Hour.

[Music]

Steve Skrovan: Welcome to the Ralph Nader Radio hour, my name is Steve Skrovan along with my co-host David Feldman. Hello, David.

David Feldman: I'm going to be doing most of the talking today.

Steve Skrovan: Yes, I'm sure you will. And we also have with us the man of the hour Ralph Nader. Greetings, Ralph.

Ralph Nader: Thank you Steve. Nice to be here.

Steve Skrovan: We have a landmark show for you today. Our guest for the whole hour is pioneering linguist and internationally recognized public intellectual, Noam Chomsky. This is the first time that Ralph and Professor Chomsky, these two titans of progressive thought and activism, have had a public conversation. For that reason, we're getting right to it. For most of our listeners he scarcely needs an introduction, but we're going to give him one anyway. David?

David Feldman: Noam Chomsky is a political theorist and activist and professor of linguistics at MIT. Along with his pioneering work in linguistics, Professor Chomsky is a critic of both American foreign policy and global capitalism. He's one of the most frequently cited scholars in history and has authored more than one hundred books on topics such as linguistics, war, politics, and mass media, including Manufacturing Consent along with Edward Herman, which was also made into a documentary film of the same name. His most recent works are a collection of commentary on various socio-political topics, entitled Because We Say So and his updated critique of American empire entitled Who Rules the World? Welcome to the Ralph Nader Radio Hour Professor, Noam Chomsky.

Noam Chomsky: Very pleased to be with you.

Ralph Nader: Yes, welcome indeed. You heard Steve mention how often you're cited as a public intellectual around the world. You go to auditoriums around the country, and they're jammed, standing room only from California to the East Coast. You've written dozens and dozens of books. You're one of the leading linguists of our generation. And I've always viewed you as a person who confronts propaganda with fact. And what's interesting in my questions that I'm about to ask is that when propaganda is institutionalized, it systematically obstructs the generation and distribution of factual knowledge, historical knowledge, contemporary events. Let me ask you a few quick questions here. Professor Chomsky, have you ever been invited to testify before the Congress?

Noam Chomsky: Yes. In 1970 Senator Fulbright, who was the head of - you might recall - the Senate Foreign Relations Committee was extremely disillusioned with the war in Vietnam with a lot of government activities and so on. And he felt he was being sidelined. And despite the fact that he'd been an influential and distinguished figure, sidelined because of his critical attitude. So he turned the Senate Foreign Relations Committee into a seminar, and I was one of the people invited to testify.

Ralph Nader: Have you been invited since 1970?

Noam Chomsky: Not that I can recall. I've occasionally talked to people in Congress but never invited to a session.

Ralph Nader: How often have you been on the op-ed pages of the New York Times?

Noam Chomsky: I can recall once in 1985 or roughly around then. They actually invited me - which surprised me - to write something about the - maybe probably 2005 - to write about the Israeli what's called the Separation Wall, actually an Annexation Wall that runs through the West Bank and breaking apart Palestinian communities and so on, and condemned as illegal by the World Court and so on - and they did ask me to write about that. I think they ran an excerpt from my testimony at the Fulbright Committee back in 1970.

Ralph Nader: 1970, which is 46 years ago. The Sunday talk shows, NBC, Meet the Press, ABC, CBS, CNN, every week they have guests. Have you ever been on those shows? They cover topics that you've written intensively on.

Noam Chomsky: No, I've never been invited.

Ralph Nader: Okay. How about NPR? And PBS, partially taxpayer supported, is supposed to be more free thinking and more tolerant. Have you been on NPR's programs or PBS such as Charlie Rose or ...?

[Crosstalk]

Noam Chomsky: I've been on Charlie Rose two or three times. And then in Boston – I'm in Boston - there's a Boston outlet for NPR based in Boston University. And they have a discussion program 10 o'clock in the morning - Tom Ashbrook - I've been on that a couple of times. I've had some funny experiences with them. I could tell you if you want, but pretty amusing.

Ralph Nader: Go ahead.

Noam Chomsky: Well, for example, they used to have a program on there - a primetime news program, "All Things Considered." Some years ago, at 5:25 they had - every once a week or so - a five minute discussion with someone who had written a new book. And there's a lot of pressure especially around Boston on this station - because it's Boston-based - to have the station allow me to be on. And they're pretty resistant, but they once agreed. I think it was a book called Necessary Illusions. It talks about propaganda. And I did have the interview recorded with Robert Siegel. Five o'clock they announced that it would be played at 5:25. I got a call from the publisher telling me it's going to be played, I should tune in. I never listen. So I tuned in, and at 5:25 there was five minutes of music. Around 5:31 I started getting phone calls from around the country asking what happened to the piece that was supposed to be on there. I said I didn't know. And I then got a call from the station manager in Washington, who told me that she'd been getting calls, and she didn't understand it, because it was listed. So she didn't understand what happened. Later, she called back saying - kind of embarrassed - saying that some top bigwig in the system had heard of the announcement at five o'clock and had ordered it canceled. And she was pretty upset, because it was over her head. So it went on from there. There was one other case - it was also quite amusing - during the first Gulf War in 1990. The coverage was just uniform - like a totalitarian state, one position constantly mentioned over and over, how horrible they are, how wonderful we are, the usual thing. And there was a little embarrassment that nothing else was being heard. In fact, for the first time ever I was invited for a few minutes on the Lehrer show, I forgot what it's called.

Ralph Nader: The News Hour.

Noam Chomsky: Yeah. And in fact there was a lot to say. But then there was pressure again on NPR to allow me to be on for two and half minutes to say something to break the 100% uniformity. And they

did agree, but they recorded that in advance and then told me it's going to have to be exactly two minutes and 30 seconds. So I carefully planned that. And first time I read it, it was two minutes and 36 seconds. So we had to redo it. And it was two minutes and 30 seconds. And they made sure to vet it so I would say exactly what was written and wouldn't go off the fixed goal. It was quite funny in the station, because the engineers in the back room we're all laughing hysterically. They all understood what was happening. But I did get on for two minutes and 30 seconds.

Ralph Nader: You're hearing, listeners, what censorship is like in our country and that any one of the former Bush/Cheney warmongers like Paul Wolfowitz and John Bolton and others have gotten far more press - after they have left federal positions - in the New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, the Washington Post op-ed pages. They've been on television, public television, NPR. And they have a record of false statements. They have a record of deception. They have a record of pursuing policies that are illegal under our Constitution, under international law and under federal statute, such as the criminal invasion of Iraq and other adventures around the world. Now, a society that operates in a way where propaganda is not only emanating from the major media, but it gets into our schools, the kind of courses that are taught, the content of the history, is a society that's not going to be mobilized for its own survival much less the survival of other countries, whose dictators we have for decades supported to oppress their people. Now, our listeners are fairly familiar, Professor Chomsky, with your writings. I want to take it to the next step. We have empire here. We have both parties pursuing attacks, war, subversions, drones, Special Forces, supporting, dividing, sectarian conflicts all over parts of Asia and Africa. And the question I wanted to ask you is what do you think can start turning this around in terms of A, the citizenry, B, institutional turnarounds maybe the Congress, C, electoral challenges from third parties or insurgent primary chances like Bernie Sanders. If you have to describe a scenario of how we can turn around from empire, from imperialism, from colonialism, from the military industrial complex having a vested interest in war rather than peace, what scenario would you urge on the public, or what scenario do you see?

Noam Chomsky: Well, I think the crucial word that you mentioned was "citizenry." That underlies all of the options that you mentioned: electoral, third parties, lobbying, demonstrations, activism. And it can have an effect. It's happened over time. A lot of things wrong with the country - we agree on all of that - but there has been progress over the years. In some ways, it's a more civilized country than it was say fifty years ago in many respects, like Women's Rights and Gay Rights, even opposition to aggression. The public activism did manage to - there's pretty good reason to believe that the mass demonstrations of 1969 about the Indochina War may have actually averted a nuclear attack - it's not certain, but there's evidence to that affect. They certainly did lead to a retrenchment. What happened after that was horrible enough, but it could have been a lot worse. But let's move on a couple of years. In the early 1980's when Reagan came in, his administration tried to follow almost exactly the playbook of the Kennedy Administration in the early 1960's when they escalated the war in Vietnam - almost point by point. But there was a big difference. When Kennedy did it, there was no reaction, and they went on to build up a huge war. When the Reagan administration started, there was immediately a major public reaction, and protests all over the place, popular groups, church groups, activist groups. And they backed off. In fact, within a couple of weeks, exposures started to appear in the mainstream press, the

Wall Street Journal of the falsehoods in the White Papers that they had produced. And they backed off. What happened again, what happened is that they were trying to launch a major war in Central America. What actually happened was awful enough, but it wasn't as bad as what happened in Indochina in the 1960s than it could have been. Let's go on to the Iraq war. A lot of people claim, believe - I think falsely - that the protests had no impact. I don't agree with that. This is the first war in imperialist history that was massively protested before it was officially launched. And I think it had an effect. Again, what happened was horrible enough, but it was nothing like what could have been done and in fact was done in Indochina in the 1960s. Again, I think not the best consequence we would like by any means, but there is an impact. And I think it continues. And the more the citizenry becomes active and engaged in all of the dimensions that you mentioned, from protests to electoral politics and on, the more that we can see significant changes in the country.

Ralph Nader: Yes, why don't you describe how nuclear arms control treaties came about from citizen demonstrations. That seem to be another good example doesn't it under Reagan?

Noam Chomsky: Yes, very much so. In the early 80s there was maybe the biggest mobilization in history opposing the Reaganite plans to develop, to expand nuclear arms. Actually, we know now things that weren't known then. And they're pretty scary. In fact, new information has just recently come out. In the early 80s, the Reagan Administration was carrying out military a operation to probe Russian defenses. It was called Able Archer. They were simulating an attack on the Soviet Union, even simulating a nuclear attack. This was a very tense moment. Reagan was talking about a huge military buildup. They had placed Pershing II Missiles in Western Europe, even in Germany within a few minutes flight time to Russia. There's a lot of tension. When the Russian archives began to be declassified some years ago, it was discovered that not too surprisingly they took it very seriously. Just recently - last few months in fact - The National Security Archives in Georgetown has succeeded in obtaining the classified information from the United States about how Washington perceived it. And we now know that Washington recognized right off that we are on the verge of war. And it came very close - to go into the details - but right on the midst of this there was an immense public opposition, demonstrations, other activism and the Reagan Administration did back off. Not enough again, but significantly. And that lead to some steps to reduce the terrifying treat of nuclear weapons. And if you want to know how people could understand how terrifying it is - so for example, right in the midst of Able Archer there was at one point an indication from US intelligence that the Russians were mobilizing and planning an attack. Protocol is for the officer who receives this - Leonard Root, his name was, back then a General - to transfer the information to higher authorities. He decided not to. The way the documents read, he did nothing. That might have saved us. About a year later on the Russian side the Russian Automated Response Systems did detect what seemed to be a massive US nuclear attack. The information went to again an officer - Stanislav Petrov his name was - and protocol required that he transmit it to higher authorities, who might have launched a retaliatory strike. He decided not to. That's why we're still around. Things like that have been happening all too often, quite apart from recklessness on the part of political leaders. It's kind of a miracle - if you look at the record - that we've escaped the Nuclear Age and survived. And it's getting more serious. There are mounting treats of nuclear war, very respected mainstream nuclear analysts, strategic analysts, people like William Perry - no dove - a former Defense

Secretary have recently argued that the threat of nuclear war today is greater than it was during the Cold War. And he's not alone. The Bulletin of Atomic Scientists runs what they call a Doomsday Clock. Been since 1947. Midnight on the Doomsday Clock means terminal disaster and they are groups of experts who move the minute hand of the clock several distance from midnight. In the midst of Able Archer, they moved it three minutes to midnight. Two years ago they moved it forward two minutes up to three minutes to midnight, the highest it's been since the war scares of the early 80's

Ralph Nader: What's interesting is the mass demonstrations under Reagan had some well-dressed Republicans in them in New York and Washington. And I know from sources inside the Reagan Administration that they took serious note of that, which was a significant effort - along with groups like SANE - to get Reagan to the bargaining table or negotiating table with his counterpart in the Soviet Union. But there are no mass demonstrations on the race to build more nuclear weapons, accidental release from either side, proliferation. Here we are in Internet Age was easy to contact all kinds of people and say, "Let's go and march. And let's go and rally" and it's not happening. Do you read that as increasing phenomena that we call apathy or anomie in our society?

Noam Chomsky: Well, if you look back over the record, I think there's probably more activism today than there has been for a long time. Take the Indochina Wars again. The war really began to escalate in 1961, '62. That's when Kennedy ordered the US Air Force to start bombing South Vietnam. South Vietnam was of course the main target of the attack. They did that under South Vietnamese markings but didn't fool anyone. He authorized these as chemical warfare to destroy crops and livestock, programs to drive ultimately millions of people into what amounted to concentration camps and urban slums. All of this were going on in the early 60s. And as you remember very well, there was no protest. It was almost impossible to get anyone to even listen to it. The protest didn't really take off until about 1967 when it became really substantial. But by that time, South Vietnam had practically been destroyed. Hundreds of thousands of troops had been rampaging around the country. There were saturation bombing of heavily celled carriers by B52s but virtually very little protest. Finally it took off. It's unfortunate, but it does take time. Now let's come to the present. We're in the midst of another electoral extravaganza every four years. There are critical issues, absolutely critical issues. The most significant questions that have ever arisen in the history of the human species, questions literally of survival. The one is nuclear war, the other's climate change. Simply ask how often do these issues come up in the political discussions or in the commentary about the political issues? What you discuss is vulgarities, trivialities. These things simply don't arise. So what should the public think? They're deluged with commentary on an ongoing political, actually extravaganza. It's supposed to be serious, but it's pretty hard to take it seriously. The two major issues in human history barely receive a mention. So people are confused. They don't know. In fact, many in the United States unfortunately, there're other problems. The United States is - the public to some extent is concerned about these issues - not anywhere near as much as it should be and in fact less than in other countries. There're many reasons for this, which have to do with all kinds of American exceptionalism - if you like - but the most remarkable fact, astonishing fact, even more amazing that it's not reported is that one of the two political parties, the Republican Party, is literally dedicated to the destruction of organized life on earth. That may sound extreme, but think about it for a minute. In the primaries, every single candidate

denied that global warming is taking place. There was one exception, the supposed “moderate,” John Kasich, who said, “Yes, it’s taking place, but let’s not do anything about it,” which is arguably even worse. So you have a hundred percent rejection of overwhelming scientific evidence - more comes out every day - that we’re facing real disaster. And the candidate who is actually the winning candidate, Donald Trump - his position is “It’s not happening. We should use more fossil fuels, more coal plants, eliminate regulations, refuse to - tear up the Paris negotiations, which is at least something, which is to support other developing countries that are trying to move sustainable energy, and in general, just race to the precipice as quickly as possible. Two things are utterly amazing. One is that it’s happening, the second is that it’s not mentioned. It’s impossible to find words.

Ralph Nader: Yeah. Well, this gets us back to the citizenry again. And I’ve often said if one percent of the citizens in Congressional districts organized around a whole variety of issues - some of which you’ve just mentioned - and they’re supported by a reasonable base of public opinion - a majority public opinion - that they could turn Congress around regardless of the lobbyists on the other side. You see Congress as pathetic now as gridlocked and all that, but under our Constitution, it’s the most accessible and the most powerful instrument of democratic society that we have in our country. Why aren’t commentators focusing more on laser beam mobilization in each Congressional district - it doesn’t have to be that many people if it reflects what Abraham Lincoln called was “the public sentiment” - on 535 members of Congress. Warren Buffet once said there’re only 535 members of Congress. We’re 300 million people. Why can’t we control it? Well, because 1500 or so corporations have been able to maneuver it in other directions. But do you find it inadequate attention to focus on Congress, which has huge leverage - the war declaring power it doesn’t use and gives to the White House, the appropriations power to tax, power to investigate, you name it? Why in progressive circles is there so much inattention to mobilizing in each Congressional district around a major agenda to deal with all these momentums toward disaster and reverse them?

Noam Chomsky: Yeah. You’re absolutely right. And in fact one encouraging sign, which may have an impact, is one of the outgrowths of the rather really quite impressive Sanders mobilization, namely the Brand New Congress group, which is trying to do just what you suggested to work at the local level to begin to change the nature, first of all of state legislatures, which is not a small point, that has a long term impact, but also Congress and to hold their feet to the fire. And it could be done. Suppose Clinton gets elected. There’re elements of her program which can be the basis for intensive popular mobilization. So take say the nuclear issue, which we were just discussing. I suppose you saw a couple days ago a leaked discussion with Clinton and couple of strategic analysts and others in which she did say - I don’t know if she means it or not - but she said that we have to reconsider Obama’s trillion dollar modernization program of nuclear weapons. And rather crucially, she came out against the most dangerous element of this modernization program, the new nuclear missile, which is quite dangerous, because it can be scaled down to battlefield use of tactical nuclear weapons, which is a temptation for any commander in a time of conflict that could easily escalate to terminal nuclear war. Well, does she mean it? Who knows? She’s a politician. She says what people want to hear. But popular mobilization could hold her feet to the fire say, “Yes we have to do this. And more and we better do it.” The same is true on other aspects of the formal Democratic program. So calling for a public option in the health

system. And the health system is of course is a total international scandal. You've done amazing work on this over the years. A majority of the population for a long time - today as well - prefers to move to a system in here is called a single pair or something like Medicare for all. The kind of system that other developed societies have with half for the per capita cost that we have in mostly better options, that's the majority of the population even with virtually no articulate support.

Ralph Nader: Yes.

Noam Chomsky: The Democratic program does call for the public option. Good. Hold their feet to the fire with mass mobilization, maybe push it through as same with free tuition, the same with community health centers. One of the elements of the program is a shift to solar power, to renewable energy for all households within four years. Fine. Make them do it. And the way to do it is mass popular activism.

Ralph Nader: I might add a lot of left-right support for these. The forces of plutocracy always like to divide and rule - we're talking with Professor Chomsky of MIT - and they've done this for over 2000 years. So they focus on polarization and how divided left/right are "blue state/red state," certain issues - certainly reproductive rights and gun control and school prayer - but on many transformational issues - some of which you've just mentioned - there's left-right support for higher minimum wage. There's left-right support for full Medicare for all. There's left-right support for more budgets to crackdown on corporate crime, fraud, and abuse of taxpayers, consumers, and workers. There's more left-right support for a lot of consumer protection measures. Conservative families bleed, too. They want their children to drink clean water and eat a safe food and breathe clean air. This is what I would add to your list Professor Chomsky: A major national public works program to repair and upgrade America's public facilities, roads, bridges, public transit, public buildings, libraries, community health clinics, schools, are in a state of disrepair and deferred maintenance. And if the people could mobilize to cut that bloated military budget and require the Pentagon to obey federal law, which it has been violating since 1992 by not presenting an audited budget to the Government Accountability Office - the GAO - of Congress there could be a huge support base. I mean, look at every community, you have labor, Chamber of Commerce, professionals - they all want to repair their community. That's a huge left-right support that can begin redirecting the grotesque distortion of public budgets into military squandering and what President Eisenhower warned about the military industrial complex devouring the country. Eventually, all empires devour their countries, of course. So that's another one. Let me just move on to a big area of lawlessness. We are a country dedicated to the rule of law, and yet there is such massive corporate crime, massive official lawlessness, whether it's Wall Street, whether it's Wells Fargo more recently, whether it's military and foreign practices - you can make a list of measures that are illegal other federal law, state law, under our Constitution. We don't declare war from Congress anymore. The president decides who he wants to destroy as the saying goes as "prosecutor, judge, jury, and executioner" abroad. You've talked to Harvard Law School students and faculty from time - it's my alma mater. In 2011, John Brennan asked to speak to Harvard Law School. He was the national security advisor to Barack Obama in the White House. Now he's head of the CIA. And he delivered a speech - almost an hour - which is online, if you go to Harvard Law School, which asserted again and again that

everything Barack Obama and his Administration was doing overseas in terms of fighting terrorism was Constitutional, legal, and in accord with International Law for which he got a powerful ovation by the assembled people, including the dean of the Law School and other high officials for which it was really a command performance to show off. A few months later - along with Bruce Fine - I went up there to try to rebut him. And there were no administration officials, no professors, no deans of the Law School in attendance. Now, when the primary law school - one can say - doesn't care about lawlessness. And it's just lawlessness everywhere, fine print contract, lawlessness that defrauds us and takes away our rights to go to court, lawlessness in terms of billing fraud. There's a professor at Harvard who says that in the healthcare area alone, computerized billing fraud at a minimum is over a 300 billion a year. That's just in the health care area. How do you read these law schools? I know that you come at it from a non-legal background, but you certainly studied enough about illegal activities. Give me your views on the state of the law schools today and the propaganda that seems to insinuate itself in their curriculum.

Noam Chomsky: Let's take Harvard Law School where I have given talks pretty regularly. And of course, as you say the faculty and the administrators don't show up but quite a few students do. There is a pretty active and quite effective human rights group among Harvard Law School students, which is working effectively even at doing research in support for initiatives that come out of organizations like The Center for Constitutional Law and so on. Those people are a base for trying to change the law schools. It's like popular mobilization. Within the law schools, the students, and the few supportive faculty - there are some - simply have to try to take over their own institutions and turn them into legitimate institutions. And it can be done. Can I give you an example from my own university MIT down the street? In the late 60's where - MIT at that time, was practically a hundred percent funded by the Pentagon, and not for war work incidentally. Now, that's US industrial policy used Pentagon funding as a way to create the high tech economy of the future, computers, internet, micro-electronics and so on and so forth. But in the late 60's, as a small number of students - maybe about a dozen - succeeded in mobilizing a student opinion to the point where there were large-scale protests and demonstrations, pressure on the administration - there were couple of military labs that were run by MIT focused on that - but pressure on them to deal with the question of the effect of that technology in society. This is the major science engineering school in the world and the question of the impact of technology on society had been barely discussed, but it became a huge issue. One event organized by students was a sanctuary for a Marine deserter - you recall in those days mostly at churches - a group would stay with somebody who was deserting and protest against the war until the FBI came and picked him up. This was at a university - first time I think - and the whole campus, which almost closed for two weeks at the student center while this was going on, there were 24-hour seminars, theatre, discussions and all kinds of activities of the 60's variety. It just simply energized the student body to the point where a couple of weeks later the administration did call off classes for a day and devoted that day to the impact of technology on society. A couple of very good organizations sort of grew out of this, like the Union of Concerned Scientists. But the point is that it simply changed the character of the institution in a lasting way.

Ralph Nader: Started with a very few small number of students as you say.

Noam Chomsky: Yeah. I thought maybe a dozen, literally. They formed a small group called the Rosa Luxembourg organization. I doubt if it had more than a dozen members. But they were very effective. The most effective is Mike Albert, who's gone on to do many other things. He, in particular, with others students really did wonderful work. It shows that you can change things. Takes effort, activism, energy, but there're real possibilities. And that's really at the heart of the military industrial complex.

Ralph Nader: Indeed, the Lincoln labs for example at MIT. I want to move on and just ask you from a different angle the situation in Iraq and Afghanistan. We know how those countries are blown apart obviously after 911, but how do you explain to the American people that less than 30,000 Taliban fighters in Afghanistan and less than 20,000 ISIS fighters in Iraq and Syria are holding down massively greater numbers of soldiers, backed by the most powerful military in the world with air, artillery mechanized equipment, naval, missiles, you name it, how do this anti US fighters continue to dominate and in some areas actually advance - such as the Taliban - against our allies there in Kabul and Baghdad backed by military might when these fighters are pretty brutal to the local community themselves?

Noam Chomsky: Well, I mean take ISIS in Iraq and what happened when ISIS exploded in Iraq was, simply from a military point of view, almost unbelievable. There's a huge Iraqi army, hundred thousands of people are heavily armed backed by the United States. A small number of guerillas, a couple thousand of them simply drove out the entire army. What happened was almost indescribable. The generals fled, then after them the soldiers fled, leaving their equipment behind and what it revealed was the total rot at the center of the society that the US had been trying to construct. I think something similar is true in the case of Afghanistan. Foreign imperial power, which comes in and batters the place with a sledgehammer, it's not going to be likely to develop a functioning society, which will be organized, committed to development and progress, and will easily fight off small guerilla groups. They're going to collapse from inside. You look at Iraq. Basra - which is quite far from the fighting - and it could be something like Dubai. It's in the middle of a big oil producing region, access to the sea and cutoff from conflict, not much sectarian violence. It is so utterly enmeshed in corruption, brutality, disorganization that the place is falling apart. An outside imperial power relying primarily on force is not going to be able to establish functioning societies.

Ralph Nader: The same thing seems to be happening in Libya after Hillary Clinton was so strong at the White House overcoming Secretary of Defense, Gates' opposition to toppling the Libyan regime. Now, just again a few thousand ISIS-affiliated fighters and other sectarian struggles spilling over into many African countries. The point here is that people, who don't like what we're doing around the world are learning valuable lessons of how to keep us occupied and drawing us into greater quagmires with poorly trained fighters, but very determined with Kalashnikovs and suicide belts against the most powerful mechanized modern army in the world, equipping the allies on our side in those countries. That is a very destabilizing message in the future, wouldn't you say?

Noam Chomsky: Yeah. In fact there's a number of analysts – serious analysts pointed out – Scott Atrin, William Polk, others - it's almost as if we've been following the Al Qaeda playbook, which is public incidentally. They made public a long time ago, and ISIS picked it up and has a similar one, exactly what their strategy is. It's as if we've been following it point by point, doing exactly what they want. They want us to be drawn into a major war against the entire Muslim world at great cost to ourselves, achieving nothing except more conflict and disaster. And pretty much, that's what we've been doing. Take a look at the so-called War on Terror. When Bush declared it in 2001, the radical Islamic terror was localized in a small tribal area in the Afghan/Pakistan tribal borders. Where is it now? All over the world. Every time you hit it with a sledgehammer, it expands, when you don't look at the roots of the problem. And unfortunately the same is going to be true almost certainly with the current attacks on ISIS strongholds in Mosul and probably Raqqa and Syria. When you look at what happened in the last couple of months - not so much the Iraqi Army but the Shia militias - whatever there is of Iraqi Special Forces and others have conquered the cities in Iraq of Ramadi and Fallujah, Sunni cities. And they've left them a total wreck. That's not reported much. But reporters like, say Patrick Cockburn, who actually go there, describe it as just devastated and disaster.

Ralph Nader: There are only thirty-five hundred ISIS fighters in Mosul. And they're getting ready - the US Military and the Iraqi Military - to attack them and defeat them and take town a city that has a million people, who are going to be largely refugees. See, this is a extremely dangerous development in terms of our own foreign military policy. In the time remaining, let's talk about Congress and the Israeli/Palestine issue. You've written many articles and books on that. We know that the US Government has given the Israeli government, which approaches the Palestinian people in a very militarize occupied manner, a blank check. That anytime AIPAC, the lobby here, wants Congressional help, it can get four hundred or more members of the House to sign on to resolutions even while the Israeli military is slaughtering civilians in Gaza. How about this for proposal? You've heard about the Daniel Abraham Center for Middle East Peace. They have put just this year six fulltime ads in the New York Times with the very pictures of retired officials who use to head the Israeli FBI and the Israeli CIA, who are opposed to Prime Minister Netanyahu's policies, who want a more peaceful solution, a two-state solution –Israel and Palestine - and who think that the present trajectory of Israeli militarism is going to be disastrous for Israel. Now, why don't the pro peace, pro Palestinian groups in this country and Israel - we have the newspaper Haaretz that writes a lot of sensible things with Gideon Levy and Amira Hass and others. We have the Civil Rights, Civil Liberties Group in Israel. We have Jewish ---

Noam Chomsky: Gush Shalom, Uri Avnery.

Ralph Nader: That's right. We have Jewish Voices For Peace, which says, it has over a 150,000 supporters in this country. We have a majority of Jewish Americans, who want a two-state solution. Why don't they go up to Congress and say, "We want to have the former heads of Shin Bet and Mossad, who are a very critical of the present Israeli government, come and testify before the Senate and the House and provide a different view and a different horizon whereby the US can back off from getting into so much trouble in the Middle East with its proxy country. And AIPAC would not be able to block

these high level Israeli citizens, who were heads of all these security groups and military groups. And there are former generals and former attorney generals in Israel, who share the same view. Since 1948, there has never been a hearing in Congress reflecting the Jewish/Israeli peace movement or the many high officials in the Israeli government, who have a different view as to how to make peace with the Palestinians for the long run. Can you explain how this obvious demonstration, six full page ads in the New York Times by the Daniel Abraham Center for Middle East Peace, has not had any resonance.

Noam Chomsky: Well, you could ask a similar question about the American Peace Movement. Now, go back to what you were saying before that was during the, say the Indochina Wars - worst crime since the Second World War. There we're full-page ads constantly in the New York Times. How often were their Senate hearings that invited representatives of the Peace Movement, which was a huge movement? I mean this is a dramatic disconnect between Congress and public opinion. Actually, that's been studied extensively in academic political science. Turns out most of the public is simply unrepresented. The lowest roughly 7 - 8% on the income scale, their own representatives follow policies, which are unrelated to the wishes, the attitudes, and preferences of their own constituency. And we know whose policies they're following. As you move up the income scale you get a little bit more influence. When you get to the very top - a fraction of one percent basically making policy. Congress is responsive to other voices, not those who of its constituencies. And that's a problem that the groups themselves ought to be dealing with. I think you hit it right on the nail when you say the popular movements ought to be pressing for this constantly. And I think there are good opportunities for change here. In the last ten or fifteen years, there's been quite a shift in public opinion, especially among younger people with regard to the Israel/Palestine issue right now. I mean not long ago, literally when I was giving talks on college campuses - even my own - I had to have police protection. That's all gone. Palestinian solidarity is one of the major issues on campus among people who call themselves liberal Democrats, probably a majority favor Palestinian rights. But something has to be done - just like health care and all these other things - actions have to be taken to turn public preference into public policy. And that takes direct activism. Electoral demonstrations, lobbying, all the options that are available to us.

Ralph Nader: Just to elaborate little more on the Daniel Abraham Center for Middle East Peace: it's run by a former Florida Congressman, Robert Wexler, who joined the Center as president. In April 2010, Secretary of State, Hillary Clinton, re-affirmed the Centers goal at a dedication ceremony in Washington DC. So, listeners, contact your members of Congress and ask them if they support a hearing where very prominent, retired Israeli officials, mayors, attorney generals, intellectuals, authors, not to mention the former heads of the Israeli FBI, Israeli CIA would be willing to come and testify and break this incarceration of Congress on this mindless support of militarism from Washington to the Middle East. I think this is a very good way to do it, because Congress could have huge leverage in changing US policy in this area. A few years ago - we're talking with Professor Chomsky - a few years ago there was a debate in Washington. You can see it on debatingtaboos.org, debatingtaboos.org. The question was: "Is there more anti-Semitism in the US against Arab Americans and Muslim Americans than there is against Jewish Americans?" There were two prominent Jewish Americans, one being the brother of the former president of Israel, Mr. Olmert, and two prominent Arabs Americans debating in a very civil manner. And I saw the outcome of that is that there was recognition by the two Jewish Americans that

there is anti-Semitism against Arabs and that the Jewish people don't own that phrase. As you know you go up on Congress and you say "Well, you really disagree privately with AIPAC, and you'd like to have a two-state solution. Why don't you speak out?" and they invariably say, they're afraid of being accused of being Anti-Semitic. It's a very powerful charge. It's a very powerful tool. And I think that given the huge Anti-Semitic language in the Israeli press against Palestinians – they've been called "dogs," "vermin," "demographic threats." A high official in one of the governing coalitions in prime minister Netanyahu's government said that they should all be killed. And they should all be killed and the mothers should be killed who are giving birth "To those snakes." It's horrific. It operates also in this country. Do you think that this is an issue that you would be concerned about, because it does stifle speech in Congress the use of that word. And it also is a very discriminatory against Arab Americans from speaking out. There are a lot of Jewish groups who agree that this kind of prejudice has no place in our country to your views.

Noam Chomsky: Well, kind of a small point: the term "Anti-Semitism," contrary to its literal meaning has come to be used to mean repression and antagonism to Jews, not Semites. So, we're kind of stuck with the meaning of the term. But your point is exactly correct. Waving this flag to try to prevent discussion, that technique should be discredited and undermined. And it should be recognized that for a long time racist attitudes towards Arab Americans are way beyond the traditional anti-Semitism towards Jews. Didn't use to be like that. When I was growing up, anti-Semitism directed at Jews was quite real, some really awful effects. By about the 1960's that had changed substantially. The Jews are in many ways may be the most privileged minority. And there's unacceptable remnants of anti-Semitic literature and activism, but they're kind of at the fringe. On the other hand, anti-Muslim prejudice and anti-Arab prejudice has been extreme for a long time and getting worse in many ways. That's a major issue. And yes, it should be brought to the fore. Incidentally, with the question of bringing Israeli officials and intellectuals, others to testify in Congress, one might also ask what about Americans who are active and trying to bring about peace and justice in the Middle East? Why aren't they allowed to testify? Exactly as is in the case of the mass Indochina antiwar movement in the 60's, the huge popular mobilizations against the Central American atrocities, the mass public opposition to the Iraq War, which was huge even before it began, Congress has been pretty much immunized, as you mentioned much earlier in this discussion from voices within the United States that are critical of the establishment (Crosstalk). How often have you been asked to testify on these things?

Ralph Nader: Not very often. You're exactly right. In the run up to the drum beat for war in Iraq the nine months before the March 2003 invasion, there were over three hundred retired high officials, generals, admirals, former heads of the NSA, CIA officials, leading diplomats, retired who spoke out, wrote out, petitioned against Bush/Cheney from going to war in Iraq. If George Soros, who was also against the war in Iraq, a multi billionaire, had given them a secretariat and a significant budget to get on the mass media, multiply their numbers, get up to Congress and we might have stopped Bush and Cheney. It's pretty hard to argue against people like Brent Scowcroft, Jim Baker, security aids to the first George Herbert Walker Bush. Pretty hard argue against Marine General Anthony Zinni retired or the former head of the NSA, four-star general Howard Odom. But unfortunately, they didn't have a couple a hundred million dollars to stop a multi-trillion dollar war with the socio-cide in Iraq metastasizing

throughout large areas of Asia and Africa. So, we are running out of time. But for people who want to know more about the whole Middle East situation, would you recommend this magazine, Middle East Report?

Noam Chomsky: Yeah, that's very good. The MERIP report is a very good source.

Ralph Nader: Well, thank you very much. I hope we can do this again. We've been talking with Professor Noam Chomsky of MIT, The tribune of factual dissemination and calm evaluation of our US military foreign policy and many other injustices that are domestically based. We hope that you will contact your own media and ask why isn't his voice more frequently on PBS, NPR, The Sunday talk shows. They have to hear it from you. And if they do, they may think twice about promoting a system of censorship that is unbecoming to our Constitutional First Amendment rights. Thank you, very much.

Noam Chomsky: Yes. Let me congratulate you on breaking this system with what you're doing for many years and again today.

Ralph Nader: Thank you. And I hope you'll come on again, because we have a lot of topics we didn't discuss in the hour that was available. No sound bites here. And we have a discussion back and forth as it should be on other media. Thank you very much, Professor Chomsky.

Noam Chomsky: Thank you. Bye.

Steve Skrovan: That's our show, once again thank Noam Chomsky. His latest book is entitled Who Rules the World? We will link to all of the relevant information at ralphnaderradiohour.com or Ralph's Weekly blog go to nader.org.

David Feldman: Remember to visit the country's only law museum, The American Museum of Tort Law in Winsted, Connecticut. Go to tortmuseum.org.

Steve Skrovan: The producers of the Ralph Nader Radio Hour are Jimmy Lee Wirt and Matthew Marran.

David Feldman: Our executive producers, Alan Minsky.

Steve Skrovan: Our theme music Stand Up, Rise up was written and performed by Kemp Harris

David Feldman: Join us next week when we talk to Doug Hill author of Not So Fast: Thinking Twice About Technology. Talk to you then, Ralph.

Ralph Nader: Thank you very much Steve, David and Jimmy. I hope the listeners will contact their members of Congress to pursue the idea that we just talked about with Professor Chomsky about Israeli officials testifying for peace before the US Congress.

[Music]

Thieves in the temple

Too much money changing hands

It's really very simple

Just make the list of demands

We demand freedom

We demand equality

We demand justice

It ain't going to happen until folks like you and me

Just stand up

Well, you can sit and wait too long

Step up

You know what it's like and you know what's wrong

Rise up

Don't let the system pull you down

Stand up

Stand up

You've been standing way too long

Well, wow

You say you're tired of trying

You say we have no choice

You say you're just one person

And who will hear your voice

Don't let them fool you

You have the power in your hand

I'm only trying to school you...

Listen to me, people, do you understand?