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QI Panel:

Epstein Files: A Roadmap of Post-Cold War Corruption and Geopolitical Chaos

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Kelley Beaucar Vlahos

Good afternoon, my name is Kelley Vlahos, and I am the editor in chief of responsible statecraft on behalf of the Quincy Institute. I am so excited to be moderating this panel for you today, the Epstein files a roadmap of post cold war corruption and geopolitical chaos. If you are not familiar with the Quincy Institute, which is the publisher of responsible statecraft. It is a think tank dedicated to re-engineering US foreign policy away from endless war toward military military restraint and diplomacy and the pursuit of America's interests and international peace.

In a way, that is why the Epstein files are such a fascination to many of us in this space, Revelations over the course of the last several months, based on the release of millions of documents by the Justice Department show a man who was a node in so many geopolitical events, schemes and enterprises leaving people and places open to instability, violence and human degradation, all ingredients for world conflict, whether he knew or not, or cared or Not, as one of our panelists today, Murtaza Hussain has said, the powerful people who shared Epstein's network spent a tremendous amount of time engaged in sordid and self interested financial dealings, manipulated public institutions to their personal ends, and profited from their most from the most Extreme human misery, all to say nothing of their evident involvement in the global sex trade and in some cases pedophilia.

So we get it. Epstein's role in the kind of Washington policies that have driven such conditions are not difficult to identify. Consider for a moment, Epstein's role in the Contra affair, playing an interlocutor in the illicit sales of arms shipments through Israel by the CIA to Iran, for which payment was used to fund the Contras in Nicaragua, who are also pumping cocaine onto the streets of America and the 1980s that was just the beginning. Epstein's role in brokering the friendship between the UAE and Israel, his work with international intelligence agencies, including Israel moving money and illicit goods, including allegedly human trafficking. Trafficking involve people at the highest levels of government, the Ivy League, finance, tech and business, they have all been deemed the Epstein class, and their ambitions were never for the greater good, but for personal gain, which means more than not feeding on conflict and fragility, never endeavoring to stop it. This seems like even too much to put our arms around, which serves the naysayers. They say Epstein was a con man, a very smart one, but there is no global conspiracy, just a guy with a lot of important friends and a lot of money and influence and yes, debauched sexual proclivities.

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We are here today, not so much to plumb a single conspiracy, but to look at whether or not Epstein was a critical figure in a modern elite class that driven by avarice and an amoral, if not immoral approach to the highly networked world stage, have hastened the erosion of the global order as we know it, and are making the world a less safe and in many ways less livable place for the 99% so let me introduce our panelists today so we can get into what promises to be a very intense and important conversation. Murtaza Hussain is an investigative journalist and reporter at drop site news specializing in national security, foreign policy and human rights. Formally, with the intercept, he focuses on US foreign policy in the Middle East and South Asia, including coverage of the surveillance state and state violence. He has reported from Egypt, Iraq, Turkey, Jordan, Pakistan and other countries, and covered top secret national security leaks from Pakistan, Iran, India, as well as the FBI and NSA. Ana Kasparian is an American independent political commentator, media host and journalist. She is a host and producer of the online news show the Young Turks, has formally hosted the point on the TYT Network and co hosted a Jacobin YouTube show weekends with Anna Kasparian and. No villa. And last but not least, Harrison Berger is a correspondent at the American conservative magazine. He has contributed to drop site news the nation and responsible statecraft, focusing on civil liberties and US foreign policy. Previously, he was a researcher and producer for system update with Glenn Greenwald.

So thank you all for joining me. I really appreciate you affording me the time and Quincy the time today. So all three of you have made enormous contributions to this story long before and during the most recent release of the Epstein files to the public. One of the biggest frustrations, I think, among journalists is explaining, you know, how or why they should care about this story. The public is awash with a fire host of emails, documents, tawdry details that are nonetheless grasping to sort of build into a narrative, and it's hard for the public to get a sense of what the bigger picture is. So I wanted to, like ask you, each of you first, what does the Jeffrey Epstein? Why does the Jeffrey Epstein story matter? And Murtaza, I think since you wrote the aforementioned column for drop site about why it matters. I'd like to start with you.

Murtaza Hussain 6:28

Sure, thanks Kelley, and thanks for having me on this panel. I'm honored to be here with Anna and Harry as well too, both through the work I really admire, and also Quincy. And thank you everyone for joining as well. And I think a lot because it's very it's almost a battle to get people to pay attention to the story, the actual crux of the story. There's been a tremendous amount of coverage of Epstein over the past several years, but you know, the nature of the coverage in most of the establishment media, I would say it has the characteristics of what was referred to in the past as a limited Hangout. And limited hangout for the term of art means basically, essentially, there's a story that's very important that the public has come to know about to some degree. And, you know, only revealing a portion of that story, or covering a portion of it very intensely, and leaving the other more salient, more damning parts of it out of the public eye, and then hoping that people are stated and move on. I think that's happening very much with this Epstein affair at the moment. So, you know, predominantly, you know, we came to know of Jeffrey Epstein most people, as in the context of the sex crimes which took place. You know, it

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came to public life the decade and a half before his death, and then finally, he passed away in 2019 under, you know, in Manhattan prison under unclear circumstances.

But you know, there's a much broader story to who Epstein was and what he's significant of. And I think that it's a story of the world after the end of the Cold War, because Epstein, if you look at his emails, and I think it's become almost undeniable at this point with the latest transit emails, he was not just a rich individual. People depicted him who had, you know, malign sexual proclivities and things like that. He was a very influential and powerful political actor. This was a person who was arranging meetings, heads of state. He was helping doing back channel diplomacy over the course of major wars. He was somebody who intelligence agencies, senior intelligence officials called upon. He was brokering gas deals and port deals all over the world. This was a person who was extremely powerful, influential, but outside of his sex crimes, most people didn't even know who he was. They didn't know he didn't work for an organization, he didn't have a business card. He didn't have any of those formal signifiers that we tend to think of connote an individual with power, and I think that's reflective of the way the world has changed in the last three, four decades. Because, you know, during the 20th century, it was very common that someone who's powerful influential was a government official, or, you know, an official of an organization one could recognize and so forth.

I think what's happened in this post Cold War world where institutions have been deliberately weakened, and power has moved into private networks of very wealthy individuals who, in many cases, are more powerful, more influential in states. And you can see in these emails Epstein and people who he's talking to who are like him. In this sort of network world, they were making decisions which impact the lives of millions and 10s of millions of people. In some cases, they were making decisions that one would expect a diplomat to make, someone you can hold a public account, or FOIA their emails or have some transparency over they were doing all this in private. So I think that the reason that they have a hard time covering the story is, you know, a number of reasons.

First of all, the connections to intelligence agencies, American intelligence, Israeli intelligence. These are things that it's very uncomfortable to cover for establishing media organizations for various reasons. But secondly, I think that it's the same way that, you know, a fish is very difficult to describe the water around them. All these institutions are now sort of embedded in the same sort of de facto corrupt ethos of this private networks of power. And the whole thing makes. Them uncomfortable. So you know, if you have Epstein, and he's in the world of several 1000 people around the world who know each other, who are working together, who are very rich, who have political influence, and then you're asking them to describe that world, and describe it in a way which is honest, which would obviously be troubling or infuriating to many people who realize how much this cuts against ostensible democratic system they live in, it'll make them very hard mad. It'll be very hard for them to report on that.

So I think that's why it's become a story which, you know, we have to sort of force the issue a little bit and force attention to what people are seeing these emails. And I'll say one final thing, there was this dump of emails, the drop side reporting that we've done, the predominant amount

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of it has been not based on those emails. Isn't based on emails which are released without consent in a way. They were hacked from Ehud, Barak and a few other people, and they then revealed these communications that Epstein the government disclosures have been heavily redacted, and not only that, they've been released in a way which is deliberately making it as hard as possible for the public to understand what's in them, because they're not millions of documents, no explanation, not chronological, just dumped on the internet. That's almost as good as trying to hush it up in a way, basically just trying to contribute to the cover up, spreading confusion, spreading kind of chaotic information environment. So what we're trying to do is sort through this and reconstruct a picture of this networked world, of which Jeff C Epstein was important node, but which still exists, and which has continued to grow even more in the seven years since he died.

Kelley Beaucar Vlahos 11:30

Thank you. Mutasa, that was excellent. Ana, your thoughts on why should we care about this story?

Ana Kasparian 11:40

Okay, I would argue that we should care about this story because it goes much deeper than the sexual abuse of minors, which is bad enough, but essentially, what I have learned, or at least my perception, from the reading of the Epstein files and the incredible reporting that dropside has been doing on the files and the leaked emails is that we are existing under what feels like somewhat of a shadow government. It's felt more and more to me that our political system here in the United States is really just a facade, and that there's something transpiring we have no say on you know, behind the scenes.

And so once I started realizing, you know, our whole democratic process and this whole facade of having a say over how your country is governed, is total BS, I realized how important it was to talk about this story as often as possible, as loudly as possible, because these secret backroom deals are bad enough when you hear about elected lawmakers engaging in it, but in this case, with Epstein, we're talking about Epstein, billionaire bankers, foreign leaders, people who should have no say over the governance of our country, not only having a say over the governance of our country, but having a say over foreign policy, the outcomes of wars, you know, Syria comes to mind and how Epstein was trying to forge some sort of relationship between Ehud Barak and with Putin in regard to the Syrian Civil War, which we all know was really just a proxy war with all sorts of actors involved.

But to me, it's just, it's important for people to understand that if you have the shadow government operating behind the scenes, and they're tremendously wealthy, they've got the resources to get what they want. I mean, the Iran Contra story blew my mind. I couldn't believe that Epstein was involved, even in the Iran Contra story. All of this stuff, to me, is much more critical for people to know about, as opposed to just minimizing the Epstein story to nothing

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more than a disgusting pedophile that preyed on young girls. That is bad. I'm not minimizing that, but the Epstein story has ramifications that stretch far wider than that.

Kelley Beacuar Vlahos 14:08

Yeah, it's both very depressing, but in a in a somewhat hopeful way, like getting all of this administration, all of this information, rather just strips a veil and or maybe we say rip a band aid, because it really hurts, but like we need it. We need it to heal. And I feel like just being under, like you said, a shadow government without realizing the extent of it. It lulls us into some sort of state in which we feel helpless. But having that information might get us somewhere where we can get out of that shadow at some point.

Ana Kasparian 14:46

Hopefully, but hopefully for me, for me personally, it, it shed light into the reasons for why our government we see continuity in. In what our government carries out in regard to foreign policy, regardless of who gets elected, and I'm having a better understanding of why that continuity exists. And you know, there's a lot of talk about the deep state, and the deep state probably means different things to different people, but for me, what was transpiring with Epstein, and what probably continues to transpire, even after Epstein is gone, is what the deep state is. These are the power players behind the scenes who actually make the decisions about what happens in our country and abroad

Kelley Beacuar Vlahos 15:34

Thank you, Harry. What are your thoughts on why Jeffrey Epstein matters? I Oh, I think you might still be on mute.

Harrison Berger 15:46

Sorry about that. I was just saying. First of all, thank you so much for inviting me. You know, I'm a big fan of the Quincy Institute and Maz and Anna, and so it's very exciting to take you right back. Gotcha. But I agree with everything that Anna just said, which is that it does expose this shadow government or deep state, and it reveals that not because Epstein was necessarily personally involved in every deep political event, but because, as I heard someone say on x the other day, he's kind of like this deep State Forrest Gump who just kind of pops up randomly over the course of 30 years with the most powerful business and government elites in ways that reveal who actually makes the political decisions in the United States and around the world.

So with Iran Contra, for the example, but also with Epstein and Les Wexner's role repurposing the CIA airline used in Iran Contra Southern Air Transport for who knows what purposes. So you can really see this common theme from the emails, which is that these global decisions are made not by the democratically elected governments that we have, but by factions within the Deep State who may compete with each other, though mostly cooperate with one another for

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mutual benefit. I'll know that it also exposes these parts of the deep state that maintain us support for the foreign government of Israel, which was one of Epstein and Wexner's primary roles, exerting pressure, both publicly and privately, to ensure that our unconditional support for Israel just continues, no matter what that was the role of the mega group that they co founded in the 1990s with Zionist oligarchs like Michael Steinhardt to fund birthright, but also to lobby on behalf of Israel at a time when Israel's settlement expansion enterprise had really threatened the relationship the unconditional support that the United States has given Israel since the death of JFK. And so that was really a pivotal role of Epstein and Wexner that I think comes away from these documents, and I think should be emphasized.

Kelley Beaucar Vlahos 18:08

And we'll talk more about Israel as we move into the hour. We have less than an hour. And I know that I mean this topic is, like, too huge to even tackle, so I'm going to try to keep it narrowly focused on the foreign policy and the geopolitical aspect. But I also want to remind the audience, if you do have a question, we'll try to get to some of your your questions. Just put them in the Q and A Murtaza. I want to go to you. I think it was, I don't remember if it was you or or Anna who brought up the Iran Contra affair. But like, I think most people you know on this call are probably a little too young to remember Iran Contra.

But I mean, simply put, the CIA was trying to find a workaround so that it could secretly sell weapons to Iran in order to create a slush fund for their proxy war in Nicaragua. Unbelievably, Jeffrey Epstein and his then roommate, Stanley, Stanley Pottinger, as mentioned, have been identified as playing roles. You know, you've written about this with Harry. Can you walk us through this? And, you know, maybe, you know, maybe, kind of extrapolate, like, was this the very beginning of Jeffrey Epstein's role in sort of influencing our foreign policy and geopolitical affairs?

Murtaza Hussain 19:38

Yeah, so Jeffrey Epstein would have been a relatively young man at the time of Iran Contra. And, you know, you talked about a little bit Kelley, but I think for people who are not familiar with the Iran Contra scandal, people didn't think of it as a, you know, as you described it, like, you know, there were money raised for funding a war in the Nicaragua and on the south Iran. And that that is true, but I think that one of the. The most important things about Iran Contra, and understanding, literally, the world has developed in last couple of decades is this creation of these black budgets. Because, you know, the money that was raised for Iran Contra, it was a very lucrative business. The selling of arms to Iran, in this case, was done at several times markup, sometimes 10 times markup. For weapons, they're making tremendous profits, and the reason for those profits were to fund these operations around the world that they didn't want the public to know about. They didn't want to show up in any budgetary requests. They didn't want someone be able to FOIA, it's something completely deniable and off the books. And that became like a template for how to operate in this world. So you could conduct terrorist attacks, you can conduct insurgencies. And they were doing these things with this money.

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And Jeffrey Epstein, the reason his name sort of makes sense to come up in this context. And we did a story about it, a drop site, going through the history, I won't go through all of it, but you know, he was described, and he has been described as someone who was very good at money laundering. And also the New York Times, also his characterization of him as a con man, a criminal. It's not untrue, in a way. It's just that, in this case, money laundering is a very, very useful tool to intelligence agencies, because if you want to do you know acts around the world, if you want to conduct an insurgency, if you want to fund a terrorist attack, or whatever else it is, you and you can't go to the public and say, Please give me a budgetary disbursement for \$5 million to do this because it's illegal, or you people wouldn't like it, or what have you. If you can find a way of making money, hiding money, and keeping a off the record budget to do those kind of things which are illegal or moral or whatever, then having people who are good at hiding money and money laundering is not just important, it's crucial to the entire enterprise. So his finance background and his talent of doing that, which is by now is quite well established, is natural. That makes sense in the context of Iran Contra, and he had close ties with individuals who were part of Iran Contra, like Adnan, Kelley and poddinger and others as well, too.

But one thing that I think me and Harry reported on this is that after the planes were discovered which were moving the guns and drugs between Nicaragua and Iran and through Israel as well too, I really should be called Israel Iran Contra that was a more accurate name for the actual event. Epstein himself took possession of those planes and repurposed them for use for Leslie Wexner's retail empire. So the same planes that were carrying the guns and the drugs and so forth were then carrying clothes for Victoria's Secret and Abercrombie and Fitch and so forth. And Epstein, of course, was at the core of that, given his relationship with Wexner and later his power of attorney over the Wexner fortune.

So it's really a very important episode to understand the world in which Jeffrey Epstein was not just involved in but helped shape this world of off the books, money, covert operations, outside of public attention and people often, you know, they describe these events which are not fully, you know, disclosed or acknowledged by the government as somehow being conspiratorial. But the fact is, the entire activities of this class of people, these rich people, who were political actors, working with each other, cooperating or sometimes at cross purposes. By nature, the fact that the media isn't reported and it's not reported by the government of knowledge, it is, by nature, a conspiracy. It's a conspiratorial event between elites and Iran Contra was the first major episode that we became aware of, and it's only continued since then. We don't even know what happened to that money and how much money may exist off the books today by Epstein and people like Epstein.

Ana Kasparian 23:30

Can I ask a question, if you don't mind, absolutely, one of the things that I'm trying to get a firmer grasp on is, you know, there's no question that Epstein himself was a huge supporter of Israel. He was a Zionist, there's no question. And he did carry out work on behalf of Mossad. I don't think he was a Mossad agent by any means. I think he was used as an asset, or at least carried

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out some work for them. But I kind of want to have a better understanding about, you know, his relationship to Israel, right? So was it just simply that he had this very close buddy buddy relationship with Ehud Barak, and because of that relationship, was requested to do some work on behalf of Mossad. I know that he was trying to forge deals with other foreign leaders, or forge deals on behalf of Israel with other foreign leaders.

You know, whether it was procuring cyber weapons and things like that, I guess, I guess, the question that I have, and I'm having a difficult time understanding what's going on here, is, when you look at someone like Leslie Wexner, you have a journalist like Whitney Webb saying he's never going to get prosecuted for anything. He's above Jeffrey Epstein. And so when you hear statements like that, like, what do you two make of it? I'm curious what you think, right? Because I'm trying to figure out if Jeffrey Epstein is this powerful person at the top who keeps getting contracted to do things on behalf of powerful Intel organizations or world leaders or. Or was he just a cog in a much bigger machine and and what is that machine?

Kelley Beaucar Vlahos 25:05

That was actually one of my questions, so I'm very excited to hear the answer. So Murtaza and Harry, I want you both to take a stab at that one for sure.

Harrison Berger 25:18

Well, I was first going to piggyback off something which you were saying about Epstein's role in Iran Contra which I think may answer this question, which is that everything that you just said this theory that Epstein's central role was as this money launderer, which I believe, too, there's a lot of evidence to support that, especially the sorts of people that he was around in the early 1980s and his role at Bear Stearns, the allegations that were made about that, I think that when it comes to someone like Leslie Wexner, the relationship and who was in charge is unclear, but we know, and we could see from the files now that there were transfers that were marked, I think, by the Department of Justice. There was some file where there was unusual activity or suspicious activity, and the DEA was involved somehow.

So it's unclear who was in charge, but it was obvious that they were working together since the early 1990s including the fact that we know that in 1991 Les Wexner gave Epstein Power of Attorney. Obviously, when Les Wexner went into his deposition last week, he made these claims about Epstein stealing from him and Epstein being or being taken advantage of by Epstein. But there isn't really a lot of evidence to support that. And it seems like a claim that he's making in retrospect, to kind of conceal what was actually going on there. And so again, as I said before we started the webinar, it does seem like kind of a black box that we're dealing with, where we know the networks involved, that we know the figures involved, but we don't know who is in charge of who maybe Murtaza has a better answer.

Murtaza Hussain 27:15

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Well, you know, it's funny when you look at the emails between Ehud, Barak and Epstein, and they spend so much time reading these emails. This point, one thing is very clear in the emails is that there's a clear power dynamic in their interactions. And you know, you would think that in Barak, you know, this time, 2000-2001, he was still defense minister. He was still near the peak of his political power. In Israel, he was a former prime minister. He was one of the most, you know, influential people in the world, you could say, just that strata of world leaders and so forth.

So you would think that Epstein was seeking his attention and trying the power dynamic would favor Barak. It was really, quite obviously the opposite. It was really Barak who was seeking Epstein's attention very eagerly, trying to be his friend, trying to work with him, trying to meet up with him as much as possible. There was a clear, sort of dynamic there that comes across from reading their correspondence, and, you know, to the question of who we work for, and, you know, what's, what's the nature and connotations of this network? I think that Harry's right, is a bit of a black box, and everything we have is very fragmentary, and we'd be able to put together quite a bit of it, but really it's just a only a portion of whatever this network is and how it operates. We don't really know who answers to who, and if there's an organization or not, what it looks like.

But one thing I'll say is that in the context of the Israel thing, it's interesting. So I don't think that Epstein worked for any government agency. I don't think he was for the Mossad or anything like that. That's just my personal view. But I do think that you don't really need to do that. In this case, there's actually a very interesting book that was written several decades ago by a gentleman named Victor Ostrovsky. And Victor Ostrovsky was a former Mossad agent, and he left the agency, and he wrote a book about his time there and so forth. And the book is very interesting because he actually describes the methods of operations of the Mossad globally. And what he said is that unlike you know, at that time, the KGB or the CIA and so forth, which had 1000s and 1000s of agents, the Mossad only had a very small handful of case officers that didn't have very many because the way they operated was that they relied on this vast network of people who would help them and who were not formally affiliated would help them. They were called signing, and think the Hebrew term that they use to describe this. So the signing would be like, you know, mostly with low level people that give you, like a fake bank account or a car or an apartment if you're in a foreign city, or some sort of assistance like that. But they could be rich signing. They could be billionaires who are signing. They could be all these people who are not affiliated with the organization. They're not agents by any means, but they're known, they're identified. You're in touch with them, and they are ideologically committed, and they will help you. That was kind of the role that these people would play.

So when I see Epstein, he kind of fits more into that category. It's not that anyone had to recruit him or he had a badge. And you know. A gun or whatever, or that he would report to the head of the Mossad or be answerable to them, or even answerable to the Israeli public. For that matter, I don't think he's answerable that any but any of them, but he was a person who they know they could rely on. They just instinctively knew he would act on behalf the interest of Israel, and he would advocate for them and so forth in certain channels. So I think that that's kind of more how

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I imagine him and the role he played. It was sort of an informal but ideologically committed role that he was very well placed and influential to play.

Kelley Beaucar Vlahos 30:33

Just before we move on, I wanted to ask about the drop site reporting about the surveillance equipment and other security procedures that were instituted at Jeffrey Epstein's apartment. I mean, what does that say to you? Is it just because Ehud Barak was a former prime minister and they afforded those kind of security provisions for pro forma? Or was there something else going on?

Murtaza Hussain 31:00

Yeah, so we did the story recently based on the DOJ disclosures, the emails were in there basically that the Israeli government, or the Israeli consulate and mission in New York had actually installed the security system at Epstein's apartment on 66th Street in Manhattan, apartment building. That building was very notorious for being used for sex trafficking and keeping young women, stuff like that. But Barack had been staying there for, you know, numerous times, for long stretches of times Israeli intelligence agents had stayed there. Chief of Staff of Barack will appoint Yoni Korn. And also stayed for very, very long time in that apartment as well. So you know, as you know, like in Israel and the US, other places, heads of state are often entitled to security after they leave office.

So it seems like, in this case, he was staying at Epstein's department for these stretches of time. The stretches were long enough that they decided to install permanent security. You know, actually install equipment and so forth, drill holes in the wall, entry and access procedures for the building itself, that were core, that were run and correspond directly with the consulates in New York, the Israeli consulate. So the Israeli consulate officials had to interface with Epstein staff. They knew who they're talking to. They know they're dealing with Jeffrey Epstein staff. They knew they're doing Epstein was personally approving these installation measures. So I'll say that at the least, it showed that they were indifferent to, you know, his notoriety. And by the time he's a very famous, probably the most famous sex offender or title file in the world, it's just that they didn't care. And that's at least they didn't care, and that's a very common theme in his interactions. People didn't really care about what he was doing. That thing is kind of treat like a joke or making light of it and stuff like that.

So, you know, people have suggested to me that they're putting CCTV cameras up in the apartment and filming and blackmailing people. I don't think that the emails that we reported show that, per se, that could be what was going on. There's been other reporting and documentation about that subject, but it does show that, you know, the relationship between Barack and Epstein was very, very deep and intimate, long lasting. Barack has claimed that he barely even knew Epstein. This clearly just not true. He was living this apartment building, very notorious apartment building, for long enough that the Israeli government was actually getting involved and having direct contact with Epstein, Epstein staffs. So I think it shows that. And, you

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know, I think that's again, this is not something they released, something that they made easy to find, or, you know, disclosed in a very honest way. It's something we just happen to find fragments up in these emails. So I think it does warrant more scrutiny of not just that apartment, but his townhouse in Manhattan, where it said that even more egregious uses were taking place, and there's known to have been like a video monitoring station in there. So I think that we still at the beginning of digging through this.

Ana Kasparian 33:40

I have to say, you know, the more we learn about the Epstein files, the more questions I have. So for instance, one of the emails that stood out to me was an email sent to Ghislaine Maxwell in the aftermath of 911 and she was asked whether she was willing to be part of some sort of shadow 911 commission. Other emails, she's like fantasizing about a world where not a single Arab exists. I also remember, prior to 911 I think the day before, the Bush administration had disclosed that the Pentagon lost like, I don't remember the exact figure, but it was in the trillions, trillions of dollars. Then 911 happens. You know, when we talk about these shadow budgets, or, you know, money that's raised in nefarious ways for nefarious purposes, you know, it might be wrong to connect those dots, right?

But I definitely have a little bit of suspicion in regard to, why was that money missing? What was it used for? Where did it go to Why would anyone in the government reach out to Ghislaine Maxwell, of all people, to ask her to be part of a shadow 911 commission? And look, these are questions that are considered unacceptable and very naughty. You know, oh, you're getting into conspiracy territory. But I think it's safe to say that, you know, with what we've already seen with the Epstein files. Uh, it's probably, you're probably on the right track, if you're, you know, susceptible to conspiratorial thinking, okay, because a lot of these things ended up being conspiracies. I mean, the Iran Contra story is just one example of that. And I'm very curious, you know, what you think about that Murtaza, like, what you think about the missing money and the fact that Ghislaine Maxwell was asked to be part of that 911 commission.

Murtaza Hussain 35:27

You know, I hadn't seen that email. I should go look at that. But in just your broader point, I think that if you were to describe the entire Epstein episode to somebody 10 years ago, it just described this is what's happening a network of very rich people are engaging in sex trafficking and manipulating global politics. Global Politics and so forth, which is not documented in these emails, it would be considered absolutely outrageous. It would be considered just a despicable thing to say and believe. And you know, one would suffer a social ostracism for even raising such a thing. It turns out, it all happened to be true. It happened to be true in a very visceral way, which we think we don't have the full context up yet. We have only a very preliminary understanding of even today.

So I think that it should embolden us to ask difficult questions and to not be cowed and afraid by these mechanisms of social control and political control when certain ideas are deemed almost,

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you know, irresponsible or, you know, unthinkable even to ask. I think we should be asking all these things. And, you know, and again, I would say this is a huge failing of the media, the establishment media, because, you know, our reporting, and a few other people reporting now has shown conclusively that Jeffrey Epstein was a political actor. Intelligence agencies are connected to him. He was very influential all these ways. If you were to go by the establishment media, and I'll pick on the New York Times, their reporting of this. It's just completely limited to fact, he's a scam artist and he had, he was a, you know, pervert. That was basically the whole story. There's nothing beyond that. Raising anything else is completely crazy.

So that's in the self shows the shortcomings of the attempts of narrative control and damage control that they're doing around the Epstein story. So I think we should all be emboldened to look to these files and ask the difficult questions. Difficult questions. And I don't think any question per se off limits at this point. I think everyone should research and search through it rigorously, but without fear of what they may find, because it is a tremendous amount in here, and the institution that should be covering it and just not doing that absolutely.

Kelley Beaucar Vlahos 37:19

And again, I feel very lucky to have you three on this Ram because you guys are do asking those questions and doing the deep dives and all of the original reporting so so thank you, Harry. I want to go to you. Let's, let's carry on this deep state theme here. Drop site has done, and you have done some amazing reporting on the connections with Epstein and Dubai's DP World Chairman now resigned chairman, Sultan bin sulaym. Not only did these two men have an intimate personal relationship, you know, the Sultan shows up in like, more than 1000 times in the email. They had an intense business relationship as well. And you know, this partnership of sorts is actually being credited with seeding the UAE normalization and the Abraham accords. Before we go into that, can you talk a little bit about Dubai and the fact that that DP World, which has ports in like 80 countries and has been a haven for illicit off the books, laundering, shipping, including blood diamond. Blood Diamonds, high stakes, money laundering, how has this relationship played into a unaccountable for influence in our foreign policy. And the greater theme of the unaccountable Epstein class hastening, you know, the decay of like, the world order.

Harrison Berger 38:53

It's an interesting question. You know, when you think of Dubai and the, I would say, like organized crime that is famous there. The thing that it reminds me of, really, is BCCI, which is the bank that I guess Epstein is reportedly involved in. Adnan Khashoggi was absolutely involved in that bank. It was also a CIA bank. It was set up with the help of the CIA and it was also set up by Zionists and that kind of power network of Zionist organized crime, the CIA that has been around since the founding of the intelligence community in the United States, with people like James Angleton, who were committed Zionists buried in Israel, reportedly helped to give nuclear weapons to the Israelis, against the wishes of our own president.

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And so I think that, as you can see with an event like Iran Contra, and as we also saw this past year with the JFK assassination disclosures. Uh, Israel is involved in a lot of these off the books activities that our CIA engages in. So for instance, the one I just mentioned with the JFK assassinations, it was revealed that James Angleton, the counter intelligence chief of the CIA in the 1960s was using a Mossad cutout to run his Murder Inc operations in Cuba, and this had been redacted for like, 60 or 60 years now at this point, you know, just showing the lengths that our government will go to to redact Israel out of our history. But these networks between Zionists and our own intelligence community have been around for a long time, and of course, they've been engaged in all sorts of crimes, mainly arms dealing to the countries where we're engaged in covert operations. And so Dubai seems like a hub for that sort of activity today, and very similar to BCCI Murtaza.

Kelley Beaucar Vlahos 41:01

Do you have any anything to add? Because I know you guys did a lot of reporting on this.

Murtaza Hussain 41:06

Yeah, no, I agree with Harry, and you know, I'll go even further. Because if you look at the origins and the growth of Dubai, the sort of like a unbelievably rapid developments and the immense amounts of capital which are now concentrated in Dubai and the UAE more generally. It's very fascinating. I think that we're really the story which has been adequately told or explained, but it does have a very close relationship. Looking at the documentation, including the life of Epstein himself as well, there is a tremendous nexus between intelligence agencies organized crime, you know, the drug trade, the global sex trafficking trade. They're all sort of coalesced in this one country, which, within our lifetimes of living memory, was basically completely undeveloped. Had nothing there. It was like a pearl fishing sort of zone.

Now it's become like a global elite hub. And I think that it was created purposely for this kind of purpose. It was created as sort of a place that these illegal dealings could take place without. People could have sovereign immunity from crimes. It's sort of like a base for transnational international crime. That's kind of what it is. In fact, Dubai and the UE more broadly, has evolved into that. And there was a close nexus between, you know, the need for having something like this in the Middle East, another base for Israelis, a place for criminals from other countries around the world, and then people from the West as well, to the store capital to evade law enforcement, to do all sorts of things Dubai and the UAE has been essential to that.

So I think that you can't really understand the American activities in the middle east of last couple of decades, without understanding the role of the UAE, which is not a normal country. You could say it's a country which is very much created as sort of a project. And our story talking about the Epstein's relationship with Sultan Salem, the former head of DP World, who's actually left the role a couple, a couple of few weeks ago, after our reporting and a few others. You know, that's very essential story, because that actually explains how this sort of nexus between

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the institutions of the UAE, the institutions of Dubai, and this transnational network sort of melded together, because through the auspices of this company, DP World, they have now kept control over port facilities and logistic infrastructure in many parts of the world, across Africa, parts of Europe, Middle East, North North America, South America. This is sort of Web.

And I think that one thing about Epstein, which was very intelligent, actually, that he knew very well, was that he knew where power came from in a very intimate way. And that's why he was very involved in trying to be at the cutting edge of technological developments. He was very interested in aware of finance, but also he knew about logistics, and he knew that from maybe his time in New York and beyond that, that if you control the ports in a certain area that control ports, gives you tremendous influence and economic power and political power over that area. If people have watched the television show The Wire, they know that the ports were very important part of organized crime in that show.

And I think that what he did is take that sort of idea global, and this relationship he had with Salem, the head of Dubai Ports world, sort of allowed the globalization of this mafia, like influence over port facilities all over the world. And I can keep going on and on about this, because there was also an Israeli connection, the Israeli surveillance technologies embedded in these Dubai Ports these Dubai Ports, world facilities, thanks to Epstein's sort of integration with the Salaam and the Israelis. But, you know, that's sort of what's happened. So I think that, you know, it's a very troubling I think the operation, that existence of a country like the UAE is current configuration, should be very troubling to people all the world were not part of the elite, because it's become a base for this sort of elite, effectively criminal organizing. And that's what's happening. And we can see and these communications in these stories.

Kelley Beaucar Vlahos 44:51

Well, let's talk about the foreign policy a little bit. Anna, I mean, running alongside of all the business transactions and. Is the suggestion that Epstein and sulaym had, you know, negotiated a lot of a lot of not just business deals, but they were nearing more political detente with Israel, and by the time that Jeffrey Epstein was killed, died, committed suicide. There was these Abraham accords that were sort of like, you know, they they were, they were formulating Trump comes in. He announced this great normalization between the UA in Israel.

But a lot of this stuff had been in the works because of Epstein and Sulaym. But when you look at the repercussions or the implications of these Accords, they are solidifying power, the gravitational power between the UAE and Israel at the expense of the Palestinians. Also isolating Iran, the UAE becomes more powerful and less accountable. We know that they have been funding violence and in Yemen as well as Sudan and Libya and lo and behold, we nobody talks about it. They are sort of untouchable. Can you talk about the foreign policy, the geopolitical implications of that very intense relationship, and what was formulated out of it on the world stage.

Ana Kasparian 46:31

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I mean, to some extent, the Abraham Accords solidified certain alliances that already existed, but were kind of secretive in a way, right? So like Saudi Arabia and Israel already had some pretty serious diplomatic relations. Sure you would hear from the Saudi royals. They would, you know, wag their finger every now and again when Palestinians were being slaughtered in mass by Israel. But aside from that, you know, there was really no effort to rein in Israel's behavior at all, and it was because they, by and large, behind the scenes, already had diplomatic relations, and, you know, potentially some economic shared economic relations too.

But my biggest issue here is that the whole point of the Abraham accords is to normalize a nefarious, genocidal state and, more importantly, the project that they are pursuing right now as we speak. I don't know if these Arab countries who have been a little more amenable to Israel realized that Israel is pursuing the Greater Israel project, but that is what they're doing, and weakening, destabilizing various countries like Libya, like Syria. It's all part of that game. And so I think the reaction from Hamas was partly due to the Abraham Accords, because that was essentially sealing the fate of the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza.

Kelley Beaucar Vlahos 48:11

Yeah, and I, we could have done the whole show on just those elements alone, the UAE, Israel, Epstein Nexus. But let's move on, because I want to get to a few more questions. And I going to try, I think, to do a little bit of the Q and A. If we have time, let's, let's take it to the US. I'm going to skip a little around, a little you know, Anna, you argued on, on Tucker Carlson, elsewhere, that you believed that the Epstein files would affect American politics, if not the Trump administration, and also have argued that Americans care, that they are outraged, and you talked a little bit about that in your opening I've heard some say that they believe that the that the Epstein files have been politicized to the point like, if you are on the left or you're a Democrat, you are going to care about the Epstein files you are. You want to talk about them. You want to see them absolutely investigated, and it let the chips fall where they may. If you are on the right, this is a hoax. This is a distraction. And we talked a little bit before coming on, about this sort of divide, you know, between the left and the right. Do you believe a, that this is a partisan issue? No. And B, okay, and B, do you think that it's deliberately become being made a partisan issue so as that, you know, people don't get together and start demanding answers together.

Ana Kasparain 49:47

You know, I'm actually curious what you all think, because nothing makes me want to rip my hair out more than hearing any Democratic member of Congress just hyper focus on the Trump angle to this story. Because. Because listen, whether or not there's evidence that Trump engaged in criminal activity that should be disclosed. Obviously I care about that, but I also care about the fact that I do see some politicians wanting to turn this into a partisan political issue for their own aspirations, their own purposes. And I'm not interested in that, because this story goes like we've said, much deeper than Oh, Democrats bad or Republicans bad. I got news for you. They're both bad in different ways. And as it's related, to the Epstein files, there are people who

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have been implicated in both sides of the political aisle. This, to me, is not a partisan issue, and anyone who is making it a partisan issue is a suspect, okay, very, very suspect, or just doesn't really understand the gravity of the situation, hasn't read deeply into it, and doesn't understand that this goes beyond, you know, pedophilia and sex trafficking. But for me, what has been a little bit of a white pill, if you will, is seeing people who were hardcore supporters of President Donald Trump. Owen Schroyer is a great example. I think Owen Schroyer was at the Capitol on January 6, but after it was very clear that Trump was covering up the Epstein files. He started being critical of Trump. He used to work with Alex Jones. No longer working with Alex Jones. He's doing his own thing. I'm just using him as one example. He cares about this issue deeply as much as I do, and I'm obviously not on the right.

And so that gives me a little bit of hope, because if you just take a step back and reject the partisan framing that we get from our media and from our politicians, and look at things in a very sober way, you'll see that most Americans who are paying attention to this story care deeply about it. They care about the deep state. They care about the fact that increasingly it appears that we do not live in a sovereign country where the voice of the people matter. This is not a government, a government by the people, for the people, especially if you have these shadowy figures behind the scenes you know, pulling strings and making deals that most people have no idea about. And so people want to know that they live in a free society, an open society and an actual democratic society. And right now, I think the individuals, you know, the ordinary people in our country, at least, see that everything we were sold has been a lie, and we do need to, I don't know if it's even possible, but I think this is what we should be working toward. We need to purge these people from our government immediately, and we need to figure out how to do that. That's where my head is at right now. Whatever this deep state is, it needs to be dismantled, and that's a provocative thing to say, but it's important to keep in mind, we do not live in a sovereign country when you have shadowy figures making decisions that do not benefit us but benefit other powerful players on the international scene.

Kelley Beaucar Vlahos 53:03

I absolutely agree. And I guess my next question would be, and I think you were all talking about this before I got on in the green room, but how much out there has yet to be released, and does it focus on government us, government players, and that's why those files aren't being released yet. Can we get some measure as to what is still out there, and will Thomas Massie and Ro Khanna be successful and pushing this mandate, this law that says they all have to be released.

Murtaza Hussain 53:42

Yeah, so we know from the DOJ files there are at least 3 million files which have not been released. And the government has said that they actually described the first disclosure, the one that was replaced recently, as kind of the last disclosure from the Epstein file. They said that the files that are remaining are contained private data. There's other reasons you can't release them, and so forth, but I think that that's really unacceptable answer, because we've already

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seen so much. First of all, you can do redactions, even if private information. That's not really insurmountable barrier at all. We've also, we've already seen there's so much that they've attempted to not release at all. They tried to pretend the entire thing was not susceptible to public oversight and scrutiny.

So I think that you know the that transit other, you know information from his estate could be profoundly even more documentation and so forth. But I'm really focused on the ring 3 million of the DOJ documents, because that's something that they their resistance to releasing it. You know, despite the fact legally mandated, is more telling, in some ways, given how bad that what they already put out is. You can only imagine what's in there. We think we need to see it, and if it is bad, we need to sort through it and make sense of it and so forth, and have kind of a reckoning, as Anna mentioned. And we have the right to do that, citizens of the United States. It's something that's in, you know, that's inherent, that we. Should have the ability to do so.

I think that we should continue pushing and I think that the partnership between ro Khanna and Thomas Massie is kind of inspiring about this, because I think that the entire paradigm of left and right is completely collapsing in the sense that I think we need, what we need is a new majority of people who are against corruption, who are against endless wars, we're against genocide, we're against sex trafficking, all these form the corruption that have been become endemic among our current elites. It all needs to go and I think that regardless of your political meanings or your differences about different subjects, I think that the vast majority of people in America would agree in all those things, and the polls show that actually they're against these sort of policies and these approaches of people currently in power.

So I think the Epstein issue has become extremely important as a symbolic tool, actually, to crystallize what we're against and what who is on the side of, I guess, decency and law and order and so forth, and democracy, really. And I'll say one last thing. You know this. I've talked some people about this, and people I know people from very different walks of life, some of them are skeptical. Some of them are skeptical the reporting. They say, Well, you know, what's the big deal? He was a rich guy. And obviously, rich people are very powerful. And, you know, he was a billionaire. So of course, a billionaire would have a political role and so forth.

And, you know, I don't think everyone really agrees with that, but it's interesting argument to engage with because, you know, I think that that's the whole kind of problem with the current political system we have in the United States. Because if you were in, let's say, you know, country where the state is deemed superior, or at least has a balance of forces with people who have a lot of money, then you could, you know, you wouldn't be able to have someone who's like at Epstein coming and bossing around public officials who are answerable to and so forth. I think the problem with the kind of capitalism that's developed, not the free market, not private property, stuff like that, but just the idea that if someone is so rich and has so much capital, then their views and their political role will outweigh that of the general public outweigh that democratic institutions. That's something which is injurious to American society in a very deep way. And I think that's a question that we can all maybe coalesce around that, you know, someone's degree of political sorry, degree of wealth and their access to capital should not

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exactly correlate with their political influence, because if that's true, then people like Epstein are gonna continue tyrannizing us pretty much indefinitely. We need to find a way of finding these people, breaking up these pools of capital and returning political power to the American public to stop these abuses.

Ana Kasparian 57:24

Well said.

Kelley Beaucar Vlahos 57:27

Harry, did you? Did you want to add something to that? And well before, before you do, I want to ask you a quick question, because we're running out of time. You know, some of some of the folks in the Q amp a are talking about the arrests in the UK, the resignations, the charges and other European countries against officials who are connected in some way to Epstein, even showing up in the emails. We haven't seen that kind of reckoning here in the United States. Can you talk a little bit about that? And maybe in the context of we don't have all the files, so we don't know how many of our elected officials or former government leaders have been connected, so we still don't know the extent. And maybe that's why we don't have the same kind of outrage here that you're seeing in other parts of Europe.

Harrison Berger 58:21

I mean, I wouldn't hold my breath for anyone to get in trouble here, only because that's not what we do in this country, like, for instance, Obama. I mean, when Obama came into office in 2008 he was elected on the promise of prosecuting the torturers and the criminals in the financial industry, and he said, we're going to look forward and not backward. So the precedent is there for us to do exactly that in this case, and I imagine that's what we'll do. No one or very few people will be prosecuted. There's obviously some people like Larry Summers and Kathy rummler who are having professional consequences, but I don't anticipate anything more than that, I do want to add to what Murtaza just said, because I agree with everything.

There's one more thing that has not been released, which actually independent journalist Daniel Boguslaw has drawn attention to, which is that the CIA has documents on Epstein, their national resource division, made reports on Epstein just given the destinations that he was frequently flying to. And so those exist, and none of that has been released at all. So maybe the DOJ has them in the files that they still, you know, need to release, but the public doesn't have them. And I guess this goes back to why we should all care about this, because, as Anna was talking about, this is a shadow government. I mean, this is a deep state that knows really everything about us, increasingly so, with all their spying tools and their Palantir systems, that they now have to interpret all the data that we. Just give them. We know very little about them. At the same time, the people who control us and control the US government. And so this is just a tiny window that we have, that the heavily redacted Epstein files, the limited ones that have been

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released. It's a window into that world. And so anyone who's trying to conceal that from you to basically protect the US Deep State. I mean, that's your enemy, right there.

Kelley Beaucar Vlahos 1:00:29

Agreed, agreed. Well said, and I think that's a good point on which to end. And I really, really appreciate I'm looking forward to all your work on this, and I will do my best to platform it in any way that I can before I let the audience go. I just wanted to give you a preview of another webinar that we have planned the true cost of a \$1.5 trillion Pentagon budget on March 5 at noon, we have our great Ben Freeman, co author of the Trillion Dollar War Machine. We'll be talking with Justin Logan from Cato, Heidi Peltier from Brown University, and Steve koziak, who is a Quincy Institute non resident fellow. Please go on the Quincy institute.org website to sign up for that. That's March 5. And thank you again for joining us. And thank you to my panelists today. Thank you so much.

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