

Daniel Davis: Russia's New Strategy - No More Appeasing NATO

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#Glenn

Welcome back, everyone. Lieutenant Colonel Daniel Davis joins us today, a four-time combat veteran and host of the very popular and informative Daniel Davis Deep Dive. And I've left a link in the description, so make sure to follow. Thank you for coming back on. Thanks for having me back, Glenn. Always a delight to be here. So, uh, we know that, well, military successes are always good. But, you know, military defeats can also provide some wisdom, you know, if you learn the lessons. And to do this, we need an honest assessment. And as the U.S. is looking at its, I guess, dual defeat now—well, we shouldn't say it, maybe not quite yet—but it looks as if there will be a defeat in Iran and also defeat in the war against Russia. I was wondering, at least that's the path we seem to be on, what has gone wrong, in your opinion?

#Daniel Davis

You know, it's interesting you bring that up, about defeats can have a very positive impact. After the U.S. lost in Vietnam, we went through a pretty significant and sobering reevaluation. And we looked at ourselves, and we made some acknowledgments of things that had gone wrong, both politically and militarily. And we realized that we had a culture problem, at least in the U.S. Army. And I joined as a private for the first time in 1985, so about 10 years after the Vietnam War. And I came in really at the time they were really ramping up what was going to be the renewed focus. And, you know, a focus on integrity, a focus on doing the right thing, a focus on hard work, a focus on only going after attainable military objectives, et cetera, and holding people accountable and doing the right thing.

I mean, just a wholesale change had occurred in those 10 years. And I came in right at the beginning of the good phase, I guess, if you can call it that. And it had dramatic effects because we were actually paying attention to doing the things that we had failed to do beforehand. And so now, in our training, in our focus, in our preparations for combat, in our taking care of our equipment, the

equipment that we were getting because we were now in the process of fielding, you know, at that time, the Humvee, the Abrams tank, the Bradley fighting vehicle, you know, after all the acquisition stuff that had been done in the '70s and then into the early '80s. And I saw all of that unfold, and I'm like, wow, this is really great. I mean, I was young.

I was a private. I didn't know anything about what the Army had been like before, but a lot of my leaders were. A lot of my guys who were training me in basic training even were Vietnam combat veterans, and I saw officers who had seen some of the worst of the stuff who were now colonels and majors, et cetera. And they told us all and they taught us all, "Listen, we did some things wrong in the past. We've now corrected it, and we're never going to repeat that." And, you know, there's—I can't remember the exact phrase—but something like, you know, "never going back" or something to that effect, and always going forward. And we had a really good military then. That has disappeared. I mean, the willingness to look at ourselves has disappeared.

We had a disaster in the Iraq War. We were only saved not because David Petraeus had this brilliant idea that he loves to take credit for to this day, but he recognized something that the Iraqis themselves had done, and he took reasonable advantage of it. And he did a good job of that. I've actually written some things that gave him credit for what he did. But he took credit for what he didn't do. And instead of acknowledging that we made a bunch of mistakes, and then by sheer grace of God, some of the Iraqi Sunnis turned against al-Qaeda in Iraq because the Sunni insurgency was being oppressed by Shia, by al-Qaeda, and by the United States. And it was an existential issue for them.

And they said, "Hey, we're not even going to live if we don't do something quick." So they said, hey, to an American brigade, I think it was the 1st Armored Brigade or 1st Armored Division, they said, "Hey, what if we work together with you to help our mutual enemy get rid of them, al-Qaeda in Iraq?" And that's what we did. And it radically changed everything. We took advantage of that. But what we failed to do was to acknowledge that, had that not happened, we were headed to strategic defeat there too. And so instead of looking at any of the things that we did wrong, we just looked at this one thing that went right, took credit for it, and then pretended the rest of it didn't happen. Then you have the Afghanistan War. And again, I had a front-row seat for both of these.

So I saw them very intimately, up close. After 20 years of complete disaster, to this day David Petraeus again still claims that it was a mistake to leave. We should still be there, he said, as recently as last year in an interview I saw. And so there's been no acknowledgement that anything we did was wrong. In fact, all we end up doing is making excuses for what happened in both Iraq and especially Afghanistan. It was somebody else's fault—the politicians themselves. I don't know, George Bush, Barack Obama, whatever. They all made some mistakes. So I'm sure Joe Biden—the way he got out was a disaster. So everybody gets blamed except us. So we don't look at ourselves. And now here we are, and as you point out, in the war in Iran and in the war we're supporting in Ukraine against Russia.

We won't acknowledge anything. And now this extends not just to the Army. It's the armed forces across the board. It's the political arena. It's Congress. It's the White House. At large, no one wants to take any responsibility for anything. No one will acknowledge anything is going wrong. We keep saying every day about how great things are going. President Trump, just a couple of days ago, again said, "Oh, the war in Iran is going really wonderful. It's going well. Everything's going well." And then you even look over into the Pentagon itself, and we keep still saying, "Oh, the Strait of Hormuz is open. We have control over it. The Iranians don't. I don't know what they're talking about. We have the escalation dominance."

We have the military dominance, et cetera, even though everything is physically, in some cases, literally falling apart. Our major power projection, the symbol of American power and might, the aircraft carrier, the George Bush, is now limping back to port. It's going to be re-engaged here pretty soon because things are just falling apart. I mean, literally, our troops are killing themselves, and apparently others are attempting, because conditions are so bad there and they can see. And I can tell you, too, that's what's been reported in the press. I can also tell you because I've seen some direct communications between a friend of mine who has friends at the front. And what they're describing is even worse than what's being publicly admitted here. But what do we do?

Does the administration and does the Pentagon say, holy crap, we have a real issue here, let's fix it? No, you have Secretary of War Pete Hegseth saying, there's nothing wrong here. Everything's fine. We're doing a great job. It's all fake news. It's the fake liberal media that's spinning this out. At the same time, you're actually exchanging the aircraft carrier only after these things come out. Everybody knows it's not true. Well, these troops at the level, and I'm sure those on the aircraft carrier as well as these others that are on land that my friend has communication with, they see all of this stuff, and they know what's happening on the ground. Just like when I was in Afghanistan, when I came forward in 2012 to talk about what I had observed in 2011 on my last combat deployment, I heard all these similar kinds of concepts from the senior leaders about how great things were going.

We're on the right azimuth. We've turned a corner. We've taken the momentum away. Whatever we're moving towards, the Afghans are taking the lead. They're becoming less corrupt. I knew none of that was true. And all the guys who were deployed with me knew the same thing. And we found it disgusting. Well, now I think it's even worse because now, at least on the tactical level, the Taliban could do nothing. They could blow us up. You know, they could put mines. But if there was ever a direct clash, they lost 100 percent of the time. That's not the case now. Now that we're seeing, even with all this aircraft carrier, this incredible armada, you remember President Trump used at the beginning of this war, talking about it in February leading up to it.

And he said, "Yeah, we're going to win. They're going to unconditionally surrender. That's what we're going to do. We're going to—no nuclear weapons, no power. I'm going to decide who the next Ayatollah is," all this stuff. And the guys on the front know we can't do that. We don't have the power to do that. We can't do anything on the land. We can't do boots on the ground. We don't own

the air, despite what's being claimed. We have air superiority, but not air dominance to where we can literally do anything, which was claimed. And when you have the senior leaders in the Pentagon and in Congress and in the White House always saying how we can do whatever we want, we destroy their Navy, their Air Force. They got nothing left and no air defense. We can do whatever we want.

But the guys who are flying these missions, they're not. They know better. They know the truth. And they've seen that a lot of whatever we've had—40-some-odd aircraft damaged or destroyed so far. And we've cut that back a lot because we've stopped, at least for the moment, any offensive actions. We are not willing to acknowledge anything, nobody. You said these losses at the beginning of this, at your comment here. The losses in Iran and in our efforts in Ukraine, we don't acknowledge that. We have not yet acknowledged. In fact, we keep saying that we're winning. We turned a corner in Ukraine. We still have control of the Strait of Hormuz, and we're going to—

And if we need to go back and teach them a lesson, that's what we're saying. But we can't do that. So this one may require—if I told you at the beginning of this what the—basically a political and strategic defeat in Vietnam, but it wasn't a physical one. I think, sort of like the Taliban situation, we won every engagement that we had with the North Vietnamese Army. We inflicted massive, massive casualties on the North Vietnamese, but we couldn't break their spirit, etc. So we finally acknowledged that this is an unwinnable war. It's definitely unpopular at home. We're just going to leave. But that was a political decision. This one, Glenn, may end up being a military force, a military necessity.

You may lose physically on the battlefield. In the Iran war, Ukraine is heading now towards a significant, dangerous period, more so this coming fall and winter than I think they have at any point of the war, other than maybe the opening rounds, for various reasons we can discuss in a minute. But that could literally turn into a Russian military victory. And then you don't get the chance to even pretend anything differently. I think it may require a physical loss in both of these to have a massive realization and a humiliation of our senior leadership, both political and military, and then a cleaning of the decks to fire all those people and elevate some new people, people who are good.

And let me be very clear on here. Just like the case when I was in that combat deployment in 2011, still to this day, there are some great men, there are some great officers, some great enlisted in all the branches of service who know the right thing to do, who know how to have a good force, who know how to train themselves right, who know how to equip the force properly, etc. They know what to do, they know how to do it, and they know what missions are foolish and should never be attempted because they're militarily unattainable.

If we get those people involved, get this chaff knocked out of the way, and elevate those kinds of people, then we can have something going forward like what I observed on the backside of the post-Vietnam period. But this time, I think that the cost in both blood and treasure will be profoundly higher. And listen, we just got to be honest. Who is to say that on the backside of that reparation or

repair, that our standing in the world will be substantially lower? I argue that we likely will never get back to the point that we started this fiasco, these twin fiascos. I don't think we'll ever get back to that position of global dominance that we had.

#Glenn

No, it appears to be gone. But it's interesting what you say. I think there's an important point: the lessons to learn from mistakes, we robbed ourselves of this. You know, when you hear all this talk that... We robbed ourselves of it.

#Daniel Davis

That's a great way to put it.

#Glenn

What they say is, you know, Strait of Hormuz is open. The U.S. is in control of it. The Iranians are begging for peace. The Iranians, according to Trump, killed 52,000 of their own citizens. There's no weapons shortage at all. The troops aren't actually exhausted or been deployed for so long. It's just nonsense. And you see the same now with the war on Russia, that is... You know, the Russians aren't really worried about NATO, even though we had these ongoing talks for 30 years about the problems that were building up. Ukraine is winning yet again, apparently, for no good reason. Russia, we are told, is taking much higher casualties than the Ukrainians. And the only possible peace is unconditional ceasefire. It's not just spin, it's really dumb, and it's very dangerous as well.

#Daniel Davis

I'd say it's delusion, not even dumb.

#Glenn

Yeah, sorry, that's a much better word. But you were talking about what's happening in Ukraine, and if the situation is horrific now, it can become much worse during this winter. But overall, though, the Russians seem to have been, over the past years, careful and restrained to the extent that they wanted to avoid a direct war with NATO. But what many now see as having been essentially appeasement of NATO has come at a very great cost. That is, lack of or collapse of deterrence, and also the deepening and deepening involvement of NATO into this war much more openly as well. And there seems to be forming a new consensus in Moscow. That is a consensus, I would say, expressed both in rhetoric as well as action, that the days of appeasement are now over. I was just wondering, how do you see the war changing now? Because the Russians are doing things they didn't do before.

#Daniel Davis

Well, they are. And I think the patience is definitely running out on the Russian side. And that patience has been misinterpreted in the West as weakness. I've lost count of the number of people I've talked to here in Washington, D.C., that say, "Well, look at the map. Look at the battle map in Ukraine today and what it was a year ago. Especially when you're looking at it at the national level, you can't even see any difference. That means that Russia has been unable to conquer any meaningful territory. Yes, some square kilometers have continued to be acquired by the Russians. But by and large, it doesn't look much different because that's all they can do."

They can't go any further. But that's not the Russian way of war. And we are misinterpreting that as incapacity. So we don't have to worry about it. We can keep doing these things. There are no red lines. This is the view in Washington. There are no actual red lines because Russia is ultimately weak. This is as fast as they can go, and they can't do anything else. The last thing they're ever going to do is anything that's going to trigger an Article Five deal, because now they know they'll lose. They'll—they can't have—I mean, they can't even defeat this one country, for crying out loud. How are they going to defeat a 32-member alliance?

So goes the thinking that that is, if Russia is doing what we perceive them to do, is trying to conquer Ukraine. But they just can't, and this is all they can do. But when you look at the Russian way of war, as I interpret it, as I can figure out what's going on, both from listening to Russian speakers, looking at what's happening on the ground, talking to people who've been fighting at the front lines on both sides of this, to me it looks like Russia is having a sustained offensive over a very broad front, whatever it is, 1,000 kilometers, something like that, maybe longer, when you add in Sumy and everything, and maybe Chernihiv, all the way across down to Zaporizhia.

But they are keeping the nonstop pressure all along so that Ukraine can't move from one place to the other, or they can't take troops away from one area to reinforce another, because there's equal pressure all along there. At the same time, they are continuing to use this extraordinary overmatch in firepower. And that's why these claims that Russia is suffering this massive casualty imbalance—it's like three to one, five to one—I mean, there's all kinds of crazy numbers out there, more Russians dying than the Ukraine side, which is, I mean, it's not even logical that the side that has the glide bombs, that Russia can nearly drop at will all along the front area.

There's no defense against it on the Ukraine side at all. Now there's no defense even against the ballistic missiles. And of course, we already know about the drones. I'm talking about the long-range drone situation. A significant percentage of those get through all throughout the country. You can't possibly have it that the side with this massive firepower advantage—and you add artillery, is still at least a two-to-one advantage on the Russian side, to include mortars—and then you get somewhere around a parity of drones, but that the side that is up to either parity on one and at the decisive

disadvantage on all the others is going to somehow suffer less casualties. That's illogical. How can it be that—I mean, you have to have firepower to kill all the other guys. And Russia certainly doesn't use these meat-wave tactics on the ground.

As a matter of fact, they're doing the opposite, as the gray zone, the area on either side of the line of contact, has expanded because of the effectiveness of the drones on both sides. So there are no big tank movements, there's no big infantry carrier movements, there's no big infantry foot soldier movements either, because you just can't do it. So therefore, Russia has prioritized not suffering, not losing its troops by having these kinds of attacks, contenting themselves for the time being with just attrition warfare, with just having this big firepower imbalance on their side to just cause more casualties and more damage, and then over time they're going to weaken it. At the same time, and this is the part that I think almost nobody in the West either acknowledges or is willing to accept, is that Russia is, I think, saying, "Hey, one day there may be a war between us."

There may be an Article 5 deal because at some point we're going to get tired of allowing the West to help target, to help intelligence, to help physical capacity for long-range strikes into our country, and we're going to have to do something about it. But before we do, so they say, we need to make sure that we have an overmatch in all of the categories of weapons and ammunition that we would need in a fight. While the NATO side has been depleting all of its resources, especially its interceptor missiles and even some of its longer-range missiles—not that they had many of them anyway—the Russians have been massively building up stockpiles of all these things. They have interceptors for the S-300, 400, 500, and those things continue to expand, and they have some capability.

I was talking to somebody who had fought up near the front, who was up near the front on the Russian side here just a couple of days ago. And they said that they now have drone defense in the depth of the Russian territory all the way through to try and mitigate some of these things with, you know, like these Wildberries things that have been hit, et cetera. You know, those successes on the Ukrainian side do have this spectacular video. But what's, of course, not reported is that a substantial percentage, like a massive percentage, gets shot down before they ever get there because of this. You know, gun trucks, even some things, but a lot of different integrated vehicles and massive capabilities that the Russian side has had to defend. At the same time, they're building up offensive capabilities in all these different categories of long-range missiles, more drones, new categories of drones.

I mean, they never stop with this kind of thing. And so if there is a war with the West, the Russian side is in a position to dominate it. Now, our vulnerability was exposed here just this week, where Zelensky was interviewed on CNN and talking about how, listen, I'm asking Europe to just give me 10% of their existing interceptor stockpiles, whether that's IRIS-T, PAC-3, whatever. Just give me 10% of it, and I'll destroy every Russian missile that there is, which is patently absurd, because the intercept rate is way less than that. But he does say, we're basically out. He was point-blank asked,

"Are you out of interceptor missiles?" And he wouldn't answer that question. He used some percentages. He said, "Well..." Here's what I'll tell you. I don't think he realized how important this admission was.

He said, right now we have two and a half times fewer interceptors at this point than we did a year ago. Two and a half times fewer. Russia has two times more offensive missile capacity than they had. And I'm like, hang on, hang on. Aren't the Russians running out of missiles? I mean, we've been talking about that from the beginning. Aren't they using chips out of refrigerators, fighting with shovels? I mean, how is that possible that in the fifth year of war they had doubled their offensive capacity in this period of time as you're running out of interceptor missiles? And the reason they're running out, Glenn, is because no one is going to give it to them because we're running low already, dangerously low in Iran.

And what we had given to Israel, and what we had previously given to Ukraine, et cetera, and our replacement capability in the defense industrial base is minuscule. And we're trying to scramble to get that built up, but it will be—not making this up—seven years before we can get back up to a place that's even still not that significant when you're talking about a war of attrition, like 2,000 per year. But you can use, by comparison, Saudi Arabia is reported to have used 2,700 interceptors in the first 40 days of the war. 2,700. That's what we hope in 2032. Seven years to be able to produce less of that per year than was used up in 40 days.

What does that tell you about the system that we have designed, while the Russians are going, "We're just making missiles hand over fist"? Iran is making missiles hand over fist at a much higher rate than anything that we have. Our literal systems are running out, and the systems that we have aren't even effective. We've had Ted—I think you've had Ted Postol on your own show—talking about how the intercept rate, he says it's maybe two or three percent. Others have said maybe it's as high as 10 percent. That sucks pretty big, though. Even if it's the higher number here, that means 90 percent of everything is going to get through. All of NATO is basically open.

I saw Sean Bell on Sky News earlier this week. He said the UK basically has no air defense. He said, in fact, most of Western Europe, he said, we are woefully inadequate on air defense. So if there is a conflict, I don't think we have to worry about hordes of Russian troops just rolling over the landscape like we were worried about during the Cold War. But we do very much have to worry about a lot of missiles coming down on the surface here. And I'm sure some of the aircraft and fighter aircraft can do some serious damage, because we do have some capability in that. But it's limited in number. We just don't have it.

And so I think that in this particular case right now—and by the way, you had Sergey Lavrov on a video that was released just today, on an interview that he had—said that they have basically sent representations to Washington demanding an answer to, "We have lots of information that you're helping Ukraine target Russia. You're providing intelligence, you're providing weapons or weapons components, et cetera." And they want some answer to this because I think, to your point a second

ago, they're getting tired of this. You had Putin a few days ago at, I think, a Pacific Fleet headquarters saying, "Hey, the West is taking out ships, you know, these so-called shadow fleet tankers that we have in the Black Sea, Sea of Azov, wherever."

He says, you know what, tit for tat, that works two ways. And so now we are going to do the same thing. We will hold ourselves free and fair to do the same thing you do to us anywhere. It doesn't have to be in the same areas. We'll do it wherever we want to. So now then it looks like that they're at least preparing themselves to expand in that direction too. And you see, it just keeps going up. Nobody's trying to ramp this down. Zelensky is begging for, you know, all this 10% of the missiles and this ridiculous claim that he can destroy all the Russian ballistic missiles. That's not going to happen because he's not going to get them. President Trump, about a week and a half ago, was asked about Zelensky's plea to him.

In fact, during the CNN interview, the guy asked him, "Are you out of missiles, or have you said anything to President Trump?" He goes, "Yeah, I'm on the phone with him all the time. Every time I see him at a conference, I pick the phone up, I talk to his people, et cetera." And then when they asked Trump that same question a bit earlier, he said, "Yeah, I mean, I need missiles too, man, because I'm not going to be giving him. Biden gave too many away in the past, and, you know, yeah, I need all my missiles." Message very clearly: you ain't getting any of ours. I mean, we're scrambling to try to replace what we have while we're still, of course, in the U.S., they're trying to find any way they can to restart that war in Iran.

They're going, oh, we're going to need more interceptor missiles and more protection and more offensive missiles. And we need to make up some more. So we need to buy a little time so we can get more off the production line and then get them delivered, et cetera. So they're sure not going to give Zelensky any. So whatever he's thinking, the air effectively, the air is wide open to Russia right now. And you're seeing it in Odessa, in Mykolaiv, in Zaporizhia, in Kherson, in Kharkov, and of course into Kiev itself, because it's basically defenseless. And the entire front line is getting just pulverized with glide bombs because there's no defense against them.

So everything is trending against our side. And mentally you would— and verbally, I'm sorry, you would never know that because mentally, I think we've so often, Glenn, said that we're doing good and everything's fine and don't worry about this. We're doing great. You've said that enough to make the people believe it that eventually even you come to believe the fiction. And if you make decisions based on this fiction, perverted and twisted belief that you're actually doing well and that you can succeed, you may blow yourself into a major loss one of these days, and then the wheels could just come off. I fear that's where we're heading.

#Glenn

This is a weakness in the human condition which political propaganda takes advantage of. That is, the human mind has a tendency to conflate what sounds familiar with what is true. So if you say

something over and over, people tend to think it sounds true because they heard it before. It's more or less how the brain works in terms of learning. But yeah, I find the same lack of evidence to be shocking. That is, the whole huge media campaign that Ukraine turned the tide. Yet one recognizes that Russia dominates on all the heavy weapons. We see Ukraine and NATO running out of weapons, as Zelensky has recognized. And even when they're being successful, they say the narrative either has to be, "They intercept 100 out of 100 Russian missiles because they're so amazing, continue to fund us," or, "We need more weapons."

We can't intercept a single one. So, you know, it's narratives. But as you said, Zelensky confirmed the Russian military is growing. They're being diminished, as well as their NATO sponsors. And also, whenever there is this handover of dead soldiers, you always have just absolute crazy ratios, like 40, 50 Russians versus a thousand Ukrainians. I mean, but I did want to ask you: what do you think the strategy is here, though, for the Russians? Because I do agree that I think NATO's being quite irrational now. That is, they keep talking about escalation. They keep talking about war with Russia at the same time as they're depleting all of their weapons.

At the same time, they know the Russians are pumping out thousands of armored vehicles, but they're not appearing on the front. We know that they have the ability to mass-produce the Oreshnik, but it's not being used on the front. You know, again, I don't have the evidence, but I have a pretty good idea that these are being prepared for us, you know, in case we get this war, which we keep talking about. As you said, they don't want to enter... If you see the escalation going up and up, there's a risk of a direct war. They don't want to show up empty-handed. So I think you're right. They're preparing. But ideally, of course, they want to avoid a direct war with NATO. But what do you see then?

That means just knocking out the proxy, but... I think in Moscow there's a conviction or a fear that once Ukraine begins to collapse, the Europeans and the Americans probably will maybe do something foolish because they want to rescue the situation. So, yeah, they have to prepare this. But in terms of just knocking out the proxy that is Ukraine... what do you see happening now, moving forward? What is the Russian strategy? Because logistics seems to be a key focus, but they also go after energy. They seem to want not just to landlock Ukraine, but they want to cut off the southern parts, you know, which would enter Romania. There's... I don't know. Did you see any structure in the chaos which is being unleashed?

#Daniel Davis

I think I do, actually. And I think you and I have talked about this before, that there are competing camps inside of Russia, and Putin is trying to navigate, you know, all the different camps together to have a single policy that they follow. And I think that he is being pushed on the one hand by the war hawks that say there will be no more negotiated settlement. I mean, Minsk One and Two shattered that myth, and everything the Americans and the Western side have done, like with Iran and pretending to be negotiating twice and doing a war within an eight-month period, the MOU. And

then immediately we went back and tried to change the terms on the southern corridor in the Strait of Hormuz, for example. You can't trust anything the Americans say.

And then we see them constantly saying that we're doing well, and everyone knows we're not. So they say, don't worry. Don't even try. Let's just take care of this militarily. Let's just go in and have this big war that they're not ready for. Putin himself alluded to this, I don't know, six, eight months ago, something like that, to say, listen, we're fighting a special military operation. It's not the same as a war. If we were fighting a full-on war, it would be dramatically different tactics, and we would do things differently, and it would be a much bigger, more violent thing, something probably closer to what they call the Great Patriotic War, Second World War. And I think that they are preparing to go down that path.

I think Putin would definitely prefer to have—maybe if not a negotiated settlement, a capitulation to where the Ukraine side recognizes it's now futile to continue on and they will literally lose everything. And I think that he's providing a military that will eventually accomplish that task, however long it's going to take, even going on this go-slow approach. The inertia and just the military fundamentals are what they are. Wars of attrition will work out that way. I had put up a chart the other day. I did some research to see that the military-age males in Russia and in Ukraine, of what's left in the Ukraine population, is about thirty-something million to about five and a half million on the Ukraine side.

So even if it was actually a one-to-one population, personnel ratio exchange, Russia just has the manpower to just, I mean, suck down all five of this. And so now go from thirty to thirty to maybe twenty-five million, and yours is gone. I mean, they can do that. And then in the firepower realm, it's not even close to one-to-one. It's way above on the Russian side, and only growing as we're going through both offensive and defensive missiles. So in time, it's nearly a mathematical certainty that the Ukraine side would lose. But the question is, what's going to be happening on the next side? Because those same hawks in Russia are saying, you know, hang on a second. I don't want to just spend all this time, all these years, and all of the Russian troops that have died.

And I'm told by some that claim to have some knowledge on the Russian side that the killed in action is somewhere around one hundred and fifty thousand, which, as a means of comparison, America lost one hundred thousand in World War One. And so Russia has this—it's a substantial number, especially for a country that's 140 million people. That's a huge number, nothing close to what it is in Ukraine, which is probably well over a million. Some suggest it's even over two million. I don't have any way to determine that, other than it is definitely, definitely high. So we're already moving in that direction here.

But these people and the Russians are saying, let's don't just take this and all the costs that we had, and then let the entire Europe scot-free, pay no price at all for all the stuff they've done, for the literal physical demolition of the entire country of Ukraine, their entire manhood. I mean, they've almost wiped out the country, and then they get all scot-free. Now they're going to do this buildup

stuff, and then now, who knows, maybe we have a war in the future. So they're saying, let's have that war now before they do this buildup situation to where they don't have offensive missiles, they don't have defensive missiles, and we couldn't actually launch. And let me point out one other thing here.

There's a belief right now that the nature of war on the ground has changed, and what we've seen on this line of contact over these years is just the way wars are fought now. So on the one hand, it's like, well, and I said a minute ago, I don't think you're going to see hordes of Russian soldiers rolling across the European continent. Many say because they can't. I mean, if they can't even take all of Ukraine, they certainly couldn't go into Western Europe. But here's the thing. The reason why, especially in the Sloviansk-Kramatorsk, which is kind of the linchpin of all the fighting right now, that thing was prepared from 2014 onward and has only been deeply reinforced here in the last few years.

And so it is literally a fortress belt with incredibly difficult fortresses, fortifications, etc. And of course, you have all the drones going back and forth. That's because you have a mature battlefield. But look what Russia did in the opening rounds before there was a mature battlefield, other than that line in the Donbas. They just literally drove into the country. But they didn't intend to conquer Ukraine. That's why they only had, I think, less than 100,000 troops, which is not a fraction of what you would need if you were trying to militarily conquer somebody. That was to put pressure for political reasons so that Kyiv would recognize the futility and say, "All right, let's just have a deal."

And it nearly worked because everybody knows now, in Istanbul, two months in, they almost had that deal, and it would have worked. But because that deal didn't happen, Russia hadn't resourced Plan B, which is, oh snap, we need now another 500,000, 600,000, 700,000 troops to continue fighting, and it took two years to get up to that point. If, on the other hand, Russia says, okay, we actually have a— we're going to fight a war on the ground against NATO countries because, whatever, they've been supporting this war, they're direct combatants, whatever you want to say, whatever they would end up saying.

You can roll over that not with 100,000, but with five, six, 700,000. And they have them now. And as you pointed out, they're making, like, T-90s and a bunch of other modern tanks. They've been refurbishing a lot of old ones. They've been using T-55s, T-62s, T-72s in large numbers because they have those. And they're doing the job that they're doing in this war on the ground. They're more than adequate because they're not using them in conventional maneuver warfare. But the better ones that they have, the refurbished T-80s, the new T-90s, I think they call them the Storm. I can't remember the title of it, that they have a Storm Breaker or something like that, whatever these new ones.

Now, you take those and you go where there's not a mature field, where there's not this line of contact and the fortifications, and you have a whole range of systems of drones, which both Ukraine and the Russian side have, to where you have a rapid technical evolution where you're doing

something that works. All of a sudden, it's not working because the other side has a counter for it. And then you real quickly use engineering. You come up with a solve, solve that problem, come up with a new one. Then it works for a while. And then the other side, you know, whatever, you have that in its equipment, and they have the resources. They have the physical components. They have the engineers. They're training people left and right. All of that is a mature system here.

It doesn't even exist over there, Glenn. And over there, meaning this in Western Europe, it doesn't exist in the United States. It doesn't exist in NATO. We've given lip service to it, and we've had a few things that we've kind of tinkered around the edges with, expanding some things, but not a fraction of what Russia could do. They could then have this large-scale ground operation, and they could seize some key terrain. And I mean, even two or three, maybe, countries across. I think they would have a constraint going much further than that because the lines of communication would then be very vulnerable, and even limited NATO air power could start to really put a big dent in that.

And so I don't know that Russia could go that far, but they could go really fast, really far. If they had the numbers, for example, the Baltics—what do you have? Like maybe a combat brigade, maybe two, with the Germans that are there. That's it. I mean, they could roll over that in a day, and I'm not being exaggerated here. You could literally roll over them in a day by just sending enough combat power in. And then Poland would be the biggest difficulty because they are aware of this risk, and so they are capable and they do have defenses set up, et cetera. But some of the other countries, not so much. So Russia could go rolling in there with the capabilities that they have because we don't have the defensive fortifications. We don't have the drone capabilities that the Russian side does.

So we need to make sure we never test that out. But there are those in Russia who want to, because they say this is our chance right now to solve this problem for a generation by denuding them. And, of course, in conjunction with anything that would happen, however far they may go on the ground, is that they are launching all of these missiles at known military facilities. I mean, they've got the address of every one of them, because they're unlike the Iranian side, who learned what the damage and the risk from drones are—I'm sorry, missiles. Two decades ago, they started building all those underground tunnels. I know Russia has some. China definitely has some. North Korea, for sure, has quite a few. But I don't think that there's very many.

And there might not be any of any size in the entire NATO alliance. It's like, we don't have to do that. That's what they have to do because of our great power. No one seems to have thought ahead and said, "Hey, what if they come up with a bunch of missiles here and all of our factories are above ground, and they come in and just, you know, with the rain of death and a massive strike that comes in from a lot of these missiles?" You pointed out the Oreshnik and a bunch of others that are not being used in any great percentage on the battlefield, not even in Kyiv. It's a relatively small number from what's allegedly being produced there. And we have no defense against any of those things, or hardly any anyway.

And in a fell swoop, you can burn to the ground our capacity to do anything for a generation. And now then it won't matter how many tanks, planes, aircraft carriers, whatever else you have, if you don't have missiles to fire from them, Glenn. And it won't matter how many men you have if you don't have the logistics it takes to sustain fighting. And I mean, you could have a coup de grâce. You could have a situation like what happened in France in 1940, where the Nazis came in there and they just had this spectacular breakthrough behind the lines and everything that had been prepared, all the ideas that the French and the British thought that they had for defending.

And they thought they were going to be so clever by moving forward when the Germans came across up in the Benelux area. But that's not what the Germans were doing. They had something different in mind. So everything they had prepared for was the wrong war. And the Nazis did come in from there behind and totally unhinged it. And the entire country, the entire British and French armies that were amassed there, were undone in a month. Actually, a couple of weeks is when it was mainly over. That similar thing could happen here if things go poorly. Now, I know to most Western ears, they're going to say, "Well, that's never going to happen. That's absurd. We're way more technically capable. We're way more powerful than that." I heard President Trump say, "We are the most powerful country ever," and, you know, NATO countries and all this stuff. But Glenn, I see a great vulnerability that could be exploited in the wrong set of circumstances.

#Daniel Davis

If the risk level gets high enough for President Putin that he decides that's a road he wants to go down. I hope he doesn't. It sounds weird, but I hope that they stick with the slow, methodical, anaconda-style death of Ukraine, and then that they just set up new defensive lines and maybe even a new Cold War. That's better than having a continent-wide war, which all too easily could go nuclear. But that is the danger that I see.

#Glenn

You would hope that defeat in Iran were the one benefit. It might humble us a little bit, that we think twice before taking on the Russians, but that does not appear to be the case. Well, I don't think necessarily the Russians, well, invading European countries—I mean, they don't really need that territory. I think it's more of a pain than a benefit. But I think what, as you said, what the main thing they would want to do...

#Daniel Davis

Let me be clear. I'm not saying that that would be a good idea. I'm saying it is a capability that Russia can do if they want to. And to give ourselves the thought that that would be dumb for them to do, so I'm not even going to worry about it, leaves yourself vulnerable.

#Glenn

No, what I was going to say is, I think, as they already warned, what is considered legitimate targets will be all those weapons manufacturers across Europe. And they already said, "We know where they are. They are legitimate targets." So if they want to strike those and the logistics centers, that would maybe, I guess, let's use the word rational escalation. And while they're at it, they might also go for some energy installations as retaliation for the participation of NATO striking within Russia. But for this, they only need missiles, the Oreshniks. But I think the main problem is that I think once those first Oreshniks begin to strike, all escalation control will be out the window.

That is, the most vulnerable part for the Russians will be Kaliningrad, which NATO has been very openly threatening, by the way, very openly. And if they go after Kaliningrad, I think that's when they need missiles, the invasion forces, to connect Kaliningrad with the mainland. And that would mean the Baltic states, at least, if not a chunk of Poland. So I just wish people would think twice before going down this road, but that appears to be, yeah, not on the agenda. Anyway, unfortunately, doesn't seem to be on the agenda. Well, thank you very much. I know we have a lot on your plate today, so I will let you go. And thank you so much for taking time. And for our listeners, yes, again, please go check out the page of Lieutenant Colonel Daniel Davis. That is Daniel Davis Deep Dive, and again, in the description. So thank you again.

#Daniel Davis

Always my pleasure, Glenn. Thanks for having me.