

Trade War Gets Worse, Iran War Extends to Ukraine | Stas Krapivnik

Stanislav Krapivnik returns to assess the reported Turkey-Pakistan-Saudi alliance, its ties to Iran, Yemen, Israel and the Black Sea. He and Pascal Lottaz discuss attacks on shipping and ports, Russia's war strategy in Ukraine, Western political thinking, and how weather could affect the fighting in the months ahead. Links: Stanislav Krapivnik YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@MrSlavikman> Rise of the Imperial Eagle Substack: <https://zmeigarinich.substack.com> Neutrality Studies substack: <https://pascallottaz.substack.com> Merch: <https://neutralitystudies.com/shop> Donation: <https://neutralitystudies.com/donate> Timestamps: 00:00:00 Introduction 00:00:20 Turkey, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia 00:11:47 Turkey, Russia and the Black Sea 00:17:48 Maritime escalation and Ukraine's ports 00:29:14 Russia's military options in Ukraine 00:35:14 Consumer systems and Western projection 00:43:01 Russia's summer offensive outlook

#Pascal

Welcome back, everybody, to Neutrality Studies. Today, for an update with the always brilliant Stanislav Krapivnik. Stas, welcome back.

#Stas Krapivnik

Thank you, thank you. Lack of sleep brings you brilliance or insanity. I'm not quite sure which.

#Pascal

Sleep well, sleep deep, and that will actually also help. But today we want to talk about what's happening currently first with Iran and this new Sunni alliance that we hear a lot about—Turkey, Pakistan, and Iran, Saudi Arabia—and then we're going to move toward Russia. What is your take on this alliance? My take is, if they don't give us the alliance text, which they haven't, they're not really serious about it. Just talking about the paper without showing the paper is a very weak hand. But how are you reading it?

#Stas Krapivnik

The METO movement, the new METO movement, Middle East Treaty Organization. Well, it made a splash. But again, you're right. We don't have anything but foreign ministry statements at this point, and something about a NATO Article 5-type announcement. First of all, NATO Article 5, what a lot of people have realized, an attack on one is an attack on all. True. That's written in there. And Article 5 activates. And what does Article 5 mean? We have consultations.

#Pascal

We can provide military support if we want to, but we don't have to.

#Stas Krapivnik

But we all decide individually, not as a collective, after these consultations, what military support is. So one country sends a tank division, another country sends 10,000 helmets, and a third country puts up candles and prays. That's support. That's all support. We thought about you. We prayed for you. And then we went home. That's Article 5. So I was like, all right, Article 5, they're all going to go attack and fight. No, no, no, it doesn't have that. Article 4 is actually much more vicious, in that Article 4 allows for offensive action by forming a coalition of the willing within NATO. You know, a group of NATO nations can form a coalition and go attack somebody.

Article 4. Yeah, nobody even knows Article 4. What I found interesting is that Turkey, Pakistan, and Saudi Arabia are all Sunni nations. So you automatically start thinking anti-Iran. But then when you start digging in a little bit deeper, you know, of all the nations to form an alliance, you wouldn't think of these three. And from what I understand, it's being formed, number one, by Saudi money. The Saudis are just paying out very large sums to Pakistan and to Turkey to sign up on this. So how serious this is is very questionable. Because when you take Pakistan, for example, Pakistan has about 20% of its population Shia, which is about 40 million people.

So out of 100 million in Pakistan, there's a lot of people there. Pakistan has been close to Iran for a while now. They were at loggerheads and even almost had military action against each other a couple decades ago. But right now they're more or less on the same side. Pakistan made threatening noises toward Israel: if it strikes Iran with a nuclear weapon, it'll strike. I don't put too much behind that statement. But Pakistan, A, has been working as the intermediary for, if you call them talks. Trump thinks they're talks. I don't know. Trump's talking to somebody.

We're just not quite sure who Trump's talking to. Maybe an image of himself with the devil in a mirror. I don't know. But they're basically—they've met there. I mean, they did have face-to-face talks in advance. And Pakistan, by the way, also allowed Iranian aircraft to park themselves on Pakistani airbases while all this was going on. And Pakistan is the main land route for Iranian oil heading to China and, of course, to Pakistan. So Pakistan is also buying up oil from just barrels. People were taking barrels of oil in pickup trucks and cargo trucks and taking it to Pakistan. Pakistan was buying it up when the blockade—the blockade was going on, which I guess is going on again. So already you're wondering, what's Pakistan's angle?

Because if this was aimed at Iran and Pakistan starts having issues with Iran, let's not forget that Pakistan has an on-and-off war with India and Afghanistan. So if it now has issues with Iran, it's basically surrounded by enemies. So making enemies out of Iran is not in Pakistan's interest in any form, not unless the country wants to cease to exist at this point. Because if it has to come to

defend Saudi Arabia against Iran, believe you me, Afghanistan and India are going to use that opportunity to square things up with Pakistan. So they're not in a good neighborhood for themselves. Then you have Turkey. Okay, so if Turkey faces off against Iran, what do we have? Turkey has a problem called Kurds. Kurds are 30% of the population. Granted, they're all Sunnis, just like the Turkish Sunnis, like the Turks themselves.

But if it all breaks out and you wind up having any kind of conflict, there's a chance of Kurdish resistance movements in Turkey, which are going to be equivalent to the Kurdish resistance movements in Iran. And Turkey is not going to tolerate any of that, any kind of Kurdish states on its border. Because, again, a third of their population—the Iraqi, Syrian, and Iranian Kurds are minorities, are relatively smaller minorities in those countries. But again, in Turkey, it's 30% of the population, and they have a long history of armed resistance, very armed resistance. So the Turks don't have that big of an incentive to go against Iran. And then you have Saudi Arabia, which itself is now in a war with the Houthis, who are Shia and obviously supported by Iran. And they've already—just four days ago, one of the Aramco refineries was burning. And again, this was a war that Saudi started again.

#Pascal

Hey, just a very quick note. The best way to support this channel is by signing up for my free Substack. You can also help with a paid subscription there, or you can get some of our new merch on neutralitystudies.com. Links below. See you there. Really stupid kind of thing to do when you're already in a war with Iran. I mean, it's like one of these choices where I really wonder who made that, because it seemed to me also, I mean, even the Americans can't have had that much interest in this. I still don't get it.

#Stas Krapivnik

Yeah, maybe they were thinking they're playing video games again, where they could just reload the previous life from the past save. But life doesn't work that way. At least as far as we know, life doesn't quite work that way. You can't just go back to the last save. So, yes, that was a stupid move. That was an incredibly stupid move. When they started attacking the airstrip, when the Houthi leadership went to the funeral procession for Khamenei, yeah, I don't understand the mentality there. I really don't understand why they did that. But they did. And now they're in a shooting war; the last one they lost.

And they lost because, A, their army that was supporting the, quote, government in Yemen, which really isn't a government, their candidate was beaten on the battlefield. Their Colombian mercs' corpses were littering southern Yemen. Colombians just tend to go and die off in every conflict they can find for some reason. It's a national pride or national tradition now. Hey, there's a war. Let's go

die there. It's not ours, but who cares? Which they're doing in Ukraine now in large numbers. And, you know, this has gotten to the point where they went to sue for peace because the Yemenis were shooting modified Tochka-U's. Tochka-U's are old Soviet-era ballistic missiles from about the 1980s.

And the Patriots couldn't shoot them down effectively. So we're wondering why they're having so many problems with the more modern Iranian ballistic missiles. The PAC-3s couldn't handle the old Tochka-U's. And Yemen was striking refineries and other infrastructure. And Saudi Arabia started screaming, "Mama." And they tapped the mat and said, "Let's have peace because we can't do this game anymore." And now they've started again. So obviously, I don't think Pakistan and Turkey are going to run to support Saudi Arabia in a war against Yemen, which is a direct ally of the Houthis, who control most of Yemen and are de facto their government, who are allies with Iran. And they're also trying to get Egypt in, and Egypt's kind of standoffish.

But as several people have suggested, including some experts I've talked to here in Russia and some American experts, all seem to think this is against Israel. And the Israelis have already voiced they're not happy with this. Of course, the Israelis are already openly talking about taking out Turkey—Türkiye, or whatever they want to be called these days. I mean, they had an AI-generated commercial running in Israel where they had the leadership of Hamas, Hezbollah, Khamenei. They're sitting there with cards. They're looking at their numbers. It's their turn. They're going off to get shot. And then the camera pans over, and there's Erdogan.

#Pascal

It's like, okay. Although we must say, I mean, this is like social media world, like, you know, people put out whatever they want. But the sentiment in Israel is very much that, oh, Turkey is next in line. After we're done with Iran, you know, we go to these guys. Because, I mean, Israel at this point is this settler-colonial entity. And what they need to do is they need to constantly expand, right? That's how all the institutions are made. The IDF without a war would be not the IDF, right? So you need to constantly have your enemies. It's a little bit like NATO, right? NATO couldn't exist without Russia because there would be nothing to exist for or, in that case, against. But they tried.

#Stas Krapivnik

They tried war on terrorism, but, you know.

#Pascal

Yeah, it's not the same. They needed the Russians back. It was very important.

#Stas Krapivnik

Well, they tried with the Chinese too, but the damn Chinese are on the other side of the world. They just don't feel like they're just, you know, a threat there. It's hard to drum up the threat that the Chinese are literally on the other side of the world. Oh, they'll be here any day now.

#Pascal

But let's—one more thing about this situation, because there is this tendency now of, you know, the Iran war linking up with the Ukraine war. We've seen this in the Caspian Sea, where Ukraine shot at Iranian shipping. Is this maybe another one of these linkages? Because Turkey must be worried out of their depths due to what Russia is doing to Odessa and the entire northern part of the Black Sea. Basically, if Russia succeeds in taking Odessa and actually taking all the port facilities and so on, the Black Sea in effect becomes a Russian lake with a Turkish access point. Do you see any connections with that, at least in the mind of Turkey, to say, like, oh, maybe we need to shore up a little bit of, you know, West Asian support in order to somehow then tell the Russians that, oh no, you can't have it all for yourself?

#Stas Krapivnik

You know, traditionally, for the last, I'd probably say 150 years, 200 years, actually—yeah, the Black Sea's pretty much been a Russian lake with a Turkish access point. The run-up to the Crimean War, it started with a Russian-Turkish war before the British, the French, and the Sardinians decided that we really want to die for the Turks en masse. And they did. They won, but it was a lot of heroic victories that didn't really change anything. But it started off with the Russian fleet just exterminating the Turkish fleet because Russia was the first country to start using exploding cannonballs instead of just solid iron cannonballs. They just punch through the opposite side and go out the other end, or get stuck somewhere and kill whoever's in there.

Russia invented the exploding cannonballs. They say Russians don't invent anything. Russia invents a lot. And they just wiped out the Turkish fleet. And that was a massacre of the Turkish fleet. And that was used, by the way, as propaganda for the British and the French to come in and enter the war. And after that, the Black Sea effectively—after the Crimean War, Russia wasn't allowed to have a fleet for 20 years, and then later to rebuild the fleet. After that, it was pretty much a Russian lake. So, yes, the Turks weren't happy with that, obviously. They wanted it to be a Turkish lake. And while we're at it, of course, they've had their shipping hit by both sides now.

Quite a few times, they had their shipping hit by Ukraine. And the population of Turkey is very livid, but Erdogan is Erdogan. He'll make—well, in the direction of Ukraine, he wouldn't make any statements. You see, one of the things, one of the reasons Erdogan was also backing this, the treaty that ceded Crimea to Russia. Because Crimea wasn't originally—well, Crimea was Russian, or parts of

Crimea were Russian, and part were Greek. And then when the Mongols arrived, it became Mongol, because the Crimean Tatars are not Tatars. There's no such thing as a Tatar. Tatars never left Mongolia either. Genghis Khan killed them all off to avenge his father.

They're Mongols. And just when the Golden Horde fell apart, there was the Crimean Khaganate. And then under Ivan Grozny, Ivan the Feared, not the Terrible, the Feared, the Khaganate invaded, tried to wipe out and conquer Moscow. They got up close enough to the city. At the Battle of Molodi, they were wiped out. And there were some Janissaries there from the Turks because the Turks were trying to vassalize them. And they were more or less Turkish vassals at that point. And then after that, the whole nobility was wiped out. Most of the warrior class was wiped out. And Turkey vassalized the Khaganate. And then they just turned it into part of the Ottoman Empire.

So when Russia retook and conquered the rest of Crimea, the treaty that ceded it specifically stated that it's now Russian territory into perpetuity. But if it ever no longer becomes Russian territory, it goes back to Turkey, or the Ottoman Empire. So the Turks were very happy to have Ukraine falling apart because, by treaty, supposedly, they would get Crimea back. And unfortunately for them, that didn't quite go that way. Crimea flipped over back to Russia. So the Turks kind of—they were actually making plans on that. Oh yeah, by treaty, we can get this back. Well, no, you can't. At this point, this is a 250-year-old treaty, almost a 300-year-old treaty.

#Stas Krapivnik

So the Turks are less than happy, of course. And now Russia's escalated after the announced 40 days of maximum pressure to force Moscow to the suicide table. I'm sorry, negotiations table, you know, where Moscow will commit harakiri and the rest of the government will just walk out on Red Square and shoot themselves. The Western dream. Pipe dream, but it's the Western dream. That's why they're now screaming, "Oh, and the Turks are now going back, let's do another grain corridor." Well, no. That's another form of, "Let's do another ceasefire." Just like they're now asking for a ceasefire in the air, a ceasefire in the water, a ceasefire everywhere. And that's just going to prolong the war even longer because they just use that as time to regroup and put the Ukrainian—what's left of the Ukrainian army—back on its feet.

#Pascal

Yeah, it's quite astonishing to me, you know, these ideas that are currently coming out of the West, including, of course, a ceasefire in the sky, or what they called it, or like a truce in the sky. It's like, yeah, so you're asking the power that is currently winning militarily, that you're still, by the way, pretending is losing, to cease using the advantage because of what? But that's just part and parcel of the propaganda lunacy that's going on. The more significant thing to me is that, again, we see how these theaters start linking up, and especially how the Ukraine war, for four and a half years, was a land war. Anything that happened on the high seas was a minor thing. I mean, even the sinking of the Moskva, it was sunk basically in port, right? That was not a sea battle.

The European Union has, from the beginning, said like, oh, we have this shadow fleet—nonsense term, absolutely. But they didn't really, they didn't have the means to follow up on that. Now, recently, they've started to systematically even seize certain ships, and the Ukrainians, again, they target shipping, not just Russian shipping, but Turkish shipping and even Iranian shipping. The expansion. And then two days ago, Vladimir Putin in the Far East actually said, "I gave an order to retaliate when that happens against shipping from the Europeans," and not only in the European waters, but that could extend all the way to the Pacific waters. Now, this to me seems like an expansion of this warfare into the maritime space, global maritime space. Do you see it that way, too?

#Stas Krapivnik

I'd like to see it that way, at least to give the European Union and NATO countries a little taste of their medicine and see how long they want to keep playing this game. But I don't know. I'll believe it when I see it. I'll put it that way. The unfortunate thing is, they talk a lot but do less. You mean on the Russian side, actually? As in Russia is still on maximum restraint and not on retaliation mode? It's less restrained than it was two months ago. And we see that because Russia escalated and closed the ports. They've closed the ports: systematic destruction of the ports and hitting any ship that came in and out. And there are seven ports that it closed. It's not just Odessa. There's Port Neusley, which is north of Odessa, Port South.

And there's five other ports to the south of Odessa, three of them on the Danube River. Yeah, they closed them out. That's it. The ports have been hit, hit again, hit some more. The shipping's been hit. But at this point, it's a matter of would Russia escalate to actually seizing European Union ships? And it could. It's got plenty of areas. You know, I was advocating setting an incident up for the British in international waters, which would be easy enough to do. Pop in, put a Russian tanker in there with Marines on board with anti-aircraft missiles, MANPADS, and set it afloat as if it broke down. And the British pirates would come running over there and have a submarine behind it.

If need be, sink them, or take them prisoner at that point. You know, stand down or you'll be sunk, and use it. You know, these are British pirates, and see what the British government does then. Because the British Navy is a joke. I mean, they're no longer queen of the seas. They're barely queen of a puddle. Most of their fleet is broken. The vast majority of what little fleet they have is broken. We saw one destroyer that went out to support Donald Trump, and it broke down in the Channel. They're using cutters and helicopters at this point to seize ships. It's piracy. It's absolute piracy because they're in international waters. So set up an incident and bring it to a head.

If you want a war, you're going to have a war. Otherwise, stand down and go back to normal relations. Okay, with the British, it's hardly ever normal relations. Go back to acting civilized. But the problem is, Russia hasn't done anything like that. And the British and the French have gotten, have filled out their oats and decided that, you know, we can seize ships that aren't too close to Russia in

international waters. And there's been strikes on Russian ships in the Mediterranean. They blame it on the Ukrainians. I'm like, I'm sorry, Ukrainians are not located with a bunch of drones in the Aegean Islands looking for a Russian ship that's in the middle of the Mediterranean, passing the Aegean Islands, but in international waters.

You kind of need satellites for that. Satellite imagery and live satellite imagery to find where that ship is, to bring the drones in. And in that incident, there were FPV drones that were flying out 30 kilometers. Again, you need reconnaissance to be able to pinpoint that ship. Thirty kilometers out, the sea is a very big place, with very few landmarks. So in a case like that, again, it was the West, more likely the British in this case, striking the ship. So they're out of control. Personally, I've advocated we need to set a trap for them and bring this to a head. If you want a war, you're going to have a war. If you don't and you can't handle it, back the hell off and act like a civilized nation.

#Pascal

And I think your advocacy inside Russia is one that is probably currently gaining traction. I mean, these types of arguments, as in, Russia must finally start to do what Iran did, which is to reestablish reciprocity, because the West got very much accustomed to doing anything they want, and Russia just goes with maximum restraint, right? And therefore, ha, ha, ha, we can blow up your Wildberries factories, and what are you going to do, tough guy, right? They play that kind of game.

But it seems that as of now, as of August 2026, the decision in the high command, in the highest chambers, which includes, of course, the office of Vladimir Putin, is like, no, we will not take the bait. We will not be provoked. We will continue to systematically and methodically dismantle Ukraine as a state, as an entity, as a military threat. This is working. We are getting closer and closer to consolidating the Donbass. We are getting closer and closer to actually eradicating any potential for threat from that place. We are not going to expand either into the European heartland or, in this case, even into the maritime space.

#Stas Krapivnik

Yeah, and, you know, first of all, for Ukraine, losing those ports, effectively they're gone, at least as long as Russia keeps the pressure up. And at the moment, losing those ports, that's \$50 billion lost off the economy that the Europeans are going to have to make up. That's a lot of grain that's not going out. That's a lot of weapons that are not going out—American weapons. That's a lot of weapons that aren't going in. Yes, I said American weapons going out, because Ukraine is a huge military hub for black market weapons, including artillery systems and things like that.

They're burying the grain as it heads out. And believe me, I mean, the people in the Pentagon are getting kickbacks off this. They're not that ignorant that artillery pieces are going missing, showing

up in other countries. But it's a good hub. Ukraine is a hub for drugs. It's a hub for black market organs. It's a hub for child pornography, for pedophilia. And again, organs—it's basically a hub for everything that is evil. That's what Ukraine has been turned into.

#Pascal

Which, by the way, is something very normal to happen once the United States takes over a place, because what actually got rid of the drug trade in Afghanistan? Oh yeah, the Taliban coming back. Twenty years, you know, opium everywhere. And then the Taliban are back, and they cut that stuff out immediately. It's quite insane. Also, the Western obsession, you know, with drugs and using these kind of outposts as laundering places. It's insane.

#Stas Krapivnik

Let's not forget, Queen Victoria was the first international drug baron in the world. You're next door to China, where Hong Kong was built as a city just to funnel drugs into the rest of China.

#Pascal

Yeah, let's not forget that the British fought two wars with China over their right to sell drugs in China, and won both.

#Stas Krapivnik

Well, the problem with the Chinese are merchants. They're a merchant society. They're not a military society. So even though at that point the Chinese were the biggest economy in the world, that sank in. And after the Second Opium War, within 20 years, they lost 50% of their GDP. I mean, it's an insane collapse of a society, because it wasn't just an economic collapse. It was an economic collapse built upon a societal collapse. The societal collapse was mass drug use, mass heroin use that the British were pumping in with just incredible speed.

#Pascal

And, you know, it's always the same pattern. And then you look back at the depictions in the West of these opium houses, and the image you get is like, "Oh, these silly Chinese, drug-addicted Chinese, you know, they're responsible for their own demise." But that's the game. That's the West going in, killing, mass slaughtering people, and then blaming it on them for disappearing. Just like, yeah, yeah, the silly North Americans who died of a flu. Silly North Americans. And then luckily, luckily, there was a land without a people for a people without a land, right?

#Stas Krapivnik

Well, there was the 1881, I think it was 1881, congressional decision on the Indian question. Indians that go off the reservation or refuse to go on the reservation—and they usually went off the reservation because they were supposed to be fed by the federal government. They'd get rotting meat or they wouldn't get anything, so then you'd have to go hunting. Going hunting is an act of war. The solution was bullets for the braves and the saber for the women and children. Why spend bullets? That's how you get an empty land. That's one of the ways you get an empty land: slaughtering the population.

#Pascal

Yeah, I just brought that up in order to remind us all of just how the West fights its wars, right, and how the West then creates the narratives around the victims that it creates. Luckily, every once in a while, you actually have people who bounce back. Luckily, most of Asia bounced back and kicked the West out. But now we are at the point where also Russia and Iran—we are again at this clash. And your criticism is still that Russia is not going in forcefully enough. But what do you think? Do you think it could? Not that it doesn't have the power, but once things are set in motion, the special military operation is still a military operation and is conceived and planned in that way. And we know how methodical the Russians are, right? I mean, if you decided to change that, it would probably take a while if it was to be done properly, wouldn't it?

#Stas Krapivnik

Yeah, it would, but I think there are contingency plans. Most militaries and Russian approach to the art of war is the science of war. So I can guarantee there are contingency plans, and more than a few contingency plans, for any of this. That's what any staff does. I mean, look, people were laughing when they found out the U.S., the Pentagon, had contingency plans for alien invasions and zombie outbreaks. It sounds funny, but what they're really doing is brainstorming. It's to keep people, you know, to keep the human brain working. They have extra time. Let's run some ridiculous scenarios. But what would you do to maintain order or to survive it? It makes people think. So even if you take the most ludicrous scenario, a zombie outbreak, okay, but how would you handle that?

And that actually is a planning mechanism to get people thinking in the most ludicrous situations. So all major staffs, they build up plans for how to fight every country around, for the most part. It may be a very loose plan, but it's something that they do. That's just how military operations work. And when you're in an actual military operation, guaranteed there are contingency plans being built up for everything, especially with the Russian approach. Russia is also dismantling Ukraine internally. Unlike Wildberries, Nova Poshta literally was sending equipment to the Ukrainian military, and they bragged about it, and they put it out on the internet. I'm not talking about, you know, some family buys their kid an armored vest and sends it through Nova Poshta.

I'm talking about when Nova Poshta delivers, you know, several hundred of these in one go. They just became the logistics arm of the Ukrainian military. So Russia has been destroying their

warehouses very efficiently. It's just not talked about in the West. Russia has also been destroying fueling stations up and down. First of all, they took out somewhere near 500 fueling stations in Sumy and Kharkov, which prevented the drones being launched from these small cargo trucks, because the cargo trucks need the fueling stations for the drones and for themselves. And the fuel stations are destroyed. The difference is Russia's hitting those fuel stations at night when there's nobody around, or they're closed. But what it also does is it collapses the local economy.

No fuel, no local economy, which has the benefit and effect of forcing people to leave. They can't get groceries in. They can't get things in. They wind up leaving. And that, by the way, allows the Russian military to advance faster. Zelensky, about two years ago, he must have been very high on cheerleader-interrupted Colombian marching powder. And he blurted out that, well, we can't evacuate all the civilians because the Russian army starts advancing a lot faster. Translation: we're using our people as human shields, knowing that the Russians are trying to avoid collateral damage, or, as the Israelis call it, bonus points in civilian casualties. So this forces the civilians out themselves. Russia's also been hitting a lot of the grocery warehouses.

So there's food shortages in Kiev, which again forces the people out, which clears the battlefield of civilians. There's no food, there's no fuel, people leave. That leaves only the Ukrainian soldiers to deal with. Makes life a lot easier, you know, one way or the other. And again, Russia could have done this a long time ago. They chose not to. But after Marco Rubio's 40 days of deep strikes to force—to escalate, to de-escalate by forcing Russia to negotiate at the table, A, it didn't de-escalate. B, it didn't bring the people and the businesses out in the streets against the government. Quite the opposite. It's some of the best things you can do for recruitment, because every one of these terrorist strikes, the number of volunteers for the military skyrockets.

It has that effect. You're dealing with a very different culture. And just because—well, first of all, Wildberries and Ozon got hit a couple of times too. They didn't sit still either. They just returned to their original logistics model, which was small, dispersed warehouses before they started building these consolidated huge warehouses. I mean, they've been around for a long time. So they just returned back to these dispersed warehouses. And, you know, 10 days ago, when we were driving back from Krasnodar Krai, from Anapa on the Black Sea, there were Wildberries trucks all over the place. Yes, you may have to wait an extra day to get your sea slug slime facial cream. It's amazing what women put on their faces.

#Pascal

There literally is such a thing.

#Stas Krapivnik

I'm just making that up. No offense to sea slugs, important creatures. But apparently their slime has—or it's been marketed that it has—beneficial properties.

#Pascal

Maybe it does, maybe it doesn't.

#Stas Krapivnik

But it's good marketing. But you can still get your sea slug slime facial cream. It may take an extra day to get it, but it's still there. I mean, I just ordered some stuff off of Wildberries, and it came in. So...

#Pascal

Can I ask you about this? Because, you know, this targeting also that was done, first the oil refineries and, you know, energy production facilities, and then these warehouses and so on, you could see how they were looking for new targets. And in our community, it's more or less—we more or less all agree—this was probably done somewhere in Wiesbaden, the decision where this, what would be struck, right? Absolutely. Doesn't that, this insight, you know, because the West, the best thing to do to me is always to use this reverse psychology because they cannot—they do not have the ability to try to understand how the Russians or the Iranians or the Chinese actually work.

So what they do is they imagine themselves being in Russia, themselves in Iran, and what would bring them to their knees would be if somebody attacked Amazon, right? Because then the population would revolt, right? In a sense, aren't they providing by now the exact blueprint of what the other side should do if they ever wanted to actually fight a real war with the West? It's like, it just seems to me, okay, this is the admission that we, that the West, wouldn't be able to withstand politically any kind of disruption of its consumer supply model.

#Stas Krapivnik

Oh, absolutely. Absolutely. And that is the point, absolutely right. They're projecting. You know, people and nations tend to project, which, by the way, has been, if you want to understand the Russian part of Russian mentality, it's the projection of, hey, let's make a deal. You know, nobody really wants to go to war. Yeah, and I keep telling Evan for the last three and a half years, four years, telling him, no, they want to go to war. But nobody wants to go to war. Why would anybody want to go? No, because they really want to go to war. Maybe the Joe Snuffy on the street doesn't want to go to war, but the elites really want to go to war. You cannot project the Russian desire not to go to war with the fact that the Europeans are out of their minds there, and quite a bit of the people, as we've talked before, as you've had on your show about the group psychosis, the group formation, you know, it is.

It loses all common sense. What's war going to bring you? People, they just go freaking insane. I mean, Finland's a prime example. They were the armpit of Europe, the laughingstock and armpit of

Europe, until they became part of the Russian Empire, where they were an autonomous kingdom within the Russian Empire. And Russia built them up, built Helsinki for them out of a stinking fishing village, educated the elites, and they became—even when they became independent, okay, post-World War II, when Stalin was very nice on them, forgave them the concentration camps that Finland was running for the population, the non-Finnish population of Karelia that they were grabbing—and their entire economy was fixed on Russia, and they were very successful.

Now they've sacrificed everything, including their entire economy. They're back to becoming the armpit of Europe because nobody needs them. They don't have anything particularly that anybody needs. Wood products, but the wood was coming from Russia too, from Siberia. So now they don't have that. So again, this is group psychosis. Oh, we're going to get the Russians. Well, no, you're not, but you're going to kill your own economy and kill your own future. But you can't talk to most Finns because they're brainwashed at this point. Not everybody. There are normal Finns, obviously. I've talked with several, but the majority are brainwashed. And this is the same thing that's happening in Europe. Russia's projecting its own values, but you can't do that.

#Pascal

You've got to understand the other guy. The brainwashing is quite fascinating, actually, and also how it works on quite a deep level. I'm in Switzerland currently, and next month, on the 27th of September, we're going to have actually a big referendum on whether to strengthen Swiss neutrality, meaning also economic neutrality. Yes or no? I'm obviously in the yes camp. And right now this is heating up, and everybody who's against this is now coming out on Twitter and actually tweeting about it. And literally, like one of our former comedians put out a tweet saying, like, these people, they believe that a war can be averted through discussions. Yes.

#Stas Krapivnik

Yes. That's what we believe.

#Pascal

Yeah. You can. There's other ways than weapons in order to approach the significant other, but they cannot even think in those categories, which is why I think it's a bit ridiculous, right? It is bordering on a psychosis, actually, what's happening in Europe.

#Stas Krapivnik

Oh, yeah, yeah. And then the Russian side, again, Russia is also guilty of this, just like the West is guilty, not understanding your opponent. They're kind of looking past each other. But in Russia, it started to dawn. It's breaking through. And what I'm telling people, yeah, they really do want a war. The elites really want... People have started to understand that. On the European side, well, the non-

Russian European side, as I was talking with Glenn, as Glenn put it, it's now forbidden to even understand your opponent. Because if you even understand your opponent, you're now an apologist for your opponent. Not that you necessarily like your opponent. You can hate your opponent, but you should at least understand your opponent. But no, there can be no understanding. It's ideology: you're with us or you're against us, right? So you're either brainwashed like we are or you're the other.

#Pascal

In the German language, the word "Russian understander" or "Putin understander" is an insult. It's a slur. It's like— and it's a very bad one. And everybody was like, "No, no, no, I don't understand." But what is a good thing is if you have experts, and Russia experts will tell you how evil the Russian soul is and how they only understand violence, and therefore we need to use violence. Otherwise, anyone who says something else is an understander.

#Stas Krapivnik

Yeah, there's a Russian saying that Germans owe us not for what they did in the Soviet Union, but for what we didn't do in Germany. Because quite literally, in 1945, the Red Army could have exterminated the entire German nation. Nobody would have said a word. I mean, the Americans were debating exterminating Germans quite literally in the papers, in the newspapers, in 1943. There was a livid debate going on about just wiping out the Germans altogether because they started two world wars. World War I was actually started—the British did a very big part in getting it started—but that's aside. But, you know, they started two world wars, so we need to exterminate them. Nobody can live with them.

And then the next plan was, okay, well, we won't exterminate them, but we're going to sterilize them all and turn them into an agrarian economy and sterilize them so they just die out. But that seems to be happening anyways for other reasons, just, you know, 80 years later. But that's the point. The Red Army came in and started feeding—whatever slurs they said about the Red Army. You know, the first day of the Battle of Berlin, just as an example, the blocks that were already liberated by the Red—or liberated, conquered by the Red Army—they turned on soup kitchens. They just could have gone through and just shot the entire population, and instead they turned on soup kitchens. You know, two blocks down, there's still combat going on. But yeah, that's the savage animals that are coming this way, that mentality.

#Pascal

Yeah, yeah. Instead of this one, maybe—I know that you also... You have some work done to your house. They're building something over here, so maybe we wind it down. But just as a very last thing, what is your expectation now for the next couple of... for the summer, basically, until the end of August? It seems that this summer offensive that the Russians started, I mean, it... So whatever

it does within the next five, six weeks, it has to kind of conclude, right? Because the weather is going to change again. What are your expectations? What the aims are? Consolidation of the Donbas, is that realistic still before the end of the summer?

#Stas Krapivnik

Well, I'll start with Orekhov is halfway taken. There's been a big breakthrough, so Orekhov is halfway taken. I think by the end of August—well, maybe by mid-September, if things are going at the same tempo—Orekhov is going to fall. And that's the last fortified area until you get to Zaporizhzhia. The Ukrainians have thrown whatever little reserves they have left in there to try to slow this down. I don't think it's going to work. And I think Orekhov and that area is going to fall. And it's just a matter of how fast Russia starts moving the 30 kilometers or so to Zaporozhye. For the agglomeration of Slavyansk, Kramatorsk, Druzhkivka, Russian forces are already approaching from two directions in Druzhkivka, and they're moving in up and down. So you've got that pincer movement, you've got a backside movement, and you've got a forward advance.

The thing is, for the Ukrainians, there's nowhere to fall back except open fields. And when the rains start by, you know, second half of September, maybe early October—it varies from year to year—but when the heavy rains start, anybody in those three cities is going to have one of two choices: die in place or surrender. There's no falling back. There's no place to fall back to. It's open, open, open fields with some small unprepared villages and some trenches they've dug here and there that aren't really a defensive line worth anything. And you're not getting anything in and out. You're really not getting anything in and out because those fields are under aviation, drone, and heavy artillery, particularly rocket artillery, control. So trying to get in and out, you get spotted and then you get destroyed.

And when the rain comes, that's it. By that point, I think—well, I don't think those three cities will be taken by the end of September. I think before the end of the year, maybe by November, those three cities will fall one by one. The northeast Kharkov province is already—the very northeastern portion is already in a cauldron, and there's a second cauldron being formed. So I think the eastern about fourth, if not third, of Kharkov is going to be taken probably by November. And the rains aren't that bad in that area because it's a forested area, so, you know, the ground doesn't turn into quagmire. It's the edge of the forest that then turns into the Black Earth steppe. So those areas are forested, so the Russian military can continue moving. And the big plus for the Russian military is the second half of October is when the fog returns.

And if you've never been in a fog down there, it's pea soup fog. And thanks to satellite navigation, you can still figure out which direction you're moving in the fog. And guess what doesn't fly in the fog? Drones don't fly in the fog. Drones don't fly in the rain. So, in its own way, when the weather turns bad, the Russian army can advance a lot faster across the ground because drones don't fly, and the drones are quite little there. They've tried to compensate with drones for everything else, including infantry that they're running out of. So when the drones aren't able to fly, the Russian

infantry can advance a lot faster. Russia has artillery, has everything it needs against very thinned-out Ukrainian forces. I wasn't aware of that. That's interesting. Drones are susceptible to fog and rain.

#Pascal

They're basically good-weather weapons.

#Stas Krapivnik

And they're susceptible to heavy—I mean, the drones, we're talking about the quad and the octodrones, they're not that stable. That's a point on them. Heavy wind, if it's gale winds, they're not flying well. You know, most light machinery isn't flying. Helicopters don't fly in heavy winds, let alone a plastic drone. When it's raining heavily, drones don't fly in the rain. And again, in the fog, I mean, they can fly in the fog, but it's pointless using them because you don't see anything. When the fog you're dealing with here is, you know, you've got visibility for one to two meters, maybe three meters if it's a lighter fog.

You're not going to launch drones because you're not going to see anything. If the drone is flying five meters up, you're not going to see anything on the ground. It's just all going to be a white sheet. It becomes very, very pointless. You can fly above the fog, but again, that's pointless because you don't know what's in the fog. And that's when the Russian forces start moving a lot faster. And we've seen that when Kupyansk fell, a very large chunk in Kupyansk fell in heavy fog. The Russian forces just, oh, no drones. Okay, let's go. And they just swept right through the Ukrainians, who at that point were exhausted, broken, and thinned out.

And they were just keeping the Russian forces at bay with drones. Russia was trying to minimize casualties. And when it comes to fog, I'll tell you, by the second half of September and October, that fog is almost every day. The majority of days are foggy days, at least in the morning, nighttime, sometimes during the day. During the day, it may burn off, but definitely at night and in the mornings and evenings, the fog rolls in. So there you go. You start advancing, all right, and that's got to be a big dread for the Ukrainians at that point.

#Pascal

I just wish it would stop. But okay, the next couple of months don't look good for that scenario. And we have to wind it down. I know there's work being done on the other end too.

#Stas Krapivnik

So people want to find you. They should, of course, go to your own YouTube channel, Mr. Slavic Man, all one word, Slavic with a K. X is Stanislav Krapivnik. We couldn't fit the whole name. And on

Telegram, it's Stas Bati, is the Russian one. Stas Was There is the English one. And Zmej Gorynych is my Substack, which right now I'm using primarily. I haven't been writing as much as I need to, or even nearly as much, but I've been using that as an archive for my videos from YouTube.

#Pascal

You just never know. Everybody, if you want to make sure that you always stay in touch, do sign up for Substack. The good thing in Substack is we get your email addresses. So even if Substack ever decided to block us, we would have backup ways of being in touch. Substack is a great way to sign up to Stas, sign up to my Substack. Let's stay in touch.

#Pascal

Stas Krapivnik, thank you so much for your time today.

#Stas Krapivnik

Thank you. Always a pleasure.