

Douglas Macgregor: Russia's Patience Is Over - NATO Faces new Reality

Douglas Macgregor is a retired Colonel, combat veteran, and former senior advisor to the U.S. Secretary of Defense. Please like, subscribe & share! Follow Prof. Glenn Diesen: Substack: <https://glennDiesen.substack.com/> X/Twitter: https://x.com/Glenn_Diesen Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/glennDiesen> Support the research by Prof. Glenn Diesen: PayPal: <https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/glennDiesen> Buy me a Coffee: buymeacoffee.com/gdiesen Go Fund Me: <https://gofund.me/09ea012f> Buy Diesen merchandise: <https://diesen-shop.fourthwall.com/en-nok> Books by Prof. Glenn Diesen: <https://www.amazon.com/stores/author/B09FPQ4MDL>

#Glenn

Welcome back. Today is August 18th, 2026, and we have the great privilege of being joined by Colonel Douglas Macgregor, a decorated combat veteran and author, and also a former advisor to the U.S. Secretary of Defense. So thank you for coming back on. Thank you. So we appear to be reaching an increasingly critical time in the Ukraine war. I think that the latest PR operation of Ukraine turning the tide, it's run out of steam and reality is setting in. But we see the Ukrainians aren't really able to intercept any of the Russian missiles anymore. Even the drones are all coming through. And Ukraine is largely now landlocked due to this naval blockade, and many of the very critical front lines are faltering. And again, there's been this gradual escalation throughout this war. And to be honest, the Ukrainian resilience has been kind of impressive, but it has come at a price of throwing older men into this war and also draining NATO's weapons storage. So where do you see this heading now?

#Douglas Macgregor

Well, if you're part of the, what I call the Netanyahu-Zelensky-Trump triumvirate, because they're in a triangular relationship right now, whether they like it or not, I think there is a view that, on one side in the West, the European leaders, the globalists that are running the show, want to believe that they're having a big impact on Russia. You had 800 drones that managed to penetrate air defenses and ultimately reach targets in Moscow, Volgograd, and another city, and do some damage. It's not so lethal that it's putting Russia at risk of going under by any means, although you'd think so listening to the reports. But these 800 drones were a product of British technology provided to the Ukrainians. They had new engines in them. They could fly further, faster.

They came in at about 20 feet above the treetops. By the time Russian radars identified them, it was too late. They'd already flown past, and they reached most of their targets without much difficulty. This is more than just an irritant now for Mr. Putin and his government. There are a lot of Russians

who are genuinely angered by the whole process and, of course, they've been angered for some time and want this war to end. But this, I think, has added fuel to the fire. It's also raised the question in various people's minds: how much more do the Russians take of this nonsense before they finally strike back at the locations where these drones are manufactured, in places like Germany or Britain or France or otherwise? Actually, I don't think anything's coming out of France. It's very significant right now.

So that's one dimension. There's another dimension right now that a lot of people aren't watching, and that is the developments certainly down in the southwest. The Russians are now on the outskirts of Zaporizhzhia. The bridge in Zaporizhzhia, the one that people pointed to for a long time as being very significant, structurally very sound, it's being damaged, it's not being destroyed. But a lot of Russians for a long time have wondered why all the bridges had not been dropped. The argument was, well, we may want to use them on the way back, but that hasn't held up to closer scrutiny given how long everything has taken. But frankly, if there's one thing the Russians can do well, it's throw bridges over rivers. So if this thing turns out to be unusable, I don't think it makes much difference.

But what it suggests is that the noose around Odessa has been tightened considerably. And that is, of course, the lifeline for Ukraine, which is already on life support as it is. That means it's dependent entirely on everything that comes to it through Lithuania or primarily Poland. And, of course, Mr. Zelensky's relationships with Warsaw are pretty terrible. The Poles are fed up. They would like to export as many of the Ukrainians as they've got that they can. And at the same time, they're deeply offended by Zelensky's remarks and behavior. Not a good thing for the Ukrainians. I think the population of Ukraine is at least 50% of what it was at the beginning, and falling. I'm told there are as many as 10 million so-called old-age pensioners.

That's not a good sign. And as you pointed out earlier, dragging them into uniform and shipping them east to sit in a trench is a waste of time. Russian forces on the ground are moving very consistently, and I think they'll soon be on the Dnieper River. Of course, I expected that to happen a lot earlier, as did most people. Now, there is an interesting development that's worth mentioning. I'm told by my sources that Gerasimov, that is, Colonel General Gerasimov, Chief of the General Staff, will be at the end of his tenure by the middle of September as Chief of the Russian General Staff. A lot of people are wondering what that means. There aren't very many rumors with any substance circulating. But we need to understand that Gerasimov was a key figure in the Prigozhin drama and wanted Prigozhin dead as soon as possible.

He subsequently had at least one major general, a Russian major general, jailed for effectively challenging him and his conduct of the war. As far as I know, he's alive and still sitting in jail, much to the shame of President Putin, who I think should release the man. I can go back and find out what his name is. But Gerasimov, let's put it this way, is not a particularly popular figure. A lot of people in Russia blame him for the slow, ponderous conduct of the operation. But we have to keep in mind that back in 2021, he was extended for an additional five years as Chief of the General Staff,

and he's still there, which means that whatever he's done has been comfortable with Putin's outlook. So the question: what happens now?

We had all of these speeches that President Putin gave not long ago, insisting, "I want an acceleration of operations. I want more offensive action." Everybody gave him a resounding sort of series of applause. The question is, is that really meaningful? One source that I trust said, "Well, there are a lot of people wondering if Suravikin, who is back from Africa and had a very widely publicized and happy office call with Putin, is now going to come out of the dark, step into the light, and become the next chief of the general staff." Others have said, "No, he's an Air Force officer. That's very unlikely. They'll want another army general." I don't know, but when this replacement is made, that will tell us a lot about where things are going to go from now on.

Because Gerasimov has always been associated with a sort of Soviet hangover, the slow, deliberate, methodical way to do business. And that's not something that Putin says he wants. That's not something that the average Russian wants. They want decisive action. So I think when this decision is made, whoever shows up, that'll tell us a lot about where things are headed. But clearly, the Russians are now positioned with all the troops and all the equipment and all the capabilities they need to be very successful. And then finally, this fear of the Europeans entering the war, I don't think it's dissipated, but it has certainly lost some airspeed and altitude.

I think there's a growing awareness that the Europeans aren't capable of putting up much and getting much into the fight. In fact, one of my sources tells me that they're more concerned about the use of modernized aircraft, potentially over Ukraine against Russian forces, and they're concerned about any ground force that might show up. And I think it's pretty obvious that since we're having trouble conducting one campaign down in the Middle East against Iran, and we're already running low on all the munitions and capabilities that we would like to have, our Navy is already overstretched because it's much smaller than it has been in the past.

It's very unlikely that if something were to happen in Ukraine, it would cause that state to finally collapse and Russian forces to cross the Upper River, that we would do anything, which means the Europeans would be on their own. And the real question is, would the Europeans do anything beyond what they've talked about? I don't think so. And I don't think so because I don't think the Poles would support it. The Polish population doesn't want it. The government is now sick of Zelenskyy. And if you don't have Poland firmly in your camp, willing to provide you with a base of operations, forget it. A lot of people don't realize that back in 1981, when they declared martial law in Poland in December, and they put Jaruzelski in charge.

I'm talking about Moscow, that within a few weeks there was a Politburo meeting involving Brezhnev and his colleagues and Kulikov, who was really the Western Theater commander, Soviet commander. They call him the Warsaw Pact commander, but that was always a joke. There was never a building for the Warsaw Pact. The Warsaw Pact was a facade. It was the Soviet armed forces. And then you had non-Soviet forces inside Soviet armed forces. So Kulikov was in command of everything. And he

gave a very blunt speech at the time. And he said, "Any offensive operations by our forces against the West is now impossible." Yeah. And everybody sort of sat up and looked.

Why? Well, very simple. Poland is in disarray. Poland is not a reliable base of support. We have to reckon with a very high possibility that if we were to launch an offensive, the Poles would hinder it, would obstruct, would disrupt. So until we can be absolutely certain that Poland will be firmly in our camp and order is totally restored, we've got to forget any notion of offensive operations. Now, at the time, that was very sensitive intelligence, but it was true. And what's really funny is that we continue to talk right up until the bitter end, when the Soviet state falls apart, about this imminent Soviet offensive operation.

And there was no chance whatsoever for that to happen after '81. So Poland is once again playing a very important role, and we should not ignore that. So whatever the German government or the British government or the French government or anybody else says, it's absurd. Forget it. Write it off. It's not going to happen. I think that's beginning to sink in at high levels for the Russians. So we'll have to see who shows up as the next chief of the general staff, but I would think September would be a very important month. Now, what we don't know is how much rain we're going to get, how muddy and miserable it's going to become. We'll have to wait and see. But as long as the ground is reasonably dry, as it is at the moment, they could do a lot in September.

#Glenn

Well, first of all, they would like to do some vengeance on the Europeans due to their growing direct involvement in this war. And as you said, they are also doubting that they would want a direct war with Russia. How do you see this impacting Russia's strategy on the front? Because, again, Surovikin, which they call General Armageddon, obviously he's for a much more aggressive approach. But this also seems to be the growing consensus that the former president's slow grinding war of attrition should be changed.

I'm not sure, simply because the war is entering a different phase. But we do see now all these attacks on Ukrainian infrastructure, the bridges, ports, quite brutal attacks on Kyiv itself. We see threats of seizing European ships in response to them seizing Russian ships. We see the North Koreans possibly entering in a much bigger way in this war. And, yeah, the Russians are attacking targets which they didn't do before due to collateral damage. And, well, essentially, it's becoming much more, I would say, ruthless now. Do you think it's possible that there's a strategic shift where the Russians might be going for a knockout blow towards the end, as they see their adversary being weakened?

#Douglas Macgregor

Well, I'm told there are now at least 20,000 North Korean troops in the theater, and there may be more. The North Koreans are anxious to get some combat experience. The Russians are happy to

have the additional manpower. But we should also understand that the Russians have a lot of manpower as it is. I mean, their force has grown dramatically, and they are training about 150,000 reserves right now. I do think the Russians smell blood. I think they know that Ukraine is a fatally wounded animal, and they're not so much worried about what the Ukrainians might do as they advance. They're much more worried about the Europeans, obviously, as you point out. But I think the fear that this could result in a larger conflagration is beginning to dissipate.

So I think the Russians, who are sick to death of these sort of pinprick operations that have now grown into something more than pinpricks, knife strikes. If you look at the 38% reduction in refining capability and the fact that the Russians have suspended the export of refined oil in the form of gasoline, diesel, and other distillates, that suggests there's been an impact. Obviously not on the scale, once again, that the hopeful voices in Washington, London, Paris, and Berlin want to laud. Privately, I think everybody knows it's only a matter of time until Ukraine is dead as a nation-state. It's already a zombie. So the question is, you know, what are they going to do next?

How much are they willing to do? And I think we're going to find that out with Gerasimov's replacement. That's going to tell us a lot, because I think it would be wise now, if they're going to take serious action, to do so. But, you know, we don't know what else is on President Putin's mind. As an American, my view would be, if they do a great deal now, we cannot do much about it. And Trump knows that, I think. Has that entered into his broader strategic calculus? That I can't tell. But I think he's well aware that, you know, we're not in a position to take on the Russian armed forces over a place like Ukraine. We're stretched very thin right now in too many ways in the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean.

#Glenn

Well, even if the Russians think that NATO countries won't intervene when Ukraine finally begins to collapse, it can't base its strategy on hope. It has to prepare for the possibility of war. Now, we've seen the shift in the nuclear doctrine and all, but do you see any other indications that the Russians are preparing for a possible war with NATO? Because from what I hear, they're recruiting a lot of Russians, but we're not seeing them on the front line. They're developing a lot of armored vehicles. We're not seeing them either. Is this for a later stage in Ukraine, or do you think that's intended for us?

#Douglas Macgregor

I don't think it's intended for us, per se. When you say us, you're talking about NATO, I guess. But it will be ready for NATO if NATO decides to intervene. They've always held forces, large forces, well-equipped forces in reserve. I think that's more true now than in the past. I mean, why would you commit the bulk of your capability if you think there's any chance that someone from NATO could intervene? So they've always had their eyes on Moldova, you know, on Poland, the Polish border, Lithuania, and so forth. My point is that I think increasingly they're aware that there's not a great

deal that can be done. The Poles are not going to enter this. The Poles, in my judgment, have perhaps the best army in NATO. They're well-trained, well-disciplined, much better than the Western forces.

And I think the Poles would fight very effectively. And the president of Poland, Nawrocki, has said, "That's not going to happen on my watch. No more Polish soldiers will go into Ukraine." They've got at least 8,000 to 10,000 dead Polish soldiers lying in cemeteries in Poland right now. So I think it's made it very clear that's not going to happen. And again, if you don't have Poland with you, forget it. I mean, it's like saying, well, we're going to invade at this place called Normandy, but Britain's not available. I mean, it's literally that important. So if we understand that, if the Poles are not on board, it's not going to happen. Are you going to try and do it from the Baltic littoral? Well, you know, going into the Baltic is sort of like going into your swimming pool in the backyard.

Anything you put in there could easily be detected and sunk. So I don't see that happening. I don't think the Russians see that happening. And as they become more and more convinced of this, the probability of a much more decisive operation becomes inevitable. There are also forces on the outskirts that have gone in and out in small numbers of Kharkov. But Kharkov is one of these places that can wait. Odessa is far more important. Now, the good news for them is that they've taken it out of the picture from a logistical sustainment standpoint. That's good. But they still want it. It's a Russian-speaking city. And that would probably destroy any hope that remains in the West of any success that Ukraine might try to achieve. Again, but you've got to move forward your air and missile defenses.

You've got to build up your capacity logistically so that you can sustain over distance. There are a lot of things that have to be done. I think a lot of that is underway. But if you look at us, for instance, we didn't invest any time at all in thinking through carefully, in the Middle East, in the Persian Gulf, the kinds of obstacles that we would confront logistically as well as operationally. As a result, this whole thing is an embarrassment. I mean, I don't know how else to put it. The war has become a huge embarrassment for us, which is one of the reasons that Donald Trump runs around making so many outrageous statements as a compensation for what is obviously a clear and unambiguous strategic setback or defeat.

#Glenn

Well, in the Middle East, though, Trump tends to use, it seems, these negotiations as a tactic for buying time. And I'm assuming the same approach will be used against Russia. That is, the Europeans now, according to the New York Times, they are noticing that things are not going well. Again, this whole optimism from NATO seems to have been based solely on these attacks on the Russian civilian infrastructure, that is, Wildberries e-commerce warehouses. This is how we measured success, essentially. But now that many are recognizing that things are going wrong, there's some reports that the Europeans wouldn't mind the US restarting talks with the Russians.

That would be a shift from last year because then they were quite unhappy with any talks. But of course, Europeans do not want an actual end to the war. I think the European leaders want a pause so they can reorganize, re-equip, and prepare the Ukrainians for another round in the war. But how do you see the possibility of restarting diplomacy? Because, again, it's a bit like with the Iranians. When everything goes very wrong, there's a tendency to reach out and seek to start talks, either genuinely or to buy time.

#Douglas Macgregor

Well, if you're a Russian right now at the top and you're working for Foreign Minister Lavrov or President Putin or the current defense minister, the advice I think they would get is, look, set it up. Let them talk. But pay no attention and prosecute this war with a vengeance. This is evidence for the weakness that we've identified. Now is the time to exploit it and strike it hard. That's what I think there are many Russians at very high levels telling their leaders. We can talk and talk and talk as long as they like. We know they're not sincere. There's no reason whatsoever for us to trust anything coming out of the mouths of any of the people currently in power. And, oh, by the way, we Russians have been patient, waiting for these governments to fall. And clearly the government in Berlin is much, much closer to that than it has ever been before.

That's very obvious. And there are a lot of Russians who are watching this carefully, I'm confident. I've already explained that Poland doesn't want anything to do with a war against Russia over Ukraine, absolutely none. So if you're a Russian, fine, talk. Let's get this on the road and get it done. Now, if you move down to the Middle East, or to Persia or Iran, how many times do they have to be lied to before they finally say, well, this is pointless. I think it's over. And if you look at the new leadership, if you go through and look at the individuals who've been appointed to key positions inside Iran, and there are many articles out there, you know, Arta Moeni is an expert on this sort of thing, and he can explain in detail the backgrounds. But these are people who are hardly amenable to a negotiated settlement.

I mean, these are people who've lost family members going all the way back to the Iran-Iraq War. And we in the United States, we never even bring it up. We don't even mention it. Five hundred thousand to seven hundred fifty thousand casualties, hundreds of thousands dead, and most of the people had relatives who fought in that war. It's as meaningful to them as, say, World War II was for us. I remember when we returned Okinawa—at least the sovereignty issue was resolved—and Okinawa was turned over to the Japanese, and the Japanese then agreed to let us stay. I think that's going to end pretty soon as well. It's a different subject. I think this whole overseas garrisoning construct is going to fall apart. We don't need it. It costs too much, and nobody wants it. But the bottom line is that, for the moment, I think the Iranian attitude is, "Screw you."

#Glenn

We're not even going to bother talking to you.

#Douglas Macgregor

Now, I understand that Jared Kushner is insisting there are talks at lower levels. I have no idea what that means. And I have learned not to believe anything that he or Netanyahu or Witkoff or Trump say. I mean, I just don't. And then you have this emotional knee-jerk reaction to everything. The South Koreans would not support us in our position on Ukraine or something, and suddenly Trump pulls the plug on a joint exercise that we conduct on an annual basis with the South Koreans. He thinks he's punishing them. The people of South Korea would like us to get out. We've been there long enough. This government doesn't need us, doesn't want us. There is no imminent threat from North Korea because the Chinese will not tolerate it. They will not permit a war on the peninsula.

And the Russians aren't going to push it because whatever happens in Asia, they will always defer to Xi, as well they should. So the bottom line is that I don't see any negotiations of any kind making any difference to anybody anymore. And I think an awful lot of that rhetoric is for consumption in the West, consumption at home by people in the United States. I still run into people who say, "Oh, well, Trump, you know, he's playing 4D chess. No, he's a genius. You don't understand. He's creating a new architecture." He's certainly contributing to the emergence of a new architecture, but it's certainly nothing that's necessarily in the interest of the American people. And it's destroying most of our partners, strategic partners in the region. So...

#Glenn

You know, it's frustrating dealing with people like that. But we have a lot of them.

#Douglas Macgregor

And until, you know, sort of like this question, you know, "Mein Führer, was mit dem endgültigen Sieg?" You know, in 1945. And Hitler looks at his person like, "What are you, an idiot?" and walks away. You know, what about the inevitable victory? This is all crap. It's all going to collapse sooner rather than later. And I just, I don't know how Donald Trump will deal with it. The smart way to deal with it is to recognize something that I hear all the time. I had a friend just came back from northern New York. He was up along the border with Canada and down in Utica and Albany. He said, nobody up there even cares what happens in Iran.

#Glenn

Nobody gives a damn.

#Douglas Macgregor

They said, "What are we doing over there?" They're all worried about what? Inflation. The rise in prices for everything. And that's a pretty grim outlook. If you look at the markets right now, I think

we're going to go up and up, and there's going to be something similar to what we saw in '29, a dramatic, steep decline. And, you know, diesel is really hitting Europe really hard now. I mean, I have friends in the Balkans and Hungary and Austria and Germany, and they're telling me, you know, diesel's going through the roof. Diesel keeps everything rolling, as we know. How do you keep things operating? How do you keep the electricity running for all the trains? And we go on and on and on.

Well, here it's not as bad as it is there, but it's getting there. And I don't see how we cope. We now have a 30-year Treasury bond that's selling for over 5%. It's like 5.2% or 5.3%, something like that. I think the 10-year Treasury bond, which is the thing that everybody watches as the bellwether of real disaster, is up to 4.72% interest. Once that hits 5% interest, we're finished with this sovereign debt. We can't cope. And what's interesting is to watch the interest rates rise and the yields rise. That doesn't happen normally. It's the opposite. One goes up, the other goes down. Not a good sign. I don't think Mr. Bessent can play the shell game that he's been playing too much longer before, you know, we're in trouble. Real trouble.

#Glenn

It's interesting, though, that Bessent and others, they keep discussing all these wars. Well, Bessent was quite explicit. He said all these wars more or less had an economic function behind them. That is, we're going to have Venezuela trading in dollars. Soon the Russians will be trading in dollars. This was kind of how victory was defined. So obviously, the wars which are making the economic situation much worse are also seen as a way out. You know, if we win, then we can get our hands on the Iranian oil. Then we can get the Russians to trade in dollars, because they're almost done selling their energy in dollars now. So it's not great when you see the great powers thinking in these complete zero-sum terms, where it's all or nothing.

#Douglas Macgregor

But it's a little late now to stop de-dollarization, don't you think? Yeah. I don't see how you stop it. I don't see how you rescue the petrodollar from extinction. I mean, what's going to happen in the region if the Iranians carry through on what they're saying? They've made it very clear that if they're colliding with us once again, they'll destroy all of the oil infrastructure and desalination plants on the west side of the Persian Gulf. That's it. It's over. Saudi Arabia can't withstand that. We don't know what the Houthis will do, but there's no reason to believe that they won't intervene and do serious damage to Saudi Arabia.

The pipeline that runs from the east to the west across the country, that's very easily disrupted. So, you know, I don't see any good news. I don't know why someone like that—well, I do know why people say those things in Washington, but they're in for an ugly surprise. The world has had it with us. They're not interested in playing with us anymore. They want an end to our interference, our bullying, you know, our financial domination. Now the Iranians have said they have to have all of

their money. The Russians would still like to have their money. You can't steal from people and then expect them to cooperate with you. But there is this sort of delusion, you know, that we are untouchable, and we're not untouchable.

#Glenn

Well, certainly Iran and Yemen are communicating this quite clearly, though, that they're going on the offensive, more or less. That is, you see it in the rhetoric, in their actions. And a lot of this is reflected in what you say, that is, diplomacy, well, it's seen as just being a sham, a deceptive maneuver to do another surprise attack. But I was wondering, do you see the same development in Russia, that they're also moving towards this idea that there is no point anymore for diplomacy? Because in the past, it looks like more hawkish voices like Foreign Minister Lavrov were a bit constrained by Putin.

Now, you know, the leash is off. You know, he becomes more and more critical of the United States. And Russia, from what I've heard, they were supposed to avoid criticism of the United States. That's what they were told. This doesn't seem to apply anymore. And again, when Putin makes these comments that, well, we will start to reciprocate and take European ships, and his trip to the southern Kuril Islands was, well, to use your language before, a big screw you to Japan for getting also involved in this war in Ukraine. So do you see especially the Russians also going on the offensive here, that, well, they had enough?

#Douglas Macgregor

I think the answer is yes. You know, Lavrov is an interesting man. I had the opportunity to meet him once. He is someone who probably knows more about the United States and its people than anybody else in the Russian government. And he has had it. There's no question about it. He's felt that way for a long time. I think people are reaching the conclusion that only by striking back at us on various levels are we going to pay any attention to anything they say or do. And I think that's true, unfortunately.

And if you look at our position militarily in the Persian Gulf right now, the problems that we've seen reported from the fleet—you know, this USS Abraham Lincoln—and I don't know how much of that is true or not, but I do know that it's like hell on earth if you are stuck for 300 days practically at sea. I mean, I can't conceive of anything worse than that. I've listened to people in the other services say, "Well, how can they complain about it?" They don't understand. There's a big difference between, "Well, I'm here in this dump that they call Afghanistan or Iraq for another six months." That's one set of problems, but there are ways that you can deal with it. Your mental health can adjust.

But if you're out there day after day, month after month, the only thing that breaks the monotony are the aircraft that periodically take off and deliver munitions somewhere. Otherwise, you're stuck. I think people are tired of it. We don't have the size of the force that we once had. And we also know

that the U.S. Navy is sitting several hundred miles south, in most cases. In other words, 150, 200, 300 miles, depending upon where they are, to avoid Iranian missile capabilities, let alone unmanned systems. So it's not unreasonable for people at sea to get sick of this and disgusted. I'm sure lots of people are saying, "What are we doing?" Somebody says, "Well, we're here to run a blockade." Okay.

Now what? How long do you do this? Do we have enough ships? The answer is usually no. For a blockade that runs as long and as deep as we're trying to maintain, it requires at least 100 ships. I think I talked earlier in a previous episode about the 200-plus ships that were involved in the blockade against Cuba back in 1962, '63, in that time frame. And then we also had ships in the North Atlantic. They were there to essentially deal with the Soviets if they tried to violate the blockade. So we don't have that right now. And in fact, many of those ships frequently are viewed as potential disasters waiting to happen.

In many of your war games, you look at a carrier. If you lose a carrier—in other words, a carrier is damaged and put out of action—that becomes a catalyst for war on the grand scale. It's one thing to shoot down a few aircraft. It's another to shoot or sink or damage a small naval combatant. But when you start attacking aircraft carriers and inflict real damage, the question you have to ask yourselves is, do we want to put this at risk? Is it worth the risk? You know, now we have the F-35, the most expensive aircraft in history, the plane that ate the Pentagon, as we refer to it in Washington. That thing—you lose how many of those?

What do you get back in terms of your ROI, your return on investment? There are a lot of problems with everything that we're doing. I'm sure that the admirals and the generals are aware, and I'm sure these questions come up. And again and again, I've heard people say, you know, we're not fighting the Imperial Japanese Navy. We lost a lot of ships. We lost thousands of sailors because we were fighting the Navy. We had to drive the Imperial Japanese Navy out. We had to seize control of the sea. We're not doing it. So what are we doing? I mean, these come up, and the answers they're getting from the White House and the administration are not very satisfactory.

#Glenn

Well, how do you see—just my last question was about how this all might end up in the end here, because, well, especially in Russia, let's say there's no peace agreement at all. How would that peace look like for Russia? What would a victory entail? Because one gets the impression now from rhetoric that the war objectives are expanding, and indeed, it's not just opportunism as their position is strengthening, but if there is no diplomatic agreement to put an end to the war, then territorial acquisition is a good replacement. But also, just to make it a larger question, same with the Iranians. You mentioned now the aircraft carriers. If the Iranians now really go on the offensive and they begin to target the aircraft carriers, how would the United States react? Because, again, this is not a good end to the war. It's not as if an aircraft carrier will sink and the U.S. goes home. How do you think the U.S. would respond?

#Douglas Macgregor

Well, let's take one at a time. Let's go back to the Russian dilemma. If you go back to 2022 in April, when there was an agreement hammered out between the Ukrainian and Russian representatives, it's said that really they killed some of the Ukrainians who were involved with that. I mean, the Ukrainian secret police for Zelensky. Then you had Boris Johnson fly in with a message from President Biden: "Oh, no, no, no, no. You know, stay the course. You have everything with you. You're going to win." We go back to that. What were the Russians willing to accept? Well, they were willing to accept a neutral Ukraine.

They were even going to leave Donetsk and Luhansk and other Russian-inhabited areas in Ukrainian hands, provided the Russians were treated equally before the law and were treated as human beings. That's gone. That opportunity has vanished. So what are the Russians going to demand? I think they want this regime and all its adherents, all its proponents, eliminated. Too many atrocities have been committed against Russian citizens and Russian soldiers. Things that we blamed on the Russians were done by Ukrainians. I mean, we can watch the satellite footage of bulldozers that have dug giant holes—it almost looks like a small quarry—and then thousands of Ukrainian dead are bulldozed into the hole. Then it's all covered up because the Ukrainian government doesn't want people to know the level of losses.

And right now, the only thing that we can depend upon as an indicator comes with the exchange of bodies, where a certain number of dead Ukrainian soldiers are exchanged for a certain number of Russians. And on average, if you get 20 Russian bodies, the Russians are providing 60 to 70 dead Ukrainians to get the 20 dead Russians. So the numbers of losses about which we in the West have continually lied are huge. It's beyond our imaginations. There's too much blood that has been lost in this war on all sides, but particularly from the Russian standpoint. We have betrayed the Russians, we in Washington, too many times when there was no reason to do so. We have no vital strategic interest in Ukraine.

None. We have never had any. We certainly wish the people well and are willing to do business with them. But whether they were neutral or they were part of the Soviet Union or whatever is irrelevant to us. We were not interested. Certainly not a place that would justify American blood and treasure under any circumstances. We tended to draw that line on the Polish border, and I think that's where it still is. So the first thing to understand is this thing for the Russians is going to be what they demand. Now, why do you think publicly you've listened to President Putin talk about, well, you know, there are large parts of Ukraine that were historically part of Poland.

#Glenn

There are parts of Ukraine that are still occupied by hundreds of thousands of Hungarians who would like to rejoin Hungary.

#Douglas Macgregor

And there are other areas that our friends in Romania would like to have. And his view is, well, why not give it to them? And everybody says, oh no, that's unacceptable. We don't play those games. I got news for you: everybody in Eastern Europe plays those games. If you go to Vilnius, everybody wants to talk about the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. You know, there used to be a giant pillar in Minsk. And in Minsk, it had three languages. One was Russian, one was Latin, and the other was Lithuanian. And you know what it said? Here begins Lithuania. You don't think the Lithuanians know that? Of course they do. So Putin's right. Now, he's not going to give up part of what is today Belarus.

You know, he's not going to surrender the gains that Stalin made as a result of winning the Second World War against the Germans. But my point is, he knows the realities in Ukraine. Secondly, he does not want to govern any Ukrainians. He doesn't want to be over there. No Russian in his right mind wants to go there. I talked to a former Soviet intelligence officer, said he never went anywhere in Western Ukraine. We're talking over near the Polish border, what used to be southern and southeastern Galicia. This is back in the '70s and '80s. Never went anywhere without being armed with an automatic pistol and cartridges in the chamber.

What's that tell you? Russians don't want to go over there. So what the Russians are interested in is this thing that they called Novorossiia. There's no doubt about it. They would like to see something emerge that is not going to be hostile to Russia, and it's not going to operate as a satellite for NATO and as a base for projecting violence against Russia. Can they get that? Well, they're not going to get it from us. They're not going to get it from the Europeans, which means they're going to have to impose that. And they're going to have to turn to the people that border Ukraine and ask them if they're going to sit down and negotiate with them.

But I think this whole thing is going to be taken out of the hands of whatever governs today in Ukraine. Why would they pay any attention to anything that Zelensky says or his representatives? None. None. And I think you're in much the same problem with Iran. The Iranians don't want to occupy everything. That's all nonsense. Territorial acquisition is a lot of trouble. You have to administer it. You have to shelter, protect, support the population that's there. Russians don't want to do that. Iranians don't want to do that. They've got their own issues, their own problems. So if we're talking about turning over Kuwait, for instance, to Iraq, which is an Iranian ally, that's fine.

If they want to sit down with the Turks and divide up things later on, that's fine. The Turks and the Persians have historically run the region. But they want us out. That's their number one priority. They've accomplished it, largely. I mean, the reason we've got so many problems with the Navy is that we were so dependent upon the Fifth Fleet headquarters and the facilities in Bahrain. Those are gone. We're not going to get them back. So, I mean, it's kind of analogous, the situation in Eastern

Europe and the situation in the Middle East. And the question is, what do we want to do? And our plan at this point is to prolong it. And how long does that last? I guess it lasts until we collapse financially.

Or we are so thoroughly embarrassed militarily that we simply can't continue. And you said, what would the average American say? The average American would say two things right now: What the hell are we doing over there? That's number one. That question comes up all the time. So people that think, oh, you're going to get Pearl Harbor, you've got to remember that we can go back over how much effort FDR invested, along with Stimson in the War Department, to provoke the Japanese into attacking us. That's another issue. But they were dumb. They did. And they did it on a Sunday morning. And that's when we were a Christian nation and most of us went to church on Sunday morning. And they killed, you know, thousands of Americans. Okay, that was it.

At that point, every American says, "That's it. These Japanese deserve the worst." And we gave them the worst. We had a big problem in the West because nobody wanted to fight the Germans. All the way up until we crossed the Rhine, Eisenhower was always stopping American soldiers, saying, "Well, do you hate Germans now?" Of course, the answer was, "Not really, no." So it was two very different wars for different kinds of reasons. After the war, we see these concentration camps, and then you get this very, very anti-German sentiment. But even that doesn't last very long. By the '50s, that's really pretty much dissipated because the Germans and we were too much alike. So at the end of the day, what you're asking is, what happens if a carrier is damaged?

It's damaged. Get it out of there. Because I don't think you can sink a carrier over a long range with a missile over a very great distance. You don't have enough of a warhead. You can put it out of action, but you can't necessarily sink it. You have to be very lucky to sink a carrier. Now, other vessels are different, but a carrier is very, very—you're talking about something that's enormous. It's brilliantly built. It's designed to withstand nuclear strikes. So I know that you're going to see a carrier under— but if you get one, if one is severely hit, I mean, I'm sure Donald Trump will want to unleash hell again and all this kind of business. But America is going to say, "Wait a minute, let's get our men out of there." That's what I think.

#Glenn

On the Russian one, I'm just wondering where this is headed, because I saw Lavrov making the point only today that Moscow has the right now to interpret UK's involvement in strikes on Russia as Britain being a direct participant with, in his words, all the consequences it entails now. It could be a bluff, but once those words are out there, they must be acted upon. Well, at least it's noteworthy it wasn't used in the past. So I'm not sure where we're heading, but we're going somewhere different at least.

#Douglas Macgregor

Yeah, but right now, whatever the Europeans want to do depends entirely on us. It's the same thing with Israel. If we pull our forces out and halt operations, how long can Israel last without us? That assumes that we're not constantly supplying them with everything they need. Europe isn't very much different, and Britain in particular. I mean, it has practically no navy. I'm sure you've talked to the Commodore, Jeremy, about this sort of thing. Their army is a mess. It's a shadow of its former self. The U.S. Marine Corps is much larger, more robust, and more capable.

So I just have a great deal of difficulty understanding what terrible things the British would do. I'm not even sure they could safely launch a nuclear missile from a submarine. I mean, maybe they can, but would they do that? I don't think they're that crazy, because Britain could be turned into a smoking heap of ruins overnight. Gone. The French have always made it very clear their nuclear deterrent is theirs. And I used to ask the question all the time, well, when would the French employ a nuclear weapon? They said, "When the enemy's on the Rhine." Okay, so I don't see the French doing very much. Who else is out there?

The Germans, the German army is a mess. It's not doing much of anything. They're backward, if not more so than we are, when you start talking about dealing with this new battlefield. So I think there are reasons why Lavrov is now more vocal, why the Russians are more aggressive, and I would simply warn the Europeans that they need to take this very seriously because I don't think they are. And I blame that to a large extent on us because I don't think the senior leadership, military leadership—now Grynkeiwich, the four-star, may be an exception, I don't know—but I just don't see people taking the threat seriously.

#Glenn

Well, thank you for taking the time and for going a bit over time there. So thanks again. All right, Glenn.

#Douglas Macgregor

Good to see you, my friend. You too.