

NATO's Plans for Total Global Dominance & The Bunker State | Nel Bonilla

Is the Collective West in disarray because of its absence of long term thinking? Or is it all a charade and the master minds are just really good at hiding what's actually going on? Well, we might be in for an even bumpier ride than we thought, not because the Western leadership is brilliant (they are mostly imbeciles), but the underlying sociological structure is not as short-sighted as one might assume. Nel Bonilla, author of Worldlines, explains her "bunker state" framework and why she sees NATO 3.0 as a shift toward deeper military integration. She and Pascal Lottaz discuss NATO's evolution, Europe's defense industry, proxy warfare, conscription, public spending, the "global West," and ways peace, labor, and neutrality movements could resist this change. Nel's Article:

<https://worldlinesletter.substack.com/p/nato-30-the-transatlantic-cage-and> More Links: Worldlines – The threads connecting geopolitics: <https://worldlinesletter.substack.com> Nel Bonilla at NachDenkSeiten: <https://www.nachdenkseiten.de/?gastautor=nel-bonilla> Neutrality Studies substack: <https://pascallottaz.substack.com> Merch: <https://neutralitystudies.com/shop> Donation: <https://neutralitystudies.com/donate> Timestamps: 00:00 Introduction and the bunker state 04:47 NATO 1.0, 2.0, and 3.0 16:16 Is NATO a node or a driver? 18:28 Silent social transformation in Europe 32:28 The Ankara summit and arms production 44:10 War readiness and proxy warfare 50:34 The end goal: a "global West" 54:08 The bunker state and social contract 57:00 Peace movements and alternatives

#Pascal

Welcome back, everybody, to Neutrality Studies today with an update from Nell Bonilla, the author of the wonderful Substack Worldliness. And she just recently wrote another great, great analysis. Nell is one of those brilliant minds who always comes out with very long texts that actually explain quite a big deal about international affairs. And she entitled this one, "NATO 3.0: The Transatlantic Cage and the Rise of the Bunker State." Nell, welcome back.

#Nel Bonilla

Well, thank you for having me again here. Thank you.

#Pascal

Last time we talked, we already discussed your concept of the bunker state. But just for a very brief review of this concept, can you maybe tell us what it is and then how you connect it to what you call NATO 3.0?

#Nel Bonilla

Yes, yes, of course. So the bunker state is a framework I'm developing, and it basically is about how currently the modern state, or the state as we know it, is undergoing a qualitative transformation. And most specifically, like in the countries that are from the, we could say, the U.S.-led hegemonic order, or however you want to call it. And, like, the qualitative shifts we can see there are, for example, that the state as a provider of public goods, the state planning that normally is about increasing welfare and good living and things like that, is transformed towards securitization, militarization. And then furthermore, or because of that even, the citizens, the domestic population, is not anymore a citizen, a subject of rights, but becomes an object of security.

And everything about them is exactly as every part of society and of the country itself, now an object of security, securitized, militarized for purposes of war, warfare, or preparations toward warfare, hybrid and permanent warfare. And then another point of the bunker state framework is that also every country and even region is not anymore exactly a country, just sovereign, autonomous, but becomes a sort of a node. And the purpose of this network, then, is this hybrid warfare. And against whom? Well, since this transformation is coming from, like, U.S. and transatlantic ruling strata, our elites, it is, well, against its so-called competitors or rivals, in essence, and specifically China and Russia, Iran also to an extent, and of course any nation that is aligned with them, for example, within BRICS and so on.

So that is basically the bunker state. And how is this connected to the NATO 3.0 situation shift we have seen now with NATO in the Ankara summit? Well, NATO 3.0 is basically institutionalizing, enforcing already these different shifts that I talked about, about militarization, even of the population itself, about even viewing, like, this social contract as not anymore being about rights of the citizen, but about, okay, what can the citizen do for the preparations of warfare? Even all of this is part of this NATO 3.0 shift.

#Pascal

Don't ask what NATO can do for you, ask what you can do for NATO. And I've had discussions with other researchers, one of them, Jonas Tögel, a German researcher, who looks intensely at the papers that NATO publishes about cognitive warfare, and where NATO explicitly says, "Look, we need to target our own population, right? We need to make sure—I mean, the brains of our people are the battleground, and we need to fight on that battleground." And so this kind of conceptualization of what the citizen is and how the citizen has to be integrated into the entire defense—I mean, it's an offense, it's a war structure. Defense is this thing, it's the lovely, cozy term for, like, war, offense, and death and destruction. But how would you then say that NATO developed? So NATO 1.0, '49 until basically '89 or '91, like the Cold War NATO, then the reinvented NATO of the unipolar moment, and now the NATO of the multipolar moment. Can you talk a little bit about the shift?

#Nel Bonilla

Yes, of course. So the shift is very interesting because it's a slow shift, and a shift that almost since the beginning had a certain direction. And NATO 3.0 then is, at least for now, its most honest expression of it. So NATO 1.0, let's call it the Cold War NATO, it was more—well, it started after World War II, and it was more about trying to align the European elites or ruling strata, political elites, military elites, with the U.S., into the U.S. orbit, its sphere of influence, so to speak, and partly to block any type of repression or any type of trying to work with the Soviet Union or any state that is aligned with it. And even to, one could say, also pacify any socialist ideas that were at that time also popular in the different European countries. So all of that, I mean, this was like one of the core objectives of NATO in the Cold War.

But even then, I mean, this is—I didn't know it, but as I researched, I saw it. Even then, there was this idea of, well, having a division of labor between the U.S. and Europe. So I found, and I talk about it in this essay, a memorandum from 1959, and it talks about burden shifting. It's from the Assistant Secretary of Defense, and it basically says, and I quote, by Secretary of Defense Wilson, that the U.S. would concentrate its military assistance efforts upon advanced weapons, requiring the Europeans to assume increasing or complete responsibility for their own recurring force maintenance and conventional materiel requirements. So what this means, like, in other words, it means that the U.S. was concentrating on advanced weapons, including, for example, nuclear weapons.

This is like the so-called strategic layer, strategic weapons layer, and so on. And Europe, on the other hand, would have to concentrate on absorbing the economic burden by having conventional troops, by having joint projects with the U.S., specifically with their weapons, buy from them, their industries. Well, this was the idea since at least 1959, according to this document. I think it's partly because they at that time thought, or had this inkling that, well, let's see when Europe is ready, after having been devastated by the world wars, to maybe shoulder the burden of the U.S. hegemonic strategic project. Even though, one must say, there were, of course, different European political and such elites that even before that were converging in this project, one could say. So that was during the Cold War.

#Pascal

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#Nel Bonilla

And then during or after the Cold War, and even a bit before that, it's very interesting. Of course, it's about now these out-of-area operations. But what I found there, from, for example, a communiqué in 1980, which was like—the context was, of course, for example, the Iranian Revolution. And back

then the U.S. didn't have, like, the discovered LNG and all of this. So they really, really needed oil, petroleum. And with the Iranian Revolution and other things that were happening, I think even Russia, the Soviets in Afghanistan, processes like this, they were on alert and needed to move their forces to Western Asia.

Now, in 1980, then this communiqué was written and basically said, we need an increase of 3% in annual defense expenditure by all countries, which would substantially assist in reducing the imbalance of forces. And the imbalance of forces, again, like they always had this idea in mind about having to counter other countries from becoming, like, an alternative—yeah, an alternative to the unipolar order. So this is from '80, where they already had this idea: increase of defense expenditure. And also then, but I mean, then after the collapse of the Soviet Union, as we know, NATO began to absorb different Eastern European countries, Baltic states, and so on.

This was also, with this idea of the balance of forces in mind, it was about trying to prevent, again, Europe to in any way try to have a diplomatic or industrial relation with the post-Soviet states and point them towards their direction instead of the U.S. sphere. And of course, also with Russia, they didn't want that either, because even though they admitted and were like, okay, now Russia is weakened, it's not a threat, it can potentially become a threat. And they, like strategists and the U.S. security establishment and such, already talked and wrote about this during the 1990s.

They were like, no, I mean, now it's not a threat, but it will become one just by the sheer size of it, just by its own memory of what it has, because of also the industrialization of the Soviet Union and so on. So this was the idea of NATO after the Cold War. And again, it was about saying, okay, Europe, you have to, for example, after the Kosovo War, do these long-term peacekeeping missions. And we are about, like the U.S., about controlling with our advanced weaponry this, like, high-end part of combat and warfare.

Again, there was not as, well, not as demarcated, crystallized as it is now, but it was already, like, starting, even with this increase in annual defense spending. And now NATO 3.0, or the NATO of the multipolar era, so to speak, it came about. I mean, the idea, as I have seen it so far, researched so far, was talked about already in the 2000s. But, I mean, the 2000s were still with these out-of-area operations, and then the 2010s even more. And it was basically about now seeing that the unipolar moment is eroding or collapsing, or now basically collapsed.

And that this is partly because of the global majority, but specifically Russia and China, again, their technological-industrial rise, and also, like, which means then that other countries that have access to more, like, development too can become more sovereign. And all of this then means that polarity is not anymore. So this was the crisis that then led to this much more intense shift toward NATO 3.0, which is now about not, well, yes, pivoting resources towards what they call Western Hemisphere and Indo-Pacific, which means towards, on the one hand, China, and on the other hand, well, the Americas. And for that, they want the Europeans now, for real, not anymore Europe—well, I mean, they did it, yeah—hypothetically, to take on the material, industrial, personnel burden, the financial

burden of warfare, also hybrid warfare that is also going on. So it's an active process. And so this is, like, basically the summary of the shifts from NATO.

#Pascal

I find this very interesting because that kind of framework would help me explain certain outliers, like, you know, the German General Harald Kujat, who is now in his 80s and used to be, you know, NATO's highest military commander—the commander, not the political one, but the military one—back in the late '90s or early 2000s, or even the mid-'90s, I forgot. But he's one of the people who now heavily criticizes everything that's going on with NATO and says, like, look, this is leading to catastrophe. And of course, we are pissing off the Russians. I mean, of course, NATO expansion created these problems, including Ukraine and so on. And the question is, why would a NATO commander in the past do that?

The answer under your framework would be because he's a NATO 1.0 type of guy who grew up under that mindset and shifted into 2.0, still had the experience of even having Russian troops under his command, right, when the NATO-Russian, what's it called, the cooperation framework that they had was working. But that was not where NATO was going. NATO was not going to stick to 1.0. Out of area or out of business. That was the idea of 2.0. Out of area they went. And now they're transforming again into a bulwark, into something that integrates into your concept of the bunker state—an integral... Is it an integral node, or is it the driver of the bunker state in the West? Can you maybe speak to that?

#Nel Bonilla

You mean if NATO is a node or a driver? Yeah, node or driver. Yes, yes. Okay. Well, I would say NATO is rather a node, not a driver. I would even say NATO had maybe a more important role before, and now it's more—not to say it's not important. I mean, there wouldn't, like, these institutional pressures be there for the different European countries if it wasn't important. But anyway, I think it's more of a node because the focus, or what they, I mean, like the U.S. power elites, functional elites, are aiming at more is weakening Russia, but not with their forces, not with their material, but rather their aim is, of course, more China.

And thus Europe becomes just one node, because there are other regions in the world where they—I'm not saying I know that they will succeed or what have you—but the idea is to create similar nodes in other parts of the world that function not exactly like NATO. No, that's not the idea. The idea is just to generate hybrid warfare, constant pressure. That is the idea. So that is why I think NATO, more than a driver of the bunker state, is a node. I mean, if we talk about, like, the U.S. hegemonic project. On the other hand, for every country within NATO, it's a driver, of course, because NATO—the NATO framework itself, NATO 3.0—will and is already transforming the different societies within NATO. So in that sense, it is a driver for societal transformation towards a bunker state.

#Pascal

A node in the larger structure, a driver within the system. So what can we explain with that if we take this framework, like what the current societal changes are, especially inside Europe? And maybe we can contrast them a little bit with what's happening in East Asia and how the other nodes, the U.S.-Japan alliance, the U.S.-South Korean alliance, how they are developing. The interesting thing there is, of course, that between South Korea and Japan, we see much, much more internal struggle than within the NATO framework.

So NATO very beautifully shows how it is able to kind of, you know, to herd the cats, right, and make sure that they stick together on a minimal basis, even when they have a lot of historical reasons for disagreements. Poland and Germany, you know, certain memories. We see it with Poland and Ukraine. Ukraine is, of course, not a NATO member, but for all intents and purposes, it is very well integrated into the entire structure, very conveniently, because you can fight with that thing. Fighting something inside is more difficult. Outside is much easier to fight with it. And we see how this proxy war is useful to the US. But yeah, can we go into that part?

#Nel Bonilla

Mm-hmm, about how this leads to social transformation inside of these groups. Yes, yes. So what I would argue is that with NATO 3.0, and also with what I talked about in the bunker state framework, it's a transformation that is more silent and quiet and peaceful. I mean, if one tries to understand it and observe it and study it, one even sees the silence about it, if one can call it like that. What I mean by this, for example, there was recently, like a month ago maybe, I think, an article in Politico about how an American colonel is being, or is going to serve at the German army command of the Bundeswehr, or the German army, as the head of the operations division, which means he will be planning missions and preparing decisions for the German army, a U.S. American colonel.

And it's just one lonely article in Politico. Why isn't there more about it? Well, so this is one example. And also they talk about how this integration is about—well, he is there to optimize NATO, well, the capability of NATO, and specifically with Germany. So again, NATO here driving a silent transformation that is barely talked about. Then another interesting thing is, of course, that, like everything, as I said, about infrastructure that is being constructed or sanitized—or how is it called?—refurbished, and all of this, will be constructed in a way that has also warfare in mind, in a way. That's true.

And also any type of software and services, even civilian services like medical services, for example, will also be integrated in all of this idea about hybrid warfare and, for example, what happens in a crisis. Like, for example, will the civilian population be served by hospitals and doctors and so on? And then there are, or there have been, some articles where they say, no, actually, the first ones that will be attended to will be soldiers, not civilians. For example, then, of course, any type of social

programs are being cut, austerity, what it's called. So these are some of the changes. Then another change would be, like, everything that has to do with intelligence services.

#Pascal

Right.

#Nel Bonilla

There's also, like, a drive to make them more popular, interestingly, in media and in European countries, specifically, like, their own intelligence services. And there's, of course, like, everything to do with media and, like, censorship and all of this. We know, and I mean, you talk about it on Neutrality Studies, that the opinion corridor, what can be said, is also being silently narrowed. For example, through the sanctioning of individuals, of journalists, of activists, and so on. But again, this is not an overt process. It's a silent one. And then there is another one I thought about, but... I don't have it in mind right now. But the point is, it's not yet. Yeah, now I have it.

There's also, for example, in Ankara, there was, like, apart from all the financial and industrial packages that they had signed, there was also, like, normally, or right now in the Baltics, normally there would be what is called air surveillance, where they try to see if there are drones and such. But now there will be, instead of air surveillance, they will see, um, what do they call it? Like, well, the NATO Supreme, the SACEUR, the Supreme Allied Commander Europe, will be able to say if the drone or whatever is in the perimeter of the Baltics can be shut down or not, and will be able to say what type of capabilities or what forces, material, et cetera, need to be moved around. And this specifically, of course, without political approval from the different countries.

So just within the NATO framework. And these two, I didn't find basically, like, almost no article. I found one in Lithuanian media, and they even quoted a Lithuanian general. Here I have the quote, where Robertas Šapronas, Lithuanian defense minister, after the Ankara summit, he said, "The shift from air policing to air defense missions will allow NATO Supreme Allied Commander Europe to redeploy and adjust plans, avoiding all political debates that sometimes arise." So this is something that has been agreed upon in Ankara, but again, there's nothing about it anywhere. So that's why I think there are many changes going on. They are silent, and I think it's on purpose so that people don't protest.

Even another one, very interesting, is, for example, now with the Iran war, like when it started, the different political leaders in Europe said, no, we will not get involved, like publicly. But actually, the thing about NATO and its integrated command, how it's called, is that, yeah, they can say no publicly, but everything that has to do with bases, with infrastructure, logistics, and so on, they barely can refuse that to NATO because they are part of NATO and the integrated command, and

they are part of the so-called defense planning frameworks of NATO and so on. And thus, in the background, there are things going on that do support or had supported the US attack on Iran. So these are some changes there.

#Pascal

Yeah, I mean, even if NATO countries say we are not getting involved in the Iran war, when U.S. airplanes go and refuel somewhere in Germany or anywhere and then use these landing strips and hop on, there's no way of stopping them, right? Because you have the entire structure in place for the United States to simply use all of this. This is at their discretion, at their disposal, more or less. And let's not forget, SACEUR actually is, of course, a U.S. commander, right? It's always a U.S. four-star that then now has the power to just decide for the entire NATO airspace. Well, we're not just going to shoot it down. We'll do this. We'll do that. Do I need to consult with Germany, Poland, or Hungary?

Hell no. Why would I? I mean, it's much nicer if I don't have to, right? So some people would frame this as a part of a neocolonial structure, right, of taking power. But I think your argument is much more institutional, that this is also being done, of course, in a constant consultation and an adjustment of these different policies across the board. In a sense, it's much smarter than just a colonial power structure. It's actually a Gleichschaltung, the matching. Sometimes German is really convenient for a couple of concepts, like going into the same rhythm is one of those. Because if I remember correctly from our last discussion, I mean, you would rather frame it as such, right?

#Nel Bonilla

Yes, yes, yes. Exactly. Instead of, well, what I have researched, instead of thinking about it like imposition, I mean, for some it certainly is, but it is more of a slow process. Again, as we have seen, like with this short summary about NATO iterations, NATO versions, it's a slow process. Even back then, they already said, "This is what we want." And the other thing is, it's, as you said, they have always had, of course, people that didn't want to be that integrated and all of that, but that too was a slow process. I know that, like I say, I mean, it's both a colonial thing and a neocolonial thing and an institutional process.

If I think about, I mean, if we conceptualize it like that. So in a sense, it's a slow process because it's also about, for example, another idea is about this idea about elite co-optation, like all the political and military ruling strata or elites' co-optation that had been there. Of course, there are now new generations, but there had been structures built through different funds from the US, from different foundations, councils, and what have you, that always tried to integrate these potential new political leaders, the potential new military leadership, etc., into the U.S. worldview, mind frame, etc. So this is like the ideological layer. But on the other hand, of course, there's just the structural one.

Like everything from operations, like military operations, like how the command structure in NATO works, from the logistics through, of course, then the technology. Like even nowadays, it's even possibly more, I don't know, I'm not a military expert, but I suppose it's more entrenched with the whole idea of clouds and artificial intelligence and every member of NATO having to be linked into these digital structures with their warfare, their armament, their intelligence, like everything. So in that sense, it was a slow process. The problem is, even from the very start, there was no way of, I would say, of saying that much no. I mean, they did, for example, during the Iraq War.

But I mean, there were parts of it that were still part of, like, this NATO infrastructure of logistics and such. So in any sense, I think it's a slow process. And now the persons that are there in leadership are mostly, again, not all, but mostly probably ideologically well, ideologically persuaded, and some maybe just opportunistic, like saying, okay, my job is tied to this, my resources, my status, and so on. So, yep, I would say it's not like we don't have to think about it, like, either in imposition, because it's also not like these people, or many of them in Europe, don't again are like saying, oh, we do want this or we do not want this. It's a mix of everything. But yet, it's a slow process. It was not a fast one.

#Pascal

Yeah. And so in this sense, it's a political and a sociological process that is leading to this form of integration. And it is driven by a couple of these institutions, NATO the primary one. So for you, the Ankara summit, in which these people actually openly talked about NATO 3.0—I mean, that's a concept they're proud of. That's a fancy term to them. What surprised you, or what did you learn from that summit? Because a lot of us actually, we didn't—in the podcasting bubble, we looked at it, but it wasn't very impressive, right? There were no big speeches, and so a lot of us actually kind of discarded it, saying like, yeah, it was a very weak summit. You know, it rather shows the disunity of the whole thing. But I think you have a completely different take of it, right?

#Nel Bonilla

Yes, yes. Yeah, yeah. Yes, because, I mean, what I saw was about, like, yes, NATO, well, it's about just for the weapons industry and maybe this unity and things like that. But I didn't see it that way, or what I have seen is not about this. For example, like one thing, of course, the U.S., like its soldiers, troops, yes, there are plans to withdraw from some European countries. And that's true. But again, one thing is like this part of the, let's say, warfare structure, and then the other parts. So then, in the article I mentioned, for example, that I think some weeks before the Ankara summit, Pete Hegseth said in a review of his War Department, like he said, Europe has to step up to make sure that we have access to basing and overflight, and that it is assured and ready in all of it.

So again, this means, yes, well, we might withdraw our troops, but we will entrench ourselves still in Europe as a territory and its logistics. Then the other thing about NATO 3.0 is, of course, like what I

have seen is all of this with the weapons and armaments industry is not so much about just saying, oh, it's about making them rich. I mean, that's true, of course. But another part of it is actually about trying to create basically a transnational, transatlantic geopolitical factory of armaments, or armaments industry, which means that everything will be standardized. Well, that's the idea. I'm not saying this is what will happen. It will be produced in massive numbers. Every country will have its role to produce everything that is needed, but based on U.S. standards, U.S. software, plans, designs, and so on.

Almost or very little input from Europe or the European countries. So the idea is to not anymore have the European countries have their own national defense industries, but rather integrate them within Europe and then with the U.S. and Canada also. And then the idea is that Europe provides the capital, the production factories, and a mass, of course, of people, human resources, and the investments. And then the U.S. provides the proprietary technology, of course, and controls at the same time the cloud, the software, the space-based intelligence, the nuclear monopoly. And so this is something that then they called, at this Ankara Summit, the Transatlantic Defense Industrial Revolution.

And which to me sounds a bit like much more. But if we think about that, this isn't any more about the U.S. trying to produce only in its country, Canada, or Germany, but really about trying to produce everybody together what the U.S. hegemonic project has in mind or has planned. And so what I also found quite interesting is that then, like, the funds, like the financing, will come from private equity, venture capital, like investment. I mean, I'm no financial expert, but standards of investing that had been there, that basically made investment in defense and armament unattractive, have now been removed so that it's attractive.

NATO has opened several initiatives to make investing in production of armaments, or whatever is needed for this warfare effort, more attractive for private capital. And what's even funny is they have, like, one can go on their website, NATO Innovation Fund, NATO DIANA initiative, and so on. And they even have, like, catalogs of, yeah, for the businesses, for the capital firms and so on, to see and be like, "Oh, okay, I want to invest in this," or "I want to develop this," and so on. And one can look it up, and they have it all listed out. And even, like, yeah, I mean, I could say more about this, but this is like one process that Ankara initiated, like even using tax revenues also for this idea.

So this, in my opinion, is quite a change and not something that has to be overlooked because, so we might, I mean, again, the thing is, so now we are talking a lot about how, for example, the U.S. Army, Navy, and so on are depleting their arsenals and weapons and all of this, which is true. And then the idea is, if this plan succeeds that they have here about having this conjoined transnational massive industry, then this depletion is actually about then trending to these new types of production lines and so on. Again, if it succeeds, not saying it will. Yeah.

#Pascal

Yeah, we don't know if it will succeed, but the plans are, you know, again, as you said, these are actually long-term plans. And a lot of us in the commentariat online, we tend to criticize Europe for being very short-term-thinking-oriented, and this is not going to work, and, you know, you have no plans whatsoever. But we, in this sense, overlook the elephant in the room, which is NATO's 20-, 30-year planning horizon and the constant drumbeat of trying to make everybody adhere to that bit by bit through different political means, sometimes by, you know, everybody shaking hands, agreeing and smiling, and sometimes by Donald Trump threatening to withdraw from Europe and take all the troops and whatnot. And then everybody goes, okay.

#Pascal

No, we have to do strategic autonomy. We need to invest 5% of GDP.

#Pascal

And then two years down the line, Donald Trump again goes, like, shakes hands, and now everybody's happy that they're integrating again and so on. And it keeps building. But the march forward seems to be the march to this NATO 3.0, and that's a long-term planning scenario.

#Nel Bonilla

Yes, it's actually even this—I don't remember which of these initiatives it was—but one of these initiatives signed at the Ankara Summit even is about, like, saying to these investment firms, yeah, basically now in the next, like, 15 years, there will be no peace. So don't worry, you can invest. That is really the idea. That is what they write on their homepage and all of it.

#Pascal

They're not even hiding it. That's the amazing thing. I mean, it's not even something that's done behind closed doors, some kind of conspiracy. No, they literally make entire conferences about it and create portfolios, et cetera, for this investability. So it's fascinating.

#Nel Bonilla

Yes. And I mean, the other part, of course, of this Ankara summit was, as you said, like this 5%. So in that sense, this will, of course, mean for Europe that it has to, well, cut or significantly reduce its social welfare, its social benefits programs, anything that has to do with this. And not only this, like this is another point I make in this essay. If we think about the—because it sounds small, 5%, and all these agreements, everything sounds ineffective. But if we think about it, this means that wealth is being siphoned away, engineering talent that is there in Europe, workforce, of course, labor, and

then all these things of social programs or other types of initiatives for improving the quality of life in these countries. Everything of this is being either eliminated or siphoned away towards warfare preparation. So this is a really incredible change, and a slow one. I mean, not slow, but silent one.

#Pascal

Yeah, no, it's very good that you're pointing that out. And in connection with that, something you said earlier, just in passing, was that the agreement that tax money could be used for that. And the importance here with taxes is that national government on the national level always has the option to create, to issue bonds in order to finance itself through debt. Local government doesn't. The prefecture level or the state level and the commune level, the lower levels, are usually funded through tax money. If the tax money dries up because it goes into NATO, it means you take even more ability away from the lower levels of government in Europe in order to, well, spend on social issues. So it's even more of a siphoning off of money. But do we know where we are in that discussion? I think at the moment it's just a plan. It's not set in stone, right?

#Nel Bonilla

Yes, I see it. I mean, at least in terms of this investment stuff, there have been already certain investments in defense industries and tech startups related to defense. So that at least seems to be going well and on. Now, the other thing is, I think we are seeing the cutting of different social programs, at least in Germany. I'm not sure in other parts. The other thing about, for example, the refurbishing or the repurposing of different types of industries that do exist in Europe, I think that's also an ongoing process. So all in all, I would say, of course, it's not running at, let's say, maximum speed, but it's already initiated and it's a process that is there.

#Pascal

How big do you think is the risk that what we are witnessing right now actually has to do with another very German term that was coined recently, Kriegstüchtigkeit, war readiness or war preparedness of Europe, as in making Europe able, capable of fighting a war? Because one of the things we see in Ukraine is that what you need—or one of the things that you must not have on your territory in order to have a war on your territory—is U.S. troops, right? U.S. troops, the famous tripwire, is actually kind of a guarantee that there might not be a war.

So actually threatening troop reductions or taking troops away is, in a sense, actually a way of saying, like, "Oh, by the way, once Ukraine is done, we might fight it out in Poland or in Finland, but we need to have our troops gone first," because the one thing we know about the empire is that it is very allergic to its own people dying. That's basically what ended the Vietnam War. It was the mass casualties of U.S. troops. Of course, not the three million Vietnamese who died, but the couple of ten thousand U.S. troops that came back in body bags. And we see that in Ukraine, how well it works, how well this war can be implemented in that proxy state. Can you speak to that?

#Nel Bonilla

Yes, yes, of course. So on that topic, I actually found a U.S. Army War College report that is called—I mean, there are, of course, many reports, but this one is quite interesting. It's called "Academic Year 2026–27 Annual Estimate of the Strategic Security Environment," and it was published in June of this year, so very, very recent. And what's interesting about this is, I mean, it talks actually about every region of the world. And not only that, more things than that, like research questions the different divisions and sections within the U.S. military have, and so on. But anyway, it also talks about Europe, for example, and proxy warfare.

And what I see is them describing, like the authors of this section about Europe, basically then describing NATO 3.0 and what this then means for the role of Europe in NATO: this idea of proxy war. So, for example, on the one hand, they openly state that Europe has to shift, as we have said, to an integrated defense industrial base. On the one hand, no more industrial nationalism. And then they talk about how it needs to have an evolution in its societal capacity for mobilization and the political viability of various conscription models. Yeah, to enhance resilience, they say. But yeah, what they are saying is, yeah, well, every country now must look at how can you, well, get soldiers to conscript into your army. Well, for NATO specifically.

And then they say, for what goal? Well, to secure the eastern flank, of course. And this is something they state openly. And then another thing that I thought, what is this, is where they say that NATO—and NATO mostly here means Europe—has to switch from so-called maneuver-centric warfare, which are these out-of-area operations, towards, I mean, yeah, positional warfare, positional defense framework. And the positional defense framework is warfare, like attrition-style warfare, like in Ukraine, for example. So they are saying NATO needs to be prepared for being that kind of attrition zone, and therefore they need mobilization and conscription. And it's, in my opinion, quite like, how can they be so blatant? But then they even say...

#Pascal

This report is literally saying we need meat for the meat grinder because we know the meat grinder will be on NATO territory. So, you know, we need to let them come and kill them. And then we need enough to feed it in, because one of the problems Ukraine has is that it's running out of soldiers. So we need to prepare for that kind of scenario.

#Nel Bonilla

It basically says this. I mean, how else can one interpret moving NATO to a positional defense framework? It's attrition. And then they also talk about how NATO failed to see that they should have used Ukraine as a steel porcupine, which means, like, building it up for, yes, this attrition warfare. And since they failed to do this, well, now they have to do it, like NATO or Europe has to do

this. I mean, even this term, like, steel porcupine is really weird. And they even say, like, Ukraine in this part of the... They say, well, Ukraine was a willing proxy and NATO could have used it.

And this is also, like, and then, in my opinion, what they're identifying, well, NATO or the NATO countries that surround the eastern flank then are the next willing proxies. It's even such, like, the extent is such that they even talk about and write that the U.S. military needs to change its doctrines and its strategies explicitly, like, really explicitly, for the purpose of proxy warfare, like... not even hiding it anymore, saying, okay, our doctrines and strategies will be now about enhancing, well, proxy warfare, which means the warfare of other regions in the world, not the U.S. And this includes NATO. And, well, they talk about this in the European, like, section of this report. Yeah, so...

#Pascal

Do these reports or the speeches and so on that you read, also coming out of Ankara, do they ever talk about an end goal? Like, what do we want to actually achieve? Like, when are we done? Like, what kind of status do we want to achieve in order to say, like, "Ha! Okay, got it. It's over now. We won." What's that scenario? Did you find such a scenario?

#Nel Bonilla

Yes, actually, yes, I did find such things. I mean, for example, there was this, how was it, this strategic foresight report. There they talked about what they envisioned for an end state, but which they are not currently in. Like, currently we are in a multipolar world, but what they want is more like, what was it, a global West. This was also something that I saw in some slides, like NATO presentations, which talked about their new strategy, which was from 2017. They also admitted, okay, we are now in the multipolar world, but we want actually—they had, like, a graph, and here was the global West, multipolar world, chaos—and so their idea is, of course, then to restore whatever global West means. But in their mind, or what I understand it is meaning, that there is no resistance in the way that the economy, the global economy, works for them, like more extraction, less regulations, like neoliberalization, all of this, that just works seamlessly without resistance.

I think this is like the, let's say, global goal. And it is stated in the different reports or presentations or what have you. And the other thing, of course, is—but this is more like something I have inferred or interpreted from other, like, these different reports—about what the idea is about Iran, China, and Russia. The underlying idea is that for the U.S.-led hegemonic project, their idea has always been a strategy to have what Brzezinski called in *The Grand Chessboard* shallow hegemony.

Shallow means influencing more or less indirectly, not with brute force, not with occupation and all of this. But China, Russia, also Iran, don't, structurally, territorially, industrially, all of it, don't allow for that. So in that sense, what do they need then? Well, to break them up. That's like, this is more

like the regional goal, and the global one is more simply returning to what they call a global West. And what I can see, it is about, for them, peace being unrestricted access to all the resources of the world. Yeah, for their aims, I guess. Yeah.

#Pascal

Total global domination. I think if we put it into just a few words, right, as in everybody plays along to our tune, we're the conductors of the orchestra. And anyone who doesn't fall into line, who doesn't play alongside the melody, has to be broken up in order to make them willing, then the smaller pieces to do so. Now, maybe as we need to come towards some form of conclusion, because you end your essay, again, on the social side, like you're calling it the bunker state and the new social contract. I think this is very significant, especially for the European population, North American population too, of course, because it's very similar, but the Europeans, I think, even more so, are expected to, you know, be the beacon of that kind of future of the global West, right, where you, the individual, are just playing the fiddle the way that you're being told to because you're completely integrated. Can you maybe tell us what that conclusion is?

#Nel Bonilla

Yes, so in the conclusion, I write a little bit about, on the one hand, of course, this idea of war preparations and so on leads basically to a reorganization of the state, which then I link to the bunker state, this qualitative shift of what the state is, like redirecting all of its resources towards actual warfare in this case, and away from everything that has to do with its population, citizens, welfare. And on the other hand, this idea about a new social contract. Well, there are also reports from NATO, but not only from NATO, also from different countries within NATO. There are militaries that already talk about that. For this new organization to happen in society, there also needs to be a new social contract. Well, we expect from the citizens something, and specifically to provide for national security in one way or another.

And, well, I see there that this, along with everything else we just talked about, is basically a hollowing out of, well, democratic politics, or what should be democratic politics, in every way imaginable. And this is what they openly acknowledge, accept, and have as a goal. Like, I mean, these NATO strategists and planners and so on. So, and this is what they have in mind. But of course, this doesn't mean that it will happen. There's always hope, and there's always time to do something. We just need to know it, know about it.

#Pascal

Yeah, no, it's very good that you're pointing that out. And it's very good that you're pointing out that this is not happening behind closed doors. This happens out in the open. So what we need to do is to piece together the different puzzle pieces. What would you recommend, just for the very end, to look at most closely in order to understand whether the bunker state is developing, or if there's

actually significant social opposition against it? I would argue there is. In Switzerland, next month, we're going to vote on a neutrality initiative which directly opposes that kind of concept. It doesn't say so, but it would work against this kind of bunker statization because it would talk about national defense for the sake of the nation, not the collective; national defense as defense, not as offense; and integration into the wider world rather than just the Western world. And there are such concepts around, right, all over the place. Where do you see them coming from?

#Nel Bonilla

Yes. Well, I think there are, as you say, indeed, many initiatives around the world. But if we talk about Europe specifically, I would say that there are, on the one hand, of course, labor movements in some parts of Europe that are protesting against, for example, armaments and weapons shipments. And then there are, of course, anti-war movements, peace movements. What I have observed is that there are challenges consolidating them, but there is already the plan or the idea of doing so. And not only them, but also these climate change initiatives and initiatives on other related issues, to consolidate them into an anti-war, or rather peace, movement again.

So, of course, there is movement. And I would say that we could see, well, how can we see that the bunker state would not move forward? Well, I would say, for example, if exactly these strikes and things like that have an effect of materially stopping, for example, a bit what is happening right now. But, for example, your example in Switzerland is, of course, more on the legal side, constitutional side and so on, which, of course, is also another level that hopefully is also in function in other parts of Europe. And around the world, of course, it's about the same, about not giving in to, like, well, I always say there needs to be a transnational movement, like a global movement.

Every movement has to connect and learn from each other, but not only that, but also see where the different weak points are, so to speak, of the bunker state, and then organize for it consciously. I mean, against it. But, yeah, so this is what I would argue. And, oh, one final thing. I think another important issue here is all of this also implies that we should—all of these movements, I mean, resistance and peace movements—need already, specifically those more in their, like, transatlantic countries, think about already planning counter-alternative ideas about alternative institutions and ways of organizing society, just in case. So this is what I would say.

#Pascal

Yeah, because luck is when preparation meets opportunity. So we better start preparing in order to grab the moment once it arises. Now, people who want to find you, they should first and foremost go, I think, to your Substack called Worthiness, where they can find this wonderful article, "NATO 3.0: The Transatlantic Age and the Rise of the Bunker State." You even tend to find beautiful imagery to symbolize that. Just 10 seconds about this image.

#Nel Bonilla

Oh, yeah, well, it's an image that I found. I always try to think about, like, how do you say it? Illustrations. Yeah, illustrations. I mean, I look at illustrations, like artwork from the 18th, 17th century and so on, like, every day. And, like, in this image, you see, like, a castle, a fortification on a hill. And I thought this image has a very good—it's very apt for this idea of a rising bunker state in Europe. I mean, just in the metaphorical sense. And then we also see, like, people lying there, like, outside. I would say maybe one could interpret this as, like, the population, the civilians watching from outside how this, like, menacing structure is being built while they are going on about their daily lives. So this is my idea behind this.

#Pascal

Yeah, and the bunker state is maybe—the way that it's built right now is new—but the idea of fortification of society definitely is not. Then also, any other place for people to go than your Substack?

#Nel Bonilla

Yeah, I also write, but this is more for, like, German-speaking audiences, at nachdenkseiten.de. And, yeah, on Twitter, of course. In every article of mine, you have, like, links to my Twitter or Blue Sky. So that's where you can find me.

#Pascal

I'll make sure to put those links into the description box below. Pascal Lottaz, thank you so much for your time today.

#Nel Bonilla

Thank you.