

Lawrence Wilkerson: NATO & the EU are Dead - A New World Emerges

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#Glenn

Welcome back. We are joined today by Colonel Lawrence Wilkerson, the former chief of staff to the U.S. Secretary of State.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I'm his chief of staff in heaven.

#Glenn

Yeah. Well, of course, yes, he passed away.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

He would probably say, upon hearing that remark, "What makes you think I've got to heaven?" Yeah.

#Glenn

Well, I wanted to ask about the Ukraine war. Well, to be honest, I guess the folly of the Iran war is somewhat similar to the war against Russia. That is, with Iran, the U.S. started a war that can't really be won, and it's not possible to go back to the old status quo, and the new status quo is not acceptable. And we see, to some extent, a similar problem with NATO's proxy war against Russia. That is, NATO contributed to this war in Ukraine, and there's no really convincing path to victory. And also, NATO can't accept the unfavorable outcome or conditions of peace at the moment. So I guess some of this should have been predictable. There is the willingness to fight, as both these countries deem this to be an existential threat. But what is it that you think the Americans and the Europeans misunderstood about Russia's security interests, again, in this part of the world?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I don't think they misunderstood anything.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I think they understood it quite well. When you talk about people like Victoria Nuland, Kagan, and others, they understood it quite well. They knew exactly what they were doing. They were undermining Ukraine in a significant way so that Ukraine would have no choice but to find a leader, which they did. I'm sure they were probably helped by the CIA, and eventually put itself on the altar, if you will, on the sacrificial fulcrum to bring Russia down. That was their full motivation. That was Biden, Blinken—I call them Winkin', Blinkin' and Nod—Biden, Blinken, and Sullivan and Nuland's goal. That was the goal of all the neoconservatives, many of the, as Doug McGregor says, globalists. He likes to distinguish between the two.

I normally don't. I just call them all damnable neoconservatives. And that's where we were off to. And as I was just telling another individual just a moment or two ago in Moscow, that's where Bill Clinton began the march, too. Bill Clinton, that country bumpkin from Arkansas who had no business being president of the United States. And the only reason he was president of the United States was because H.W. Bush was hated—hated by the Israel lobby and by the leadership in Israel because he'd compelled them to go into the Oslo process, which they thought was the worst thing that had ever happened to them and were very fearful that it might succeed, and which they derailed—Ehud Barak primarily, along with Clinton.

And Bush was anathema to them. And so they got this country bumpkin elected, his first year of which I was with Chairman Powell and witnessed up close and personal. And he was a total neophyte. It was chaos in the White House. And his whole idea about America was that he was going to give it over to corporations. And he said so. And when he got rid of Glass-Steagall, he did just that. He gave America to predatory corporate interests.

And what that demanded was some kind of plan for getting those corporate interests which mattered the most—think Lockheed Martin, RTX, Raytheon then, and so forth—into some better positions for selling their products. Voila! You need an expanded NATO, and you've got an expanded NATO. It was that fundamental for William Jefferson Clinton. And that's stupid. Violating everything that H.W. Bush had promised Mitterrand, had promised Kohl, had promised Shevardnadze, had promised Gorbachev, had promised the people in England, like Thatcher and Major—everything was violated. Everything that we ginned up in the first period after the real collapse of the Soviet Union, when Gorbachev was almost putty in our hands, we sacrificed.

We sacrificed that blooming, good, positive relationship with Russia for the first time, for the first time with the possibility of really meaningfully coming into Europe in a political sense and being a partner. We sacrificed all that. And we started it with William Jefferson Clinton. And from that point

on, with a slight hiatus with President Obama, who knew better but didn't act on his instincts, we've been doing that. And that's why we have the war. We have the war because we were duplicitous bastards once. We were cheats. We were liars. We were fabricators. We used our allies in Europe. We built our allies in Europe.

I'm going to give a speech in Williamsburg next week, and I'm going to tell people details about how we bought European parliamentarians, European newspapers, European people who could then be Jens Stoltenbergs and Mark Ruttes, how we bought school systems, how we bought entire countries in order to get them to come into NATO. All this was a plan. Every aspect of it was implemented fairly well. And CIA was at the head of it, big time at the head of it. And CIA is big time in Ukraine right now, and probably the most hated instrument in Ukraine by the Russians, because they are instrumental in everything that's happening there, much of which the president of the United States doesn't even know about. That's the way we do things these days. Oh, by the way, we're also in Moldova still. We're in Chechnya now.

#Glenn

We're in Armenia.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

We're back in Georgia. When I say we, I'm talking about CIA. And, of course, its lackeys like SIS, now called MI6, GCHQ, NSA—all the good guys, all the guys that get more money than you can shake a stick at and spend that money on covert operations that contaminate the world. And most presidents and most oversight committees in the Congress of the United States know nothing about what they're doing. And if they do, they bless it, like Lindsey Graham. I could go on and on in this vein, but we are being run, largely and predominantly, by inexperienced people who are being led around by the nose by the intelligence agencies and what they want to do in the world. And what they want to do is continue their process of making money for themselves and contaminating whatever they see that they feel is inimical to U.S. interests.

All added to by the inchoate feeling that we have, and that's behind Elbridge Colby and all these people wanting to retrench and create a Western Hemisphere redoubt and eventually abandon all the people with whom we have some sort of security agreement, including Japan, Korea, Europe. That's what's behind their effort to defeat China, because that's what it's all about. It's about this inexorable movement of China in a more or less benign way, in terms of wanting to fight people and kill people. They want to stop that. This is inimical to their interests. They want to continue killing, continue sanctioning, continue exerting hegemonic power from the empire. And China is saying, "No, no, no." That's what's causing all this trouble.

#Glenn

Well, to what extent, during your time in the White House, did you experience, I guess, the intelligence agencies running their own foreign policy? Oh, wow.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I was out at Langley in the belly of the beast for seven days and seven nights, watching them do it. And stupid me, not having the professional expertise to challenge Tenet and McLaughlin and a host of others, including the vice president of the United States, who made 11 unprecedented trips out to Langley in order to coerce people, in order to get them on his team. I was in the belly of the beast. I saw it up close and personal. I know what we do. I know how we do it. I know with whom we do it.

#Glenn

Well, often in the 1990s, everyone more or less knew that this was NATO expansion. This was something that was going to be received very unfavorably in Russia. You had those who favored it, like Madeleine Albright, who recognized, yes, this would alienate the Russians. However, if we have a conflict, at least NATO will be there. That was kind of the logic. And then you have those who opposed it for, well, also recognizing that it would alienate Russia, but arguing that essentially it wasn't worth it. But the overall assumption by many was that maybe the Russians would have to get used to the new status quo. That was, at least in Europe, the thinking.

That is, we'll just incrementally expand NATO towards Russian borders, and they have no other options. They will have to get used to the new status quo. Same with missile defense: we'll gradually expand it. It will start with 10 interceptors. We gradually expand it. They will have to get used to this new status quo. There's nothing they can do. And, you know, making a fuss would only, you know, work to their disadvantage and, you know, gradually topple their government with these color revolutions. And again, the assumption was that there's nothing they can do. So it's in their interest to simply adjust to a new status quo, which is not favorable.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

And now Russia has proven that hypothesis to be totally false.

#Glenn

But was there any realistic way to expand NATO without, I guess, eventually provoking this conflict?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Not according to the conversations that Colin Powell, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and the various service chiefs in the United States, and the President of the United States, and the Secretary of Defense, who at that time was Dick Cheney—not as far as the conversations there were

concerned. The conversations there were about the promises we'd made, the deals we had made, which H.W. Bush, being a gentleman of the old school, the kind of person who thought his word was his bond, there was no intention of bringing Russia to a point where she was an enemy again.

There was every intention of using the reunification of Germany and its retention in NATO, and all that that meant. And the most worried character about it was Helmut Kohl, because he had an instinct for what that would mean to Russia. And he was assured by both Shevardnadze and by Gorbachev and by Jim Baker and H.W. Bush and other characters like Mitterrand that this would be a new Europe. And we started out with three prongs on it: the European Security Identity, which would be a 3,000-man European brigade exclusively for European use. Think about things like later the Balkans and so forth. Think about UNPROFOR and former Yugoslavia, things like that. That was the first part.

The second part was the clear path for Russia to become a member of the political organization, and then possibly, if she agreed and the rest of the alliance agreed, a member of the military organization. And then third, an entirely new security architecture, with the ESI, or European Security Identity, being the principal pillar of it—like an entire new architecture for Europe, Western and Eastern Europe, and that Eastern Europe included Russia, at least to the Urals. That was the plan. We worked on it on the Joint Staff. And we already did all of that. We violated all of that the moment that country-bumpkin, draft-dodging, woman-chasing Arkansas governor, with Israel's help, ousted George H. W. Bush.

And got himself in the White House. And his first move, with cigars on a lanai in a hotel between being elected and being inaugurated, was to tell the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell, "You will implement—you will implement my campaign promise of gays serving openly in the armed forces of the United States." And Powell said, "Well, you know, have you talked to the Congress?" And the president said, "I don't need to talk to the Congress. You will implement it. Understand?" And Powell said, "Yes, Mr. President, I understand." Then it came time for him to be inaugurated, and a week after that, he asked how it was going. And Powell had to tell him, "I just got off the phone with Sam Nunn, chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee. And you know what his words to me were, Mr. President? Over my dead body will gays serve openly in the U. S. armed forces."

Ooh. Well, he hadn't called me. He did call him. He did tell him the same thing. Next thing is a phone call to the chairman from this novice president: "Please get me out of this, Mr. Chairman. Please get me out of this." So we went six weeks beavering away, designing Don't Ask, Don't Tell, which is the best compromise we could come up with. And that's what we implemented. But this was how stupid this man was, especially in his first year. And we were off to the races then. We started alienating Russia in every way we possibly could. We started calling Yeltsin a country bumpkin, a drunken slob, and so forth and so on, in private. And we started letting these people, these neoconservatives, back into the government in force again, and they began running things.

There was a brief hiatus through President Obama because I think he understood this was not what we should be doing. But he didn't have a lot of time to dedicate to it, so all he could do was occasionally say things like he did: "It would be the stupidest thing in the world to make Ukraine a part of NATO. It really would be, you know." But he had to deal with other people too. And when he gave up on the nuclear posture statement, it was quite clear that this was not a very powerful man in terms of the presidency. Fluent, eloquent even, but he wasn't a very powerful man. He didn't know how to use the Congress. He didn't know how to do the kinds of things, for example, that Ronald Reagan did in his first term or that FDR did in his terms.

Of course, he had the war behind him to give impetus to it, but we haven't had a good commander-in-chief since H.W. Bush, and all of them, in one way or another, have gone along with this crowd that wants Russia as an enemy. Reluctantly in some cases, but in the case of Joe Biden, loving it all the way down the road. Tell me it's Russophobia. Tell me it's hatred of Russia. Tell me it's a vestige of the Cold War. Tell me it's all about economics. A lot of that is part of it, but most of it is the fact that we just want to overthrow Putin and get rid of him and take Russia off the scene so we can get to the real problem, which is Beijing.

#Glenn

Well, the Europeans, though, they seemed like they were pushing back to some extent, at least up until 2008. After that, they began, I think, to fall in line.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

And after 2014, they were... Yeah, I think 2014 was the key year. I heard Angela Merkel the other day again, and she was talking about that. And she didn't change a thing about what she said. In fact, it was a little more devastating: "We used the time to rearm and refit. We had no idea of complying with the agreements." And I listened to Alice Elisabeth Weidel, I think that's the way you say her name, in the German parliament, with Merz sitting there beside her, just absolutely lambast him. And I said to myself, "There's the new chancellor of Germany."

No matter what Merz does, no matter what the cognoscenti in Germany, which really is BlackRock, decides it wants to do to her, no matter what weight of German politics they bring to bear against her, she's going to beat the hell out of them because she's smarter than they are. Now, we may have a civil war in Germany. It could be that he's talking about doing all manner of things, like forbidding any German forces to move into that area because they might be traitors, you know. Germany's in trouble right now, big trouble. And they won't even admit, Merz and his gang, they won't even admit to what they did with Nord Stream, what they did to Germany, because they let it happen. They let it happen.

#Glenn

Yeah, so an interview today with Merz where the journalist told him, "Well, you know, one out of five Germans would like to leave the country now." And then, you know, it's so dismissive. It's just, "Oh, where are we going to go? Where is so great?"

#Lawrence Wilkerson

He's a typical corporate chieftain. He's a typical corporate chieftain in this predatory capitalist world that we, the United States of America, have created and are trying to govern. Predatory capitalists. That's the difference between us and China. You can say, okay, it's Deng Xiaoping and it's capitalism with communist characteristics. Bullshit. It's capitalism with oversight. It's capitalism with a model of development that takes all people into consideration. It's not perfect, but it is so much better than what we are offering and what the EU is offering that the world is awake. I'm sitting here looking at the number of conferences that are being held right now. It was reported this morning they're being held in Vladivostok. They're being held in Petersburg.

They're being held all over the world. They're going to be held in India. They're being held in Beijing. All these people are meeting to decide on new currency regimes, to decide on how they're going to mold themselves into the Shanghai Cooperation Organization or into BRICS or into both, to decide on how they're going to create a cryptocurrency outside Vladivostok for the Japanese. The Japanese are at most of these conferences. You can't make this stuff up, Glenn. The world is changing with a dynamism and a speed and alacrity that I never thought I would see. This is going a lot faster than the transition happened in the past between the East and the West and the West and the East, returning the power to the East. Even National Geographic has a full spread on Central Asia right now.

And you read that, it's just mundane, like National Geographic does, with a lot of beautiful photographs. But basically, it tells you where the robust happenings in the world are today. They're in Uzbekistan. They're all through Central Asia. They're in all those signature cities that have a history that goes back years and years and years. And even looking at the Soviet history in many of them, they're turning some of those old Soviet state buildings into places where people now go and get the best food in the world, get the best drink in the world, have the best experience in the world, ride bullet trains between them, and so forth. I mean, this National Geographic article ought to be required reading for every member of the Trump administration. Dudes, do you realize this is where it's at?

#Glenn

Yeah, I was watching. Well, again, they do have a lot to coordinate. Again, I think that's why they have now the SCO meeting. Then they're going to have BRICS. They have all these bilateral deals. But again, they have to work out how to establish more cooperation between the different tech

centers, the different tech industries. They have to integrate their supply chains. They're developing these new physical transportation corridors, digital corridors. They have new banks, currencies, payment systems. I mean, it's so much stuff to do. It is.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

And it's absolutely telling that, look at the people that are there. The Japanese are there. The Indonesians are there. The Vietnamese are there. I mean, some of the most entrepreneurial and capitalist countries in the world, in terms of doing it right or nearly right, is China. I mean, it's writ large. They're all there. It's like a magnet. They're going to be there because they know that's where their interests are best served.

#Glenn

But then I switched to the G20, and I see the vice chancellor of Germany making the point of what a great diplomatic victory they had because they were able to have a group photo which excluded the Russian counterpart. I'm thinking, is this our diplomacy now? I mean, the Europeans more or less invented modern diplomacy after the Peace of Westphalia and all of this. And now... and now it's a sad state, though. I mean, it's, you know, when you're deindustrializing, you're criminalizing diplomacy, war is the, you know, militarism is now the, you know, the pride in Europe, the excitement about how they're going to be great again. I mean, surely they must know they're going down the wrong path here, but there's no course correction.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Well, it's good. It's good to see new leadership, like I think Weidel represents. Not only is she a striking personality with an absolutely dynamic... I saw her speak for about 45 minutes, and he was sitting right there. And the expression on his face was just like you were saying. It was like, "Oh, man, sit down. Go away, woman. You're not the future of Germany." Right, dude, you're not listening. You're not hearing. But that's so much a part of this kind of BlackRock mentality. They don't listen. They don't hear, and they don't take messages and do something about the problems that the messages have delivered. They just keep on the same path: profit, more profit, and more profit, and a greater share of that profit for me personally.

These people are on the wrong side of history in so many respects. They're on the wrong side of history, and I feel some real pain because I know who helped them get there: us. We weaponized liberal democracy, and we weaponized what I would call the incredible width and breadth and depth of our intelligence services, which are now the predominant part of our government. From NSA to CIA to GCHQ to SIS, you name it, they're all the same. And their purpose is not anything but inimical to our real interests. And they're scared to death of China. They are frightened to death of China.

They're frightened of Russia too, but China is the real, real behemoth that they're frightened of. And it's so funny because China really doesn't have the kind of intelligence apparatus that we have, or that Britain has, or France has, or Germany has, or that Israel has.

They don't because they don't think they need one like that. Their intelligence service is essentially designed for actionable foresight. That is to say, what's happening out there? Who's the character in what's happening that is going to influence us adversely, be neutral, or be positive? That's about the only thing they're looking at. They're not looking at how much throw weight in nuclear weapons do they have. Yeah, they've got a branch of their military intelligence that looks at that sort of thing, but that's not primarily what their national intelligence looks at. We're the only people in the world that shape their national intelligence to look at things from the perspective of, how do we kill you or sanction you.

#Glenn

Well, given that the attempt to expand NATO, or at least, well, if not put Ukraine inside NATO, at least put it in the NATO orbit, helped to trigger this war. I mean, all this kind of reflects the wider post-Cold War objective of organizing Europe around NATO and the European Union as these two legs of collective hegemony that would push the Russians out of Europe. Given that the war isn't going as well as we had hoped, we're losing the Ukraine war. What does that tell you, though, about the future of NATO and the EU? How will they be impacted by the direction of the war now?

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I think NATO is gone. It'll linger for a while, but I think it's gone. And this Elbridge Colby idea that we're going to establish a redoubt in the Western Hemisphere—that's really what he's talking about, a nuclear-backed redoubt. R-E-D-O-U-B-T, a military term. You know, comes from the—I guess it comes from the—really from the very beginning of people building forts and things. But that's what we're talking about. We're talking about having a Western Hemisphere that we dominate completely, from Argentina to Canada, which isn't working out very well right now. And we're going to put our nuclear shield with that. And it's not going to be just a shield. We're going to contemplate using those weapons now. That's a big part of Colby's portfolio. Jonathan Pollard, for example, a big part of his portfolio too.

These people want to dominate what they can, and what they can dominate, they think, is our own hemisphere. The real exception to that, of course, right now is Brazil. And one of Marco Rubio's principal tasks right now is to recruit those Nazi-like leaders in Paraguay and Argentina and elsewhere throughout South America, get Bolsonaro back into leadership in Brazil, and get rid of Lula. That's next to managing Venezuela's oil, which he's not doing a very good job of, and taking over Cuba. Rubio's other task is to engineer Lula's downfall in South America. Then we will be able

to deal with South America in a much more comprehensive and favorable way, is what we think. This is not going to work out very well either. I don't think it's going to work out anything like what Rubio thinks it's going to do.

One of the things he's run into right now, as I'm told, and by a competent authority, almost every major, if not every major in the world, has told Rubio, "Go pound sand." A hundred billion dollars minimum to get Venezuelan oil back up to specs. That is to say, where it's economical to recover it, it's economical to refine it once it's recovered, and it's economical to spread it out across the globe, as you could if those two conditions were met. No one wants to touch it. So he can't find a major that will go in and do what Trump wants done with Venezuelan oil, which is essentially to get it and use it immediately to relieve the tremendous pressure on the United States right now to even fly its jet aircraft, to even drive its trucks, because within another 30 to 45 days, there'll be no diesel and no jet fuel.

#Glenn

Also, if you're an investor in Venezuela, you would have to bank on the likelihood of the political stability of this colonial rule essentially sustaining itself, which is, I guess.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

You said it right. You're dragging the world, that part of the world, the redoubt—we're dragging it back to the past. We'll be the colonial master, and they will be the slaves.

#Glenn

I can see the logic, though. If the multipolar world is coming to an end, or has come to an end, and the U.S. can't dominate every corner of the world, obviously Europe's not a priority, so NATO will die, and the U.S. will retreat to some extent by at least dominating its own backyard, and of course going to East Asia to confront the Chinese. But again, a lot of this, you know, it's not the past. Countries do not want to be dominated anymore.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

So the Koreans and the Japanese are rapidly reexamining their situations. They were not wanting to do so there for a while because we screwed the pooch so badly with North Korea and let them develop nuclear weapons. A lot of people don't understand that. In the Six-Party Talks, I saw it very clearly. The Japanese were more concerned than the Koreans. The Koreans, living cheek and jowl with the Kim Jong-un regime, with Pyongyang, they were not as concerned as the Japanese were when we were talking about the possibility of North Korea getting nuclear weapons. And then when they got them, the Japanese were apoplectic.

The Koreans were like, almost ho-hum. We know what we've got on the peninsula, both in terms of U.S. support and in terms of what we can do ourselves. And we're not all that fearful. Now they've changed their mind a little bit, the conservative wing of the Korean political structure, and they're thinking about building their own system that would make them a latent nuclear power, just like Japan is. But the Japanese are still very concerned about it. And an Asian scholar recently wrote it this way: Ukraine barked at Russia, and look what they got. Japan barked at China, and look what it's got.

A collapsing yen, and for the first time in Japan's modern history, not looking too good, economically speaking, because China's levied so many tariffs against them in reciprocal actions against Japan. So who caused the dogs to bark in Ukraine and in Japan? I'll tell you who caused them to bark: the United States of America. How do you think the Japanese and others are going to deal with this once they realize what's happened to them? Well, the Japanese and the Koreans are moving out rather smartly. I think they're already looking at alternatives, and they're already thinking about some sort of security relationship, probably with China and possibly with Russia.

And they're looking down the road at maybe the possibility of becoming even more defense-capable themselves, to include a nuclear weapons complex. I don't know if it's going to go that far quickly, but I do know they don't trust us anymore. I'm going to speak to a group of Japanese professors this week downtown in Washington, ostensibly because they're bringing their students for me to lecture to them about this idea of China being the end-all and be-all of this movement that's happening in the world. And I had a long conversation with a couple of Japanese professors who were in their 80s. Japanese tend to be that way these days.

And they're kind of disbelieving of the message I'm going to deliver today. But I told them, I said, you leave it to your students to make up their own decisions on what I'm saying and ask good questions and so forth. But it's going to be an interesting, interesting time, I think, a couple of hours downtown in the hotel. And I haven't spoken to Japanese students in a long time. So being exposed to 20-, 21-, 22-year-old Japanese students at university is going to be a good experience, I think, because I haven't been plugged in for some time. But I do know there's a lot of angst in Japan right now about the security relationship, about the trustworthiness of Washington, about the deceit in Washington, about the deception in Washington.

Donald Trump has done some real damage to our relationships. But at the same time, I'm thinking to myself, maybe it's not a negative thing necessarily that we're doing this much more rapidly than one would otherwise, and therefore have a lot of people hanging on by their fingernails trying to fight for the old world. Maybe we're going to do it really swiftly. We might do it under an idiot, but we're going to do it. I don't know. I'm of mixed mind as to how this is going right now because I see so much ignorance in really central locations in the U.S. government, most notably in the Congress, which is so behind this whole movement that it's pivotal.

They don't understand. They don't grasp what's going on. And it's very important that they do because of the kind of legislation we're going to need to deal with this once we really start dealing with it. And I call it a multi-nodal world, not a multipolar world. Got that from Chas Freeman, and I think he's right, because poles are out there sticking up with something at either end. Nodes are out there just sort of floating, and power accumulates as they float amongst each other and adhere or back away. What's happening right now is a lot of adherence. I've got the thing right here on the screen.

It's just meeting after meeting after meeting, and everyone virtually who matters in the world today, in terms of the two-thirds of the world that has two-thirds of the world's GDP and almost two-thirds of its population, everyone's there. And they're all talking, and they're all sitting down together, and they're talking about things like establishing alternative currencies and alternative regimes to SWIFT and alternative regimes to the entire economy—quote, international rules-based order, unquote. And they should be doing that because we are an abject failure right now. And there's no reason why their ships should go down with us. And they're beginning to understand that.

#Glenn

Well, you see these discussions now going along, how to adjust to this post-hegemonic world. You see what you refer to—you'll see it to some extent in the Gulf states. At least that's what I hear, that they are discussing what will the region look like after this war.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

And they're sort of in a panic.

#Glenn

Well, it's more urgent. Yeah, very. But as you say, with South Korea and Japan, there's more or less two options, though. Either they can arm themselves to the teeth and look after their own security, or they can adjust to the regional distribution of power and adjust to new realities. That is, you can't really set up an alliance system against China. You have to take into account all the major powers' security interests. Again, that has kind of been the problem with all the alliance systems. That is, in the Middle East, they don't take into account Iran's security concerns. Indeed, their alliance against Iran is the same in Asia, but also in Europe, though. That is, you know, we created a Europe where the only country that shouldn't be a part of the continent is the largest country on the continent.

And somehow we're all surprised it turned out in this way. But again, now that the U.S. and the Europeans are also recognizing that the U.S. probably won't be there in the future, either the capabilities or intentions will make it leave. But the solution, kind of what they're discussing now, is, you know, let's make a new NATO without the U.S. But they don't really have the money to do this

either. And without the money, not only can't they arm themselves, but also without the geoeconomics of it, the unity will start to wither away as well. Also, without the U.S., I think there's no pacifier to keep the Europeans together. So I think they will start to squabble as soon as this war is over. At the moment, the hatred of Russia seems to be the only thing that unites them.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

If that's one reason, they're frightened. I think they're frightened because they know that. What you just said, they know. And so that's the only glue they have. They've got to cling to it. And they're clinging to it to the bitter end because it is that existential, if you will, for both the EU and NATO. The sad thing about it is they're clinging to something that's already dead. They're clinging to a cadaver in both cases. And new leadership in the countries in Europe is going to do one of two things. It's going to recognize that and adjust to it, which includes dealing forthrightly and up close and personal with China and Russia. Or they're going to fight it amongst themselves, and we're going to go back to a 1930s Europe. That would not be a smart move.

#Glenn

Well, I wish the European leaders had joined the countries in the East and sat down and talked about how to reorganize geoeconomics, politics, security, given that the distribution of power is so different. But instead, they hardly even mention these meetings in the media. And when they do, it's usually framed as, well, it's an anti-Western meeting. And, you know, it shows the threat, so we have to arm ourselves. This is kind of the logic.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

We're so used to this kind of thinking amongst a lot of our elite, that it's a zero-sum game. And if you're on the zero side of that zero-sum game, you're losing. Well, what the Chinese model says, what Wang Yi and Sergey Lavrov, to a certain extent, are saying and have been saying for some time, is it isn't a zero-sum game. We can all participate. We can all share in this. And we can all be successful. You don't even believe in your own system, America. You have contaminated your own system. It is so viciously maladjusted now that you have less than 1% of your country owning 60% of its wealth. You are terribly ill-equipped to accommodate this new world. We don't like you. Either change or go away. I mean, that's really the message that's being delivered, sort of inchoately, but nonetheless delivered. And that's the message that people like Elbridge Colby and Pete Hegseth and others are receiving and saying, "Not on your life. We'll bomb and sanction you until the last one of us is breathing his last breath." That isn't going to work.

#Glenn

Yeah, well, I think there's this assumption about a zero-sum game. I think that's a common interpretation across the West about the Westphalian system, that, you know, because you have

many states competing for security, there has to be some kind of a Game of Thrones, slit each other's throat before they slit yours. But the kind of idea behind the Westphalian system was everyone can have security if you then also seek to manage the balance. If you put yourself in the shoes of the opponent, you seek to harmonize interests where it's possible. You manage competition when it's not possible. And, you know, but when you criminalize diplomacy, you kind of throw all of that out the window.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I'll hire you to be my Secretary of State.

#Glenn

Yeah, I'll take it. Well, the belief now in Europe, though, seems to be if they can pull the United States deeper into the war with Russia, then, well, two things will happen. One, the Russians can be defeated, and also we can revive the relevance of NATO, which would then give a clear political, security, and also an economic role for Europe again in the world.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Listen to what you said. A country of 11 time zones, the largest country on the face of the earth in terms of geography, that Napoleon tried to take, that Hitler tried to take. I could go back to Prince Nevsky and the Huns on Lake Peipus. No one has really ever succeeded. They did it to themselves as a result of World War I and what happened there, and then the revolution, and they did it to themselves. But no external power is ever going to do what you're saying the Europeans want to do to Russia, period. They just aren't going to do it. So why would you even try?

#Glenn

Now Russia is the largest nuclear power as well, but the Germans still want to have another go at it.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

It's just, to me, it's just insanity. And, you know, but I understand humans are insane often.

#Glenn

But kind of the security blanket, if you will, for the Europeans is that if a direct Russia-NATO war breaks out, then Article 5 will be invoked and...

#Lawrence Wilkerson

I explained Article 5 to a group of people the other day, and they were thunderstruck when I finished.

#Glenn

Yeah, all the actual text.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Yeah, I explained it to them. I said, basically, here's what it says. It says that each country, now 30, is it, or something, will consult its constitutional or otherwise formal process for war and come back and say whether or not they're going to join. It doesn't say that, you know, an attack on one is an attack on all and we'll all respond immediately, right? And I said, what do you think we will do? Our constitutional process is broken. We will ask the Congress for a declaration of war on who? On Russia? And what will we get? You think Trump will do that? Probably not. Or will he just go to war? And then what are we doing? We're tearing our own process up. But basically, what I'm telling you is each country goes through its process of declaring war and then comes back and says to the joint arena, we will or we won't.

It's not any automatic commitment to a war, so it's absurd to say that it is. And the most reluctant person—people, country—in this whole thing is your big guy. Do you think Donald Trump is going to take an attack on Lithuania as an attack on the United States of America and unleash holy hell on the attacker? I don't—not unless we're down the road a little ways and he's fully demented. I admit he's becoming more and more demented every day, but you've got to be massively demented, and you've got to be his cabinet that's massively demented to say, okay, Lithuania just took two hits. Oreshniks killed a whole bunch of people who were supporting the war in Ukraine. Now we're going to invoke Article 5 and we're going to go after Russia? I don't think so.

#Glenn

No, as you said, it does say an attack on one should be considered an attack on all. However, every participant of the alliance can respond in a way that they see fit. That is, how the response they deem necessary, I think, is the text.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

And we made sure it was that way because our Congress would never have approved it otherwise, because at that time we had little respect for the war power and Congress's constitutional responsibility therein. I remember that argument. I remember that argument because I essentially followed Truman, Acheson, and who was the other guy that really got involved in it? I can't remember now, but he was the guy who was the Republican who was dead set against NATO. His

name just escapes me right now, but he was a senator. I think he was from the Northeast, but he was dead set against NATO. And when I was studying that at the Naval War College and we were doing the case study, we were looking at how close a thing it was. Had the Korean War not come along? Had Truman not made the decision he made without consulting Congress?

Had that not been a police action that drew Truman into going from \$8 billion a year and directions to his budget guy that he would not spend a penny more to \$53 billion in about a week's time? And most of that money, most of that money, they made sure went to Europe and to NATO and the new organization rather than to war in Korea. So we fought the war in Korea on really the cheap. And people know that now after studying the data and so forth. But that was the only way we got NATO approved, because this guy was so powerful within the caucus, the security caucus in the Congress, that it was a touch-and-go thing. And if it hadn't been for Truman and that war and his change of face, if you will, I don't think we would have been a member of NATO. It was a close-run thing.

#Glenn

Well, as I said before, perhaps it's time to rethink the utility of it. I often hear the argument that, well, we need NATO. It kept us safe during the Cold War. But, you know, the world has changed. And even during the Cold War, we did recognize that having this zero-sum rivalry between two blocs was not an ideal setup for security, which is why we began the Helsinki Accords to try to set up an inclusive security arrangement where we could have managed security competition for the benefit of all. So it didn't have to be so intense in terms of the zero-sum rivalry. But, you know, try to speak about indivisible security in any European political discussions at the moment and, you know, it's treated as Russian propaganda almost. It's become quite vile.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

It is. And, you know, I go back to March of 2004, I think it was, if my memory serves. Powell had known Sergei Lavrov ever since he was deputy national security—actually, I think he'd known him ever since he was military assistant, as a two-star general, to Caspar Weinberger when Weinberger was secretary of defense, and everybody said Rich Armitage and Colin Powell ran the Pentagon, not Caspar Weinberger, which was close to the truth. So he'd known Sergei for a long time, and he had just been made foreign minister. March, I think it was, of 2004, and this was April or May. We were in his office, and he just had—I think he'd had his first meeting with Sergei.

And he was waxing eloquent about how, when Sergei spoke, he meant what he said and said what he meant. And he was one of the most direct individuals Powell had ever dealt with, and a very, very fine diplomat. And how do we go from that assessment to where we are now? And how do we go from the relationship that I think we still had at least a modicum of in 2004 to where we are now? Because I know Powell was still— and I remember Bill Perry meeting with my Marine Corps War

College seminar when he was the [unclear] secretary of defense or so for Clinton. And I think Bill told me later out in California that one of the reasons he left was because Clinton was doing what he was doing.

And when Bill had met with my seminar, he had just come out from Moscow, and he was just full of it, the optimism of what the new relationship with the Russians was going to produce. So what we were talking about in the early nineties was going to come to be, and Bill was a big advocate of it. And then it went sour with Clinton doing what he did, and Perry left. But in that series of conversations, I saw what was happening in a way that was extremely inimical, I thought, to our interests in Europe and our interests in the world. But there was nothing we could do about it because it was moving in that direction. We no longer were in power.

And it was very frustrating to be on the outside. I kept trying to get Powell to come down to the Marine Corps War College to address my seminar. I finally succeeded, but he was reluctant to do it because he was so into the America's Promise organization and what he was doing. And I kept saying, "It's going to pieces, boss. The whole thing we set up, the whole idea we had, the whole dream we had, the concept—it's going to pieces. It's going to pieces, and you're just sitting over there at America's Promise, and you're dealing with kids, and you're doing things that are important and mean a lot to you."

It doesn't compute with me. You're one of the people who has a lot of power in this country and a lot of influence still, and you're not using that. We had a couple of nasty talks. But we saw it, and he saw it, and he was frustrated about it, but he didn't know what to do about it, and he wasn't in a position anymore to do anything about it except back channels and things like that. When I saw Perry out in California later, I gave a talk, and Perry came up to me with his wife and he said, "I really appreciated that, Carl. There aren't too many people who think the way you do now."

It was a pleasure listening to you. I'll never forget that because I kind of halfway thought I was going to get, from those Northern Californians, a pretty testy reception. I'd kind of talked like I've talked with you. No, Bill and the people who were with him—I think it was the Northern California Monterey something club or something like that. But it really was interesting to listen to the questions and then to listen to Bill afterwards, because he got it. He got it. We had screwed the pooch when we screwed it most forcefully and most disadvantageously with Russia.

#Glenn

It's hard to argue against that. We screwed up that relationship. That was almost the only, or the main, strategic strategy of the Russians after the Cold War: just integrate with the West and make the concessions required. If any country in the East slows you down, just rush fast towards the West. Put all your eggs in the Western basket. Surely they want to take advantage. Yeah.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Here we are. Little did they know. They should have seen Anatoly Chubais and Larry Summers raping them with the fire sales to the oligarchs of all the Soviet Union hard assets, and said, as Putin, I think, did from his vantage point—I think he was in St. Petersburg at the time—"This is not good, what these guys are doing to us."

#Glenn

Colonel, thank you so much for taking the time.

#Lawrence Wilkerson

Truly. Thank you for the opportunity. Take care.