

Russia is "Ready Right Now" for War if Europe Attacks

Larry Johnson is a former intelligence analyst at the CIA who also worked at the US State Department's Office of Counterterrorism. Johnson discusses the defeat of Ukraine, Europe's plan to escalate, and Putin's warning that Russia is "ready right now" for war if Europe attacks. Follow Prof. Glenn Diesen: Substack: <https://glennDiesen.substack.com/> X/Twitter: https://x.com/Glenn_Diesen Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/glennDiesen> Support the research by Prof. Glenn Diesen: PayPal: <https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/glennDiesen> Buy me a Coffee: buymeacoffee.com/gdieseng Go Fund Me: <https://gofund.me/09ea012f> Books by Prof. Glenn Diesen: <https://www.amazon.com/stores/author/B09FPQ4MDL>

#Glenn

Welcome back to the program. We're joined by Larry Johnson, a former CIA analyst. Thank you very much for coming back on—and I love the shirt. Hey man, always an honor to be with you. So, you've written a lot of articles lately about the advancements of Russia, but also the economic components of the war. We've seen, for example, the focus on striking each other's energy infrastructure. The Russians are taking out electric grids across Ukraine, while NATO and Ukraine are trying to hit the oil refineries in Russia. But with these attacks on Russian ships, this seems to be moving into a very dangerous area.

#Larry Johnson

Oh, most certainly. Ukraine's now been put on notice, as has Europe, that if this continues—Vladimir Putin outlined in a statement to the press yesterday—let's call it an "escalatory ladder." It starts with destroying Ukrainian ports in Odessa and along the Black Sea, then moves up to a full embargo or blockade of those ports, and even to sinking ships that go in and out of them. And the latter could include sinking ships that belong to other countries like France, Germany, or the UK. There was an attack on a ship connected to Russia yesterday off the coast of Senegal. Gee, didn't Senegal used to belong to a particular European power—or at least have some control from one? Oh yeah, that would be the French.

And, you know, the Senegalese do speak French, or at least it's one of their languages. So the assumption is that Macron authorized a drone attack, because certainly these drones didn't fly from Ukraine all the way to the coast of Senegal. This was a deliberate, planned attack on that Russian ship. And Russia's—well, Vladimir Putin was very clear—he defined it as piracy and said they're going to react accordingly. So this represents a potential escalation. Now, what's interesting is that the first attack, on the 28th, on the two empty oil tankers, took place in Turkey's exclusive economic zone.

The tankers were ultimately going to carry oil coming out of Kazakhstan. Well, Erdoğan was hollering like a stuck pig—he was upset.

And the leader of Kazakhstan was outraged. So instead of currying favor with other countries, Ukraine managed to alienate two nations that, at a minimum, could have been neutral with respect to the war. So that sort of backfired. It's crazy how the West has this built-in assumption that Russia is dependent on oil and gas exports, and that if we just cut those off, Russia's going to collapse—the economy can't continue. And, you know, you've lived there. It's not true. It's absolutely not true. In fact, the amount of money coming into Russian government hands from the oil and gas trade has been declining as a percentage of GDP—not increasing, declining. And, you know, Russia is not in a position where, if it fails to export oil and gas, it's going to collapse.

But that's what the West assumes, which is why they're taking these efforts. "Man, if we just attack the refineries that loaded the oil tanker, Russia will collapse." This shows—and this is where you're needed—because you bring your knowledge of history, and trying to make the past relevant to today is what the West sorely needs. The West forgets that during the early days, really the first two years of World War II, with respect to the West—with the UK and the United States—the number of merchant ships getting sunk on a daily basis was, I mean, enormous. And again, that was based on the German belief that if they destroyed the merchant fleet, then the UK was done.

Well, even with all the German efforts to do that—and they did destroy a significant number of ships—it didn't stop the West from building up. Similarly, these crazy retired U.S. generals like Ben Hodges, David Petraeus, and Admiral Stavridis—what a collection of dopes. They're really not intelligent guys, because they keep pushing this idea that if we just get long-range missiles and start destroying supply depots in Russia, hit this site and that site, then Russia will be forced to collapse. Step back and look at what Russia has done to Ukraine over the course of almost four years. Look at the number of missiles and drones Russia has fired into Ukraine.

Look at the number of targets they've hit. It's been significant, it's been substantial. Yet it hasn't caused Ukraine to collapse. So, is someone really willing to argue that Ukraine could now launch the same number, the same quantity of missiles and rockets that Russia has launched over the last four years? The West doesn't even have those. I mean, it's impossible. So stop kidding yourselves that there's some magic bullet you can fire that's going to force Russia to collapse. Meanwhile, Russia is carrying on with the offensive. And let me give you one more point of reference. One of the most common criticisms among this retired group of dummies—the former generals—is Russia.

Look at Russia. Russia's failing because they're just barely taking any territory—they're just creeping along. They've hardly accomplished anything. Okay, we've now learned that in November 2025, Russia captured 700 square kilometers of territory inside Ukraine. Let me put that in perspective: that's twice the size of Gaza. Look at what's happened in Gaza, where the Israeli army controls the

entire perimeter. The Israeli army is fighting a bunch of insurgents with rifles, pistols, sidearms, some rudimentary mortars—but they don't have artillery, they don't have tanks, they don't have armored vehicles, they don't have air support. They have none of the intelligence advantages.

Ukraine has all of that, supplied happily by NATO. And yet Israel has been unable to conquer 350 square kilometers of Gaza in two years—two plus years. They've been unable to do it. And here's Russia, in one month, doubling that territory. So, I mean, again, it illustrates something I learned early on at the CIA when I was doing military analysis—how politics try to come in and influence it. When we were analyzing the Salvadoran guerrillas fighting the Salvadoran army, back in 1986, our analytical conclusion was that when the Salvadoran guerrillas shifted from attacking military targets to attacking economic targets, that was a sign of weakness on their part.

But when it came to analyzing the Contras—when the Contras were attacking economic targets instead of military targets—we got pressure to say, "Oh man, this is a major military accomplishment." Just play by the same standard, you know? What's good for the goose is good for the gander. So what we're seeing from Russia is that they're not retreating; they're moving steadily forward. In fact, that pace of advance has accelerated dramatically over the last three months, since September. And that's why we're seeing the West so panicked, trying to push for negotiations to save Ukraine.

#Glenn

Yeah, but whenever I'm in a debate with someone, they always bring up this idea that the Russians aren't winning—"Look at the slow movement. At this pace, it'll take decades before they even reach the Dnieper." I mean, that's kind of the logic there. Yeah. Well, either that's stupidity or dishonesty, because at the same time they recognize this is a war of attrition. So why would Russia waste a lot of manpower and equipment storming well-fortified lines, taking all those casualties, when in the end that would only lead to a loss? This isn't primarily about territory. It's not like you take a city and the war is over. It's a war of attrition, where you destroy the enemy's military.

So this whole idea that the Russians would just keep going at the same pace doesn't really make any sense. It's a poor indicator. In traditional warfare, you want to measure casualty numbers. And if you look at what's happened over the past almost four years, the Ukrainians have run out of manpower. They have a massive shortage. Their military equipment—well, all of NATO has emptied its weapons stockpiles and burned through that as well. Desertions are increasing, morale is low. And all those hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian soldiers who used to be well-armed and in well-fortified positions—those fortifications are now behind the Russians. They've taken them. So in front of them, there are no more fortifications, and fewer and fewer Ukrainian soldiers.

Many of those they have are just dragged out of their homes and sent to the front without much training. So now you have reports of mass desertion. Meanwhile, the Russians have built up—and continue to build up—an even larger fighting force. They're stronger now than at the beginning of

the war. I mean, this is the metric. You're going to see Russian advances increase dramatically, and casualties on the Ukrainian side rise sharply as defensive lines and communication collapse. But this is all brushed aside with, "No, no, they moved this slowly in the first three years, so they'll do the same in the next three." Again, I can't make up my mind if that's stupidity or dishonesty.

#Larry Johnson

I think it's more likely stupidity and just a lack of—well, they're not good analysts. Now, I've thought about this quite a bit, and maybe I should have come to this conclusion much earlier. But I think I now see very clearly why we saw what they'd call relative slowness in attacks over 2022, 2023, and 2024. But now we're seeing a dramatic acceleration in 2025. The first fact is that Russia's total ground forces at the start of the special military operation were about 450,000 active-duty troops, maybe close to 500,000. Russia only went into Ukraine initially with between 125,000 and 180,000 ground troops. And their objective—which they achieved—was to put enough pressure on Ukraine to negotiate, which the Ukrainian government did.

And there was a tentative agreement between Russia and Ukraine until the West—Joe Biden and Boris Johnson—intervened and compelled Zelensky to back out of the deal. At that point, the nature of the war shifted. If you go back and look at a map from that time, Mariupol was under Ukrainian control, surrounded on both sides by territory held by the Donbass, particularly the people of Donetsk. So the Russians' first priority was seizing Mariupol, which they did in May 2022. After that, Russia wasn't launching major offensives. One reason was that several things happened at once: a number of contract soldiers' terms ended, Russia hadn't mobilized new troops, and recruitment wasn't exactly taking off.

So you can fault the Russian general staff for not having prepared a good Plan B—like, OK, if our negotiation strategy fails, we've got to have Plan B ready to go. They moved to that plan in September with the mobilization of 320,000 reservists, then increased the conscription rate and started signing up new contract soldiers. But just because you sign them up in September, or tell them, "Hey, show up at base next week," doesn't mean everyone's trained, equipped, and ready to go. The reservists only needed about two to three months of training to get back into shape because they already knew how to serve. But for the new conscripts and contract soldiers, you're looking at three to six months. So what happened starting in September 2022 was that Russia was gradually building up and expanding its ground forces.

Well, the first major offensive by the Russians was against Bakhmut. Again, the tactic for Russia was to minimize casualties. They weren't going to use human wave assaults like, you know, Georgy Zhukov was known for during the Great Patriotic War. But once you take territory, do you have enough troops to hold it? The Russian general staff was planning this out, knowing when new units would become available. And again, especially with conscripts and contract soldiers, you've got

people without combat experience. So you don't want to just shove them out there—you want to integrate them into experienced units. That led to troop rotations, and then you had troops who were coming to the end of their service period. So the Russian army was gradually building up.

And it didn't have sufficient force to launch multiple attacks, sustain those attacks, and then secure the territory once they'd achieved their objectives. So the first big move was up in Kursk, when they finally routed all the Ukrainians from there. It started with the offensive at Suza, led by General Avdi Alaudinov. Then we saw the offensive spread from Sumy and Kharkiv—not much in Luhansk, because Luhansk was already under control—then Donetsk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson. I said, in one month we've now seen Russia take territory that's twice the size of Gaza. That's significant. The reason they didn't move faster before was partly a lack of trained, prepared manpower. It wasn't a lack of resources—the industrial production was meeting its goals quite rapidly.

But training personnel so they know how to operate in a modern, net-centric battlefield—where you're communicating with drones—you have to know where your geolocations are. You have to understand what firepower is. You know, there's a lot of information to absorb that you don't just get by reading a book or doing a week of training. So now Russia has about 750,000—maybe even as high as 800,000—men deployed in Ukrainian territory, and they're carrying out at least eight axes of attack. On each one, they're moving forward, and it really puts the Ukrainians in a terrible situation. You've got to figure out where to defend. Ukraine doesn't have enough manpower to defend against eight separate points of contact. So, yeah, that's where I come back.

I think the people making these arguments about, "Oh, look how slow they've moved,"—particularly U.S. generals—I'd say, shut up. You went into Iraq in 2003 with 120,000 soldiers and failed. Failed to pacify the country, failed to defeat an insurgency. And ditto for Afghanistan. It took you 21 years to figure out, "We can't win this, we've got to leave." Russia's not in that position. And yeah, would you like, by Western standards, for them to move faster? Sure. But the bottom line is, Russia's winning, Ukraine is losing—which is why you're seeing the panic from Europe now in particular. Because if Ukraine really was beating the Russians and really chewing them up, do you think there'd be a push from the West to get a peace process going? No, man. They couldn't wait to be in Moscow dancing on Putin's coffin. But that's not what's happening.

#Glenn

Yeah, I think this is often ignored in the West—that the war has changed its dynamic since February 2022. Initially, people forget the Russians went in with, what, about 100,000 men. The point was to take a lot of territory, shock the Ukrainians, and then demand neutrality—so at Istanbul, what wasn't achieved at Minsk. But then what we saw was the West coming in and sabotaging the peace agreement. They said the war would be solved on the battlefield, and they began to sever all diplomacy with the Russians, suggesting that this war would end in capitulation. At the same time,

you had these leaks or interviews with American and British military leaders who said the only acceptable outcome was regime change in Moscow—a fight to the last Ukrainian. That’s when it became a war of attrition.

At that point, I think those 100,000 men spread over such a huge territory in Ukraine were massively exposed. So the Russians did, I guess, the sensible thing. Again, this isn’t primarily about territory. You tighten up the front lines, pull back from Kherson and Kharkov, and then strengthen the defensive lines. The Ukrainians came, as they did in the summer of ’23, and they got destroyed. Meanwhile, while defending, the Russians were building up a massive army in the rear, ramping up industrial production of weaponry. Then the next step—they went on the offensive. Now they’re just steamrolling everything. The Ukrainians lost, ran out of manpower. NATO ran out of weapons. And yeah, the problem is, I think, in the West we created a narrative because we wanted to fight to the last Ukrainian.

We had to keep up the optimism. So the Russians went in, and then we decided not to take the peace—we would stand up to them. And then, wouldn’t you believe it, the Russians were just falling apart. You know, when they pulled out of Kherson and Kharkov, it was because, well, we just fight better than them, right? The Russians are backwards. So we created this victory narrative. Now we’re in this very awkward position where we’ve been shouting “we’re winning, we’re winning” for almost four years, and our Ukrainian proxy is about to collapse. European leaders don’t know what to do except escalate. But this is where I think—as Putin said—the assumption that they would treat the Europeans like Ukrainians was wrong. They would treat them much harsher.

#Larry Johnson

Well, I mean, just let me observe that the West discounts the term “special military operation.” They think that’s just the Russians playing word games. But no—if Russia were on a war footing, that would mean mass mobilization. Now, Stanislav Karpivnik—I think you’ve interviewed him, a.k.a. Stas—was formerly in the U.S. military, ready to be promoted to major when he resigned his commission and moved back to Russia. But there are at least five million Russian reservists who could be called up. Stas actually said the number’s closer to ten million. So Russia hasn’t even begun to mobilize that. And I don’t know—well, you’ve been to Russia recently.

Walking around the streets, restaurants, and stores, you wouldn’t know a war was on. Life just goes on. There’s no reason for people to sacrifice. You think back to times like World War II, when in the United States you couldn’t buy a new car, food was rationed, you had ration cards, and there were strict controls over supplies because everything had to be devoted to the war effort. You don’t have that right now in Russia. That’s what could come to pass. What you’ve seen Russia doing is stockpiling a variety of weapons, because now the general staff isn’t going to make the same mistake it made in March 2022. They had a plan A but no well-developed plan B. Now they do.

They have a plan B and a plan C. Their preferred outcome is a negotiated settlement and getting back to some normal relations with the West—but with the understanding that their future isn't in the West; it's in the East, with China, with India, and in Siberia. But if that fails—if the negotiations fail—they'll take key sectors of Ukraine that would prevent Ukraine from continuing as a normal state. They'll take Odessa, they'll take Transnistria, they'll take Kyiv, they'll take Dnipropetrovsk, Kharkiv, and probably Sumy and Poltava. They're going to control most of the territory, if not all, that's east of the Dnieper River.

That's where it's going to head militarily. And if Europe decides to intervene to try to stop all that, Russia is prepared to go to war with Europe. Some people think they're going to use tactical nukes—no, that's why they've developed the Avangard, the hypersonic missile, which is now in serial production. It's not just one or two, and that's why they're not using it on a regular basis. It's being saved for if the worst comes to pass. Russia is uniquely positioned to destroy Europe militarily. I mean, just to show you how bad the situation is for the Europeans, there's a modified 28-point peace plan.

Their suggestion was, no, no, no—600,000 troops for Ukraine isn't enough. They've got to have 800,000. The combined armies of Germany, France, and the UK are less than 500,000. And, you know, what's the population of those three? Well over 120 million between them, I'm just guessing—but Ukraine's only got 19 million, according to former Prime Minister Azarov. So if I've got this straight, the Europeans have a larger population and wealthier economies compared to Ukraine, yet they want Ukraine to use almost 10% or 5% of its manpower in an army? It's insanity. It just shows how out of touch with reality these people are.

#Glenn

I think there seems to be some preparation for a possible European attack, though, because there have been some reports—even in the Western media—that all this new hardware, all the tanks and a lot of the different armored vehicles, are not being sent to the front. It's being piled up in the rear. Meanwhile, they're also stockpiling a huge number of missiles. They're continuing to pump them out like sausages, faster than they're being used. And the electronics as well. All of this indicates they're preparing for the end of this war, because the Europeans can either accept that they've lost this proxy war or escalate into a direct attack.

And we're seeing that to some extent already with, as you said, the attacks on Russian commercial vessels, because there's no way Ukrainians are—well, it's like suggesting Ukrainians were behind Nord Stream. It doesn't really make any sense. But with this 800,000, what do you think is the goal? Why are the Europeans insisting on 800,000? That's an absurd number for a peacetime army. Is it to set conditions they know will be rejected, so they can block any peace agreement? Or is it to make sure Ukraine won't be able to go to war again—that they just want a temporary ceasefire?

#Larry Johnson

No, they don't want it. It's the same boss as before. You know, with the Minsk II agreement—the first case in January 2015—it was created to buy time for Ukraine to rebuild its military. It was portrayed as a peace agreement, and it was signed between the government of Ukraine and the leaders of the Donbass. But in truth, as was later admitted by Angela Merkel and confirmed by François Hollande, the former French president, it was all a scam. It was designed purely to buy time so Ukraine could rearm, rebuild, re-equip, and recruit new soldiers. So now we're at what I'd call Minsk III on steroids.

During Minsk I or Minsk II, before they had finalized the negotiations, Merkel hops on a plane because the Ukrainian army is surrounded near the town of Debaltseve. They're encircled by militias from Luhansk and Donetsk, backed by some Wagner Group members, and they're facing being wiped out. So Merkel goes to Moscow and persuades, cajoles President Putin into supporting the Minsk II process. Putin does, and I think he's since admitted that it was a mistake—he trusted the West when he shouldn't have. But that stopped the Russian offensive. I think the agreements were signed around February 12.

February, and the battle at Debaltseve ended six days later. But the agreement was never really upheld—the Ukrainians just used it to buy time. Well, that's what they're trying to do now, only it's too late. Russia's not going to fall for that, you know, the banana-in-the-tailpipe trick. That's a reference to an Eddie Murphy movie, **Beverly Hills Cop**. I've seen that one—"I'm not going to fall for that banana-in-the-tailpipe trick." Well, that's Russia now. They realize they're not going to get fooled by the West. They've made their demands very clear, very specific, and they're not backing off those.

And, you know, the disdain that Putin has for Europe—he's not taking any steps to hide it. He was visibly angry yesterday, vis-à-vis Ukraine and Europe, over these attacks on the ships. He's been asked both in Bishkek at the press conference a week ago—was that Tajikistan?—and then today, just before we went on air. He did a two, two-and-a-half-hour interview with two women journalists from **India Today**. And one of them says, "Hey, you know, what about rejoining the G8?" And he just goes, "That was it." And then I said, "Well, could you explain that?" He goes, "Why join them? We stopped doing that years ago."

And he said, you'd go and nobody would talk to you. So it's like, why go? You know, they want to be mad at us. So if you're not going to sit down and have discussions, it's better to spend my time talking with people who actually want to talk. And this is, you know, your friend and my friend, Sergei Karaganov—he's been one of the leading voices saying, hey, as we talked about last time I was with you, you wrote a book on this—about Russia turning away from the West and expanding relationships to the East. And that this is really the future of Russia. And that's, you know, I think that's where this whole war has accelerated that process.

#Glenn

I was on CNN India this morning for an interview, and they also asked, why is Putin coming to India? Does he want to signal to the West that he can diversify his trade and that he's not dependent on them? The whole assumption is still Western-centric, though—that this is just, you know, "Look, I have other partners in the East," as a way of negotiating your way back into the West. I was making the point that in the past, the Russians would have done that. They would have accepted some sanctions on Iran; they would have traded their relationship with China almost as a kind of currency to negotiate a position for Russia to have a seat at the table in Europe.

But those days ended in 2014. That was the consequence of toppling the government in Ukraine. And I made the point that, you know, when the Russians signed the Power of Siberia II deal—this is 30 years of gas from the Arctic that was going to Europe but is now going to China—this isn't about sending signals to the West that "we can live without you." They are decoupling. Their economy is reorienting to the East. And the Indians are a very important part of this constellation because they don't want all their eggs in the Chinese basket. Because then you end up with a bipolar system—the U.S. and China dominating. So if you have Russia and India working together, they're diversifying; they avoid all this dependence on the two largest powers.

And this is the formula for a multipolar system, where they don't have to fall in line with blocs or anything. Yeah, I think even the Indians are still seeing some of this through a Western-centric lens—that somehow Russia still wants to get back into the G8, you know, reviving those 1990s objectives. But that's gone, it's dead. The main economies they want to integrate with now are in the East. It's just a reality. Let me just ask you one last question, though, because I read there was a leaked phone call about European leaders—you probably saw it—saying we have to watch out for Zelensky because the Americans and the Russians are up to no good.

They're going to get rid of him. And, well, in the EU capitals, there are a lot of crazies. But on this topic, one gets the impression that many of the anti-corruption efforts now—not that they're false, I mean, the Ukrainian leadership has always been extremely corrupt—but that this is also an effort by the United States to push Zelensky aside. I know that if it happens, of course, the UK wouldn't mind pushing in Zaluzhny. Germany would probably prefer Klitschko. But do you see the United States working to at least weaken Zelensky's position as a way of pushing through this peace agreement?

#Larry Johnson

Oh, absolutely. I think you astutely note that leak about the \$100 million corruption scandal. You know, as we've discussed before, that's chicken feed. We're talking billions of dollars. Out of \$360 billion, the estimates are that between \$50 and \$100 billion have been siphoned off. And I guarantee you, when the investigation is finally completed, there will be U.S. members of Congress—both in the House and the Senate—who've received millions of dollars. One senator got around \$16–17 million, another around \$23 million. One's a Republican, one's a Democrat. So it's bipartisan

corruption. Do you think there's any possibility that Kaja Kallas might be getting paid under the table by the Zelensky regime?

The underlying question is, who else in the EU? And hey, Boris Johnson—he's already been getting some money from one of his buddies who was profiting off the war in Ukraine. So there's a lot of money at play here. When this leaked out, I took it as a sign that the U.S. is going to dump Zelensky. Because when you create this narrative about corruption in Ukraine, you take the air out of the balloon about, "Oh, Ukraine's fighting for freedom and democracy and the American way." All of a sudden, that becomes the story, and all the air is let out of that other balloon. And then Yermak's gone, and Timur Mendic is now hiding out in Israel.

And Zelensky—I think he's a dead man walking now. The test will be to see: does he survive, or does he get taken out? The problem with Zelensky is, you know, Putin made it clear this week that Zelensky is a criminal and illegitimate, and they're not going to negotiate with an illegitimate president. Well, if Zaluzhny comes back in and just gets named as president, he too is an illegitimate president—unless they follow the constitutional succession order outlined in the Ukrainian constitution. I'm not fully familiar with that, but only if Zaluzhny is appointed president according to the Ukrainian constitution would I think the Russians be willing to entertain talking to him in serious negotiations. But Russia is not going to back off from giving back any of the territory it now occupies.

And it's not going to back off its demand that Ukraine have no connection or ties with NATO, and that NATO has to get the hell out of Ukraine. The size of Ukraine's armed forces also has to be reduced so that Russia no longer faces a threat. And for those who think these are just talking points that Russia will eventually make concessions on—they're not going to make concessions on those. These are firm demands. Russia hasn't budged an inch from them since it first made them. I think that was part of what was going on with the meeting that Witkoff and Jared Kushner had with Vladimir Putin the other day—that Putin was explaining exactly the Russian position so they could go back and communicate it again to Donald Trump.

I think Trump is now ready to distance himself from Ukraine. I mean, we've seen some tangible things—like the leaks of information about corruption. And then Rubio not attending the ministerial that was held yesterday or the day before—the first time in the history of the ministerial that a U.S. secretary of state wasn't there. There are also reports from Steve Bryan, a former Bush administration defense official, a senior guy at the Department of Defense. He said that all aid already in the pipeline for Ukraine has been cut off—stopped. So that's not going forward. As the days grow darker, as we approach December 20th, it's a pretty good metaphor for what's taking place in Ukraine. It's getting darker and darker with each passing day.

#Glenn

I agree. The problem when we call Putin a dictator in the West is that we delude ourselves into thinking he controls everything. But even if he wanted to make some kind of massive concession,

that limits what he can actually do, because there's a big political force in Russia now that remembers how, in 2013, Ukraine and Russia presented an offer to the EU for an EU-Ukraine-Russia agreement—so Ukraine wouldn't have to choose. The Europeans said no, Ukraine will not be a bridge; they have to choose, us or them. And then in 2014, after destabilizing Ukraine, the Europeans signed on as guarantors of a unity government. They walked away from that within the first 48 hours after they toppled Yanukovich.

And then, of course, you have the Minsk Agreement, which was also a fraud after the defeat at Debaltseve—undermining or essentially reversing the election outcome, the peace mandate that Zelensky got in 2019, sabotaging the Istanbul talks in 2022, then boycotting diplomacy pretty much throughout the last three years. Why—like, imagine if yet again Putin suddenly said, “Well, we’re going to have to trust the West this time. NATO has to be trusted in the peace agreement.” There’s no way that would work; the revolt within Moscow would be too great. He’d expose himself as not just weak, but stupid. So I think that limits what can be done this time.

#Larry Johnson

No, you're right. He's not Charlie Brown. Are you familiar with the Charles Schulz cartoons—Charlie Brown? Yeah, with the dog.

#Glenn

Snoopy.

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, Snoopy. And one of the memes in that cartoon was that Lucy would always encourage Charlie Brown—“Here, come kick the football.” And Charlie Brown would run up, trying to kick it. It doesn't matter whether we're talking American football or soccer—European, world football—every time he'd go to kick the ball, she'd pull it away, he'd kick air, and he'd fall on his back. Okay, that's happened to Putin once. But you're right, he's not going to let that happen again. So Russia has made its decision.

And, you know, frankly, they were not in a position militarily, prior to 2022, to launch what's now called the Special Military Operation—despite significant provocations from the West over the preceding 20 years. So Russia has now, ironically, surpassed the West in military technology, in available armaments, and in troop manpower. They've now tripled the size of the U.S. Army—they're, I think, about 1.5 million—and they've done all this without having to fully mobilize for war. It's been one mobilization, and the rest through regular conscription and contract soldiers.

#Glenn

Well, thank you very much for taking the time. And for the listeners, please check out sonar21.com, which is the website of Larry Johnson, where he writes excellent articles almost daily. And please also hit like and subscribe to keep the channel going. So thank you, Larry. Hey, thank you, Glenn.

#Larry Johnson

It's always a treat to sit down and talk with you.