

Russia's Permanent Divorce from Europe

Stanislav Krapivnik is a former US Army officer, supply chain exec and military-political expert, now based in Russia. He was born in Lugansk during the Soviet times, migrated to the US as a child and served in the US army. Krapivnik discusses how the Ukraine War has permanently changed Russia. Follow Prof. Glenn Diesen: Substack: <https://glennndiesen.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](https://www.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 here today with Stanislav Krapivnik, a former U.S. Army officer who was born in Donbass, in Lugansk, and has recently returned and is now living in Russia. Thank you very much for coming back on the program.

#Stanislav Krapivnik

Thank you.

#Glenn

Well, "recently" is about 15 years ago. "Recently" is a relative term. Yeah, 15 years—so, not so recent. But you're there quite close to the front, following things carefully, and of course with your military background. How are you assessing what's going on now on the front lines? Because in the past, what used to be a month-to-month development is now happening almost day by day. So what exactly are you looking at?

#Stanislav Krapivnik

We're looking at something between a 1917 moment with the Russian Imperial Army and a 1918 moment with the German Imperial Army, and we'll see which way this goes. Why I'm saying that—there are two differences. In 1917, the Russian Imperial Army collapsed morally. The provisional government that overthrew the Tsar—the liberals who overthrew the Tsar—created these soldiers' unions that could vote down any order they got from their commanding officers. So you had chaos on the Russian front: some units just threw down their weapons and went home, others fought only defensively, and others stood and kept trying to go on the offensive. Versus the German army in 1918, which just disintegrated totally—they just went home, streaming in.

So it's interesting where we're going with this, because what we're seeing now is attrition warfare. First of all, most Western field-grade officers really can't understand attrition warfare. They're so boxed into maneuver warfare that they really—well, I listen to these guys, and what they're saying is—you can tell they have no clue what attrition warfare involves. They're more moderate; they can't get out of the big movements, the big division- or corps-level operations. But attrition warfare doesn't have a lot of movement at first; in the end, though, it produces gigantic movements. Because once you reach the point where the enemy is attrited, it can no longer hold the front, it can no longer plug in troops to stop any breakthroughs.

Once you get to that point, that's it. Then you start having big breakthroughs and large chunks collapsing. And we've seen this—it's like those small snowballs coming down the mountainside. At first, no big deal. But now you've got a lot of dust and snow coming down, and it's a big deal because you realize that's an avalanche. It's not a full avalanche yet, but it's an avalanche. And we're at the base of that mountain, and it's all going to come down on top of us. That's what we're seeing right now. I mean, look, Gulai-Polye is a prime example. For two years, Russian troops couldn't get up to Gulai-Polye. Why? Because Gulai-Polye sits on high ground surrounded by low ground—it's open plains and farm fields that are easy to shoot across.

Any troops—especially with drone warfare—any troops that were moving up, the only way they could approach was from the south. That southern area was very easy to shoot through, and it was a failure every time. The Russian military lost several companies of armored vehicles and troops trying to get up there, trying to reach the city, the edges of the city. To the east were fortified villages and a fortified line that stretched about 50 or more kilometers north of the city—50, 60 kilometers north. What happened? As the Ukrainian forces were being attrited further and further, those lines were being destroyed. Russian troops were able to reach those villages, and the villages fell fast. And from those villages to Gulai-Polye on the east side, you're talking about, I think, roughly 10 kilometers.

They covered those 10 kilometers in a couple of days, and then they were investing the city from the east. Now, you've got this long line of heavy fortifications running about 50 or 60 kilometers north of the city. What did the Russian forces do? They went around, because north of that there were no fortifications. And the Ukrainian line was so thin they couldn't stop the Russian forces from breaking through in the north. So they went in from the north, then turned around and started moving south, rolling up those fortifications because they were now behind the line. Yeah, sure, sit in your trenches—you're a dead man. You either run or surrender, because you've got Russian troops coming from three directions.

Your only direction left is to keep rolling down toward Gulai-Polye. And once Gulai-Polye is gone, most of Zaporizhia that's not part of Russia now is just open field—right up to the Dnieper, where you've got Zaporizhzhia city. It has one bridge across the Dnieper, and beyond that it's really hard to defend. It's a relatively open area. So you're looking at a collapse. You're looking at a collapse because what's happened is Ukraine's been attrited—attrited to the point where it can no longer

fight. Morale collapses. You know, the prosecutor general in Ukraine opened up 400,000 cases of desertion. Just to put that in perspective for the audience, that's the entire military of France and the UK combined.

That's just desertions. And a lot of those desertions—and here's the key point—a lot of them are veterans. Veterans who've been fighting for a year, two years, some of them three or longer. But they've figured out, you know, I'm leaving this battlefield in one of two ways: I'm either going to be a corpse and eventually get picked up in a body bag, or I'm going to leave on a stretcher. That's the only way this ends for me. You know what, thanks—I'm picking up my army men off the sandbox, and I'm going home. To hell with all of you. And there are tens of thousands of those leaving. So what can you say for the other guys who just got press-ganged off the street?

Flip side, if you've noticed, the videos that are starting to come out—the reports from western and central Ukraine—the press gangs are starting to get killed. The men's survival instincts have finally kicked in, and now they're walking around in groups of six, seven, eight, ten guys. They try to grab one, and the rest—the wolf pack—jumps in and just beats the crap out of them or kills them. There have been incidents like that. There was one guy, a Banderite, walking down the street. A press-gang Banderite called him over, "Give me your documents." "Hell no." The guy grabs someone's arm, and the first guy pulls a knife and puts it in his throat. End of the press gang.

There are lots of videos coming out where they're smashing up cars, pulling guys out of them. It's all over—just women left. The remaining men have finally decided, you know, I'm going to survive. And the only way we survive is if we band together, move like a wolf pack, and attack these guys. But this is societal breakdown. Not only do we not support this government, we're not going to fight for this government. We're sure as hell not going to die for this government. Because Ukraine is a three-tier society: the middle class, the lower middle class, and the lower class—they're the ones who get sent to die.

The upper middle class and the lower upper class die. By the way, the reason these press gangs in the past have allowed themselves to be videotaped while they beat the crap out of people—break their arms, literally beat them to death if they fight hard enough—is because it's advertising. You know, "Look what's going to happen to you." Or you could come over and give me \$10,000, and I'll write out a little white piece of paper, a form that says you're not fit for combat. That's your get-out-of-jail card. Plus 5,000—actually, I think it's 20,000, 25,000 right now. You know, inflation. So that class of people buy their way out and then get the hell out of Ukraine.

And they become these ultra-nationalists sitting in Ireland, or in Deutschland, or in Italy, beating up some brown-skinned guys, screaming, "I'm a fascist!" Which, by the way, actually happened—twice. There was a videotape back in '23, guys screaming, "I'm a fascist." Great, you're all fascists. That's great. Where are you? As far away from the front as you could possibly be. Yeah, these are the guys screaming, "We're going to fight to the last grain here," because they've got no skin in the game. They're not there. And then you've got the elites at the very top—they're the ones partying in Malibu.

They're the ones partying in Monaco. Those are the cars that, back in 2022, Moldovans were videotaping—super expensive cars with Ukrainian plates, stashed in Moldova. Then they eventually moved on to other areas, to better party spots. And they're the ones blasting the Ukrainian anthem—anthem? Yeah, anthem, sorry, little mental breakdown there—playing the Ukrainian anthem while doing body shots and acting wild. So these are the three tiers of Ukrainian society. I mean, this is not a society that's going to win a war. This is not a society that's coherent. But that's what's formed now.

#Glenn

Yeah, but I also think the game is kind of up now that it's evident the war is being lost. The only question is whether it's going to be lost quickly or slowly, with greater casualties. And you see a lot of really disturbing rhetoric coming out of Europe now—things like, "Well, as long as the Ukrainians are fighting, they'll distract the Russians." Or when the German intelligence chief came out and said, "We need the Ukrainians to fight on for a few more years so we can prepare a proper deterrence and defense."

Even people like Yulia Timoshenko, who was, you know, NATO's favorite presidential candidate, came out and said, well, this kind of proves our worst fears—that we're just meat for the Europeans to throw at the Russians to buy them time and, you know, to weaken the opponent. I mean, for God's sake, even Zelensky himself said this back in March 2022, that many countries were encouraging Ukraine to go for a long war instead of taking the peace deal, because then they could weaken a strategic rival. And they wanted this despite destroying Ukraine.

I mean, it's coming a bit late now, of course—by 2025. But all this pretending to care about Ukrainians, just to keep sacrificing them in the hope of killing Russians—I think it's going to have consequences. As you said, more and more people are waking up to this. And I see the same Ukrainian Telegram channels showing similar videos, demonstrating the situation. Your comment on attrition warfare, though—I always thought that in the summer of 2023, it was a perfect example. The NATO planners had hoped the Ukrainians would just plow through the Russian front lines, hit the Azov, and cut off their forces. That was supposed to be the grand victory.

And they would all go partying in Crimea. But then, of course, they were fighting a war of attrition, so you just saw mass casualties ramping up on the Ukrainian side. Gradually, their fighting capabilities were diminished. So, yeah, attrition warfare is quite different. But as we enter the final stages, you know, it's hard to see this simply dying off. There seem to be a lot of incentives now to fight, to escalate, to rescue the situation. I mean, we hear more and more talk about the need to perhaps send troops, help the Ukrainians—all these things coming from the British especially, but also more and more from the Germans. What do you make of this? Do you think the Europeans will enter this war?

#Stanislav Krapivnik

First of all, by the way, that 2023 counteroffensive was a piece of marketing genius—they even had commercials for it and all that other crap. It's like a bad movie where the protagonist goes, "I'm going to take my right leg and put it into your left ear." Yeah, nowhere in human history, I think, has a general said, "Hey, make sure they know exactly when and where we're going to be there, because we don't want them to be surprised." This hasn't happened since armies lined up in rows on a battlefield, looked at each other, and said, "Okay, let's get it on." The whole point is, you don't want to tell the other guy where to build up, because that's where you're going to be. But they did it. And when they got sent in, you know, there's this tendency on the Russian side to say, "Oh, NATO tactics don't work."

Well, and I've corrected it. Look, these aren't NATO tactics. These are basic guidelines for breaching defensive structures anywhere. The Russian army uses them too, because everyone's learned this is the best way. But the problem for the Ukrainians was that, to complete what they needed to do, they had to have at least air parity—if not air dominance—plus enough anti-aircraft systems to keep enemy aviation at bay, a hell of a lot more engineering assets, and tube superiority for artillery. Artillery tube and rocket superiority would let you suppress enemy artillery and firing positions while you're trying to cut through the obstacle course they've set up for you.

Ukraine had none of those. So basically, they just got a lot of armored vehicles. They had a lot of strategy missing—or a lot of tactics missing the key points—and they got sent in to die. Eighty-five thousand dead to take 120 square kilometers, which to somebody may sound like a small piece, but that's realistically 12 kilometers wide and 10 kilometers deep. That's kind of World War I casualty rates for pieces of land like that. I mean, that's a tiny, tiny piece of land to lose 85,000 dead and I don't know how many wounded. You figure about twice as many wounded. So from that point, what will the Europeans do?

We're already fighting NATO. We're unofficially fighting NATO. You know, when the Poles take 10,000 casualties—that's not because they're mercenaries. I mean, they're "sheep-dipped" as mercenaries, but those are entire battalions that go over all of a sudden as mercenaries and then come back and start serving again. That's rotations to get people combat-proficient. But they take casualties—that's part of becoming combat-proficient. You take casualties, you get shot at. The Finns are doing that too. When suddenly 2,000 Finns quit the Finnish army—it's not that big to begin with—to have 2,000 guys suddenly quit, and you've seen this in different European countries.

But, I mean, look—a lance corporal from a parachute regiment, dead from the English army. Do you think he's the only one there? It doesn't work that way. He's not a deserter, he's not an instructor, so what the hell is he? He's a line trooper. Well, if there's a lance corporal, then somewhere there's a sergeant, and there's a bunch of privates, and probably a few officers. There may be a whole battalion sitting there fighting—at least a company-level element. You know, so yes, we're fighting NATO as it is. We're already in combat with NATO; NATO just hasn't put NATO flags up. Macron—

this is one of the problems with Macron. Macron is going to have to explain hundreds of dead Frenchmen, whether they're French legionnaires or, well, Russian-Ukrainian French legionnaires.

Yeah, but they're still part of the French army. They're not a mercenary force—they're an official force. You're part of the French army, probably the best part of it. Um, how do you explain that? It's come up several times in French politics. It's been hushed up; it hasn't exactly blown up yet, but it's going to sooner or later. If you've got the French army taking lots of casualties, you can kind of sweep the rest of those casualties under the rug with all the others and hide your nefarious plans to send Frenchmen off to die—plans that have been in effect for the last four years. I mean, you see generals—French generals, seventy-some years old—who go off into the mountains for a walk and fall down a gorge. You know, lots of car crashes involving NATO officers, plane crashes, helicopter crashes.

All of a sudden, there's this whole surge of people mysteriously dying—an American colonel, a Marine colonel dying in his bed all of a sudden after supposedly going somewhere. They suddenly find his body dead. You start looking at this, and it just doesn't add up. Because if it either consistently happened every year—but no, it's just happening now. For fifty years it didn't happen, but it's happening now. You understand these guys are being killed on the battlefield. I've talked to people from Fort Bragg who are serving right now. They say, yeah, we all know guys are over there getting killed. Families are being paid off to keep quiet. And they're being killed, and we know that. So it's, you know, one of those open secrets. Unfortunately, I think we're already there, at least to some degree.

#Glenn

I think one of the miscalculations of the 2023 counteroffensive was that, to some extent, NATO fell for its own propaganda. In traditional warfare, territory isn't the most important thing—it's about exhausting the adversary. It looked as if Russia decided to tighten up that long, weakly defended supply line, pulling back from Kharkov and Kherson and creating these very tight, well-defended positions—primarily the Surovikin line in the Zaporozhye region. In the media, in the NATO media, all the narratives were being pumped out because the public had to be pumped up for victory—"we're going to defeat Russia," and so on.

And so this was sold as a defeat—as a victory—because everyone said, well, look at the map, look at the map, the Russians are fleeing. That means we're winning, so they're weak. Once they see the Leopard tank, you know, they'll just all run for the hills. That was the general idea. So they sent all these well-armed Ukrainian brigades, all with the newest tanks, all of this, just heading toward those defensive lines. And they were just being slaughtered. I mean, it was grotesque to watch. I remember saying then, this is the worst thing they can do. What are they doing?

And it's like, oh, well, if you criticize it, that means you're just trying to reduce public support. So the public support has to be there all the time, which leads to these stupid narratives that are so self-

destructive. I mean... In 2023, you even had Ukrainian generals appearing in the Washington Post saying, well, we didn't want to do this, we knew it was going to be a disaster. But, you know, the Americans were telling us, well, you have to do it. So again, that's where the decisions were being made. Yeah. I did want to ask you, though, because you spend a lot of time there near the front.

And how do you assess the morale among the Russian troops? Because a key assumption was that while the Ukrainians were fighting for their homeland, the Russians' morale would begin to drop as the war went on, since they were the aggressors. This was supposed to be just a war for territory, for the leadership, so their morale would plummet. But the whole assumption that the Russians would see this as an existential threat was dismissed as cheap propaganda. I think people also neglected how the Russians themselves were feeling there. So I'm not sure how much you've spoken to Russian soldiers—how they see this fight and what the morale is like among them.

#Stanislav Krapivnik

Okay, so... best way to describe this. On one side, when this all started, a lot of people in society were a bit confused, because it probably wasn't the best-sold campaign to begin with, and for various reasons. Now, people like myself, who were much closer to what was going on in Donbass, understood what was happening. The people in Donbass are the most nationalistic Russians you'll ever find, because they've paid for their Russianness with their blood and the blood of their children. And that feeling has spread—it's spreading across Russia among much of the population. The existential crisis, people understood it, but it didn't hit us close to home.

Because when you say the West saw Ukrainians fighting in defense of their own land and the Russians as invaders—for Russians, this is their homeland. These are Russian historical lands. Kyiv was the third capital of Russia, starting with Old Ladoga. Then Rurik from Old Ladoga built Novgorod, and his sworn brother, who had adopted Rurik's son Igor, moved down through Russia. Oleg came down and captured Kyiv, which was part of the Khazar Empire—the westernmost vassal of that empire. And this is all Russian historical land and has been for well over a thousand years. These eastern provinces are absolutely Russian lands.

There is absolutely no doubt about what Novorossiia is. For Russians, this has become not just an existential crisis—it's a fight for the homeland. This is Russian land. This is for Holy Rus. And don't forget, there are a lot of Cossack units and a lot of Orthodox Christian volunteer units that have formed up and are still recruiting and building communities. They go in with the badge of Christ—Christ's face on a flag, or angels, or what have you. I mean, I've got a badge like that myself. They go in there, and it's for Holy Rus. You know, we're fighting for Orthodoxy.

And on the other side, there's the destruction of the canonical church—destruction of churches in general—when Ukrainian drones are targeting old Orthodox churches inside Russia and in eastern Ukraine for destruction, and so on. Now, for Russian Orthodox Christians, for the more religious believers, this is a holy war. It's a holy war against evil, against Satanism. And a lot of Muslims in

Russia have joined in, seeing it as a holy war against Satanism. That's what the Chechens say, if you listen to them. Now, first of all, Ahmad Sila is about 50% Russian, 20% Chechen, and the other 30% is everybody else.

But they—Optia and others—have said the same thing: this is a holy war. You know, the Russians are leading the holy war. And there's an old saying: the Chechens back the Russians because the Russians are backed by God. And this is quite literal. I mean, to Western Europeans, this is going to be a head explosion—for the modern Western European who's anti-Christian, anti-religion, anti-everything. But for us, this is morphing into more. Yeah, on the one hand, Vladimir Vladimirovich and the others are trying to put a bit of a brake on it, but this is how it's growing very quickly inside a very large chunk of the Russian population.

I won't say the entire Russian population—it will never be all of them. But what's happened in the Russian mentality, which was already starting to form but has now accelerated, is this realization: wait a minute, we're not Europeans. We're our own civilization. We've always been that. And the Russian pendulum swings both ways. Either everybody becomes a Westophile, and it doesn't matter—you know, if a Westerner brings a piece of his personal crap from the toilet up to you, they'll say, "Oh, it's golden because it's from the West—even the crap is holy." Then the pendulum swings to the exact opposite, and if somebody brings you a cure from the West, it's satanic and evil. The pendulum has always swung that way throughout Russian history.

And the pendulum is swinging very, very fast in the other direction, where Russians are remembering again that, hey, you know what? We're our own civilization. We've always been. We may be part of Europe, but we're not part of Western civilization, and we don't want to be. And that's the key point. You hear Western companies saying, "Oh yeah, well, this is over, we'll just go back to Russia." A lot of you won't, because the people don't want them there. Or, you know, they left—fine. Chevron and Exxon tried to come back, and I've been told by people who were in some of those negotiations that they were told by the government, "We really don't want these guys back. We don't need them, and we don't want them." That age is gone. That's over. And that's all part of this formation.

War changes societies. It does. It takes on a life of its own, a culture of its own. And it can accelerate changes that might have taken 20, 30, 40 years—they'll happen in three or four. Or changes that might never have gone that far end up going much further. And those European leaders who think that when this is over it's going to be business as usual—it's not. Russia has felt its strength. It's withstood the super-sanctions. The fear of sanctions in Russia was huge. Don't get me wrong—back in '21, '22, before they were actually imposed, there was a real, palpable fear among a lot of people about what sanctions would do and how this was going to play out. And, you know, it's one thing when you threaten somebody or promise some punishment, but you haven't actually done it.

And in their mind, they're imagining much worse scenarios. You know, like a child—"Oh my God, I'm going to get spanked, this is going to be horrible, it's going to break my legs, I'm going to be destroyed." And then—"Oh, I got spanked. That's it? Really? Okay, so I'll stand in the corner for 20 minutes after that. I got to do whatever I wanted before that. Spanking isn't that bad." And it's the same thing that happened with all these threats from the West. They hit, and people went, "This isn't bad. We can survive this. Wait a minute—we've got strength we didn't realize we had." And, you know, by the twentieth sanction package, people just laugh.

You know, what's the next thing? Come on, bring it on. The society, quite literally, doesn't give a damn. Russian society does not give a damn about Western sanctions. Bring fifty more packages—we just don't care. That's the level it's gotten to. There's no fear of sanctions. And most people, you know, a lot of the guys I even thought might leave Russia haven't left. And they'll tell you, "If they declare war, yeah, I'll go fight. I'm not going to volunteer before that—but if I've got to go fight, I'll go fight. If it becomes a declaration of war, sure, I'm not leaving." It's seriously changed the mentality of society.

So it's gone past an existential political crisis for the state to "we're fighting for Holy Rus." This is part of the—well, even the provinces, the way they're being referred to now, are the "new old provinces," because they used to be part of Russia and they're newly again part of Russia. It's the new old provinces. And if you haven't noticed, the rhetoric when portions of Kharkov or Sumy or Dnipropetrovsk oblast are taken—they're not "taken," they're not "occupied," they are "liberated." And liberation means a certain thing there. So the chances they're going to get negotiated away grow smaller and smaller every day this conflict continues. It's a serious mentality change.

#Glenn

Well, what you said about the pendulum swing—this is a common thing in Russian history now. It swings out to the West and the East. But often what incentivized the swing to the West was that, for the past 300 years at least, since Peter the Great, the westernization or Europeanization of Russia was always associated with modernization and economic development. That is, if you want to develop, you have to become more European, effectively. That's the cultural revolution of Peter the Great as well. But this is quite a unique thing now, because this conflict is happening at the same time as the rise of the East and China, with Russia and others developing this new economic architecture. So Russia doesn't have to look so much to the West anymore for economic development.

I'm not sure if that has contributed to the pendulum swinging harder to the East this time, given that there's now a path for economic development with very different partners. But there's been this interesting thing I saw in some Ukrainian reports—there were discussions about what to do with POWs who were Ukrainians, because a lot of the captured Russian soldiers among the POWs are actually Ukrainians, or at least former Ukrainians, from Donbass. The discussion was about what to

do: should we hand them over to Russia, because technically they're our guys? That was the argument. Of course, they might disagree with that. But it's interesting—if you're in Donbass, you're born there.

And then you saw, after 2014, these militants recruited from the western parts of Ukraine—a lot of the Azov and Bandera types—showing up in Donbass. It's hard, I guess, to tell them that they were the defenders. So I can see why the narrative often spun here in the media isn't as simple as it should be. Also, I know the former advisor to Zelensky, Alexey Arestovich—he's not very consistent, a bit all over the place at times—but he did recognize that, from a strategic perspective, banning the Russian language and going after the Orthodox Church were not very smart moves. They ended up alienating huge numbers of their own citizens, who then didn't really feel that Kyiv was there to help them, but rather that they were the target.

But yeah, Putin made the point that if the Europeans decide to enter this war—well, he said it was really a war of the Western Europeans fighting against Russia using Ukrainians. But he also said that if the war breaks out and they involve themselves more directly, Russia is ready for it. And he added that they wouldn't fight the Western Europeans the same way they fought the Ukrainians, because the Ukrainians were, you know, a brotherly people, and at least they were defending their own country.

But the Europeans, who had used the Ukrainians, would be treated very differently. Do you see how this would work? I mean, would it turn into a war of attrition if the Europeans entered? Because I think the dream scenario, from the Western side, is total escalation control—where you just send in the amount of troops you want, either fight in Ukraine or bring the war to Russia. But the assumption, I think, is that it would be fought in a similar way. And I think that's what Putin was trying to signal.

#Stanislav Krapivnik

Well, first of all, I slightly disagree with you there. The pendulum isn't west or east. It's always been external or internal—and the external has always meant the West, never the East. The East was mostly barbaric nomads, or Islamic states, which absolutely couldn't be accepted—like Turkey, for example, as part of Russia's model. We fought thirteen wars with them and won eleven. The big one we lost was the Crimean War, where the French, the British, and the Sardinians did all the fighting and dying for the Turks. The swing right now isn't toward the East culturally; it's inward, toward Russia as a nation-state and a civilization. In parallel with that, though, there's Eastern economic advancement.

And Russia is plugged right into that, having turned its back on many of the Western and Central European markets and ties. They've been severed, primarily by the Europeans themselves. And Russia has quite quickly plugged in elsewhere. Let's not forget, Russia has somewhere between the fourth and fifth largest manufacturing base in the world. Russia is a huge manufacturing power, and

it's being reindustrialized very quickly. I saw a lot of this reindustrialization taking place—the renovation of huge factories. Some of these factories have floor space of thirty to fifty thousand square meters. I mean, these are huge buildings with lots of equipment. That started back in 2006, and it's just been steadily accelerating. And this has done a lot to speed it up. In fact, Trump Jr. said—he was talking about all the rich Ukrainians in Monaco.

And, you know, Zelensky doesn't want to end this war because he's stealing money. And Putin doesn't want to end it either, because—well, he's also kind of implying he's a bad guy. He doesn't want to end the war because he's building factories. Building factories isn't bad, though. Wait a minute, there's something I don't understand here. So, the Russians are industrializing—that's bad? Well, no. For us, it's actually pretty good. And China and the East have created this alternative for Russia. Now, you know, some Chinese culture has appeared because stores have been opening up and selling Chinese groceries or candy. But to say that Russia is saying, "We want to be like China"—no, absolutely not. There's none of that, nothing like what we saw in the '90s toward the West.

#Glenn

I just want to say I agree with you, though, because if you go back to the period of Peter the Great, with the whole idea of remaking Russia as a European country—changing the language, the alphabet, the beard, the dress code, the culture, the literature—I mean, that was the whole point. This is what gave rise to the new pendulum swing toward the Slavophiles, which meant they had to reclaim their own culture, traditions, and civilization. They had to revive what it meant to be Russian. So it's not as if they were turning to China. "East" meant the distinctive cultural traits of Russia. So that's fair enough. Sorry for interrupting, though. But no, I agree with you.

#Stanislav Krapivnik

One of the things Putin said to the Europeans was, "Don't think we're going to fight you the same way." You know, we're pulling punches, we're holding back. I mean, quite literally, if Russia wanted to, Kyiv and every other major city, step by step, would start to look like Gotham. Okay, quick example for the audience: official UN statistics say about 14,000 civilians have been killed in Ukraine in this conflict. Of course, what they don't say is that most of those civilians are on the Russian side, because they all get counted as this ambiguous "Ukrainian" number, even though they don't consider themselves Ukrainians. But anyway... two million dead Ukrainians, and NATO, and mercs, and whatever.

I'm not going to say how many Russians were killed, but it's a lot fewer—many times fewer—than on the Ukrainian side. It's part of attrition warfare, where you have air dominance, rocket dominance, tube artillery dominance, and a lot of other advantages. So what's your kill ratio for civilians, for collateral damage? It's tiny. Now, look at Israel, which admitted, "Yeah, we're killing, but we've got

great casualty control—acceptable carnage.” One and a half civilians for every Hamas fighter killed. That's insane. That's 150 percent—one and a half times more civilians killed. That's huge collateral damage. But the West accepts that.

And they're screaming bloody murder in Ukraine, where Russia is doing everything it can not to kill civilians. You get 400, 500 drones and rockets flying in, and what—four or five people get killed? Usually for being in the wrong place at the wrong time, or something falling on their heads because the anti-aircraft artillery, stationed right in the middle of the city, is shooting something down. And, you know, gravity's still working. Nobody has released Ukraine from the laws of physics—what goes up will come down. At least the Earth will catch up with it, depending on how you want to interpret gravity. But the point is, it still falls on somebody's head. And that's the casualty rate—versus what?

So Russia is holding back a lot. What's going to happen if the Europeans are stupid enough to do this? Is major European infrastructure going to get destroyed? I mean, imagine a cruise missile slamming into the German natural gas storage facilities. First of all, think of the explosion that would create—that's a gigantic blast. Guaranteed, they'd be taken out. The energy ports would be taken out. I would not want to be in NATO headquarters the day NATO declares war. There's not going to be any NATO headquarters left about 30 minutes after that, when the first strike comes slamming through it and burning six floors down into whatever sub-basements they have.

This is going to be a whole different level. And Russia has the armament. Russia is using less than 40% of its military might inside Ukraine. There are over 300,000 ground troops sitting outside Ukraine. They get rotated in—the battalions rotate through. They get combat experience, spend six months at the front, then get rotated out. Another unit comes in to take their position, and so on. They're making sure everybody gets enough rest. I have friends who've come back for a month here, a month there, for vacation time to see their families, and so on.

And the Ukrainians aren't getting vacation time. Some of those guys have been there for three years, and they're lucky to have survived that long. They're not getting any vacation—not even one day. The only way they get off that battlefield is either in a body bag, and usually the Russians are the ones picking up that body bag, or on a stretcher. That's it. That's where the desertion rates are now. And the veterans are deserting—they've figured it out: my chances of getting out of this alive are zero. And this is nothing. When I'm talking about the way Ukrainian society divides, you've got to ask yourself, what's the average Ukrainian going to get out of this war if Ukraine wins?

I mean, let's go full fantasy: Ukraine takes Moscow and wins everything. What's the average Ukrainian get out of this? Debt for the next ten generations, paid medicine he can't afford, destroyed school systems he can't afford, no pensions. None of the land, none of the resources are owned by Ukrainians. Most Ukrainian oligarchs don't even own those areas anymore. That's it. There's nothing for the Ukrainian people to fight for—they're being used. And that, by the way, I think is one of the biggest fears, a kind of twofold fear, among the Western elites. One, the average Ukrainian soldier is going to finally figure this out.

He's still alive, and he's going to switch sides. He wants revenge—revenge for his buddies who died aimlessly, for what he's gone through. He wants revenge. And they're going to be ready to fight, to take the fight to Europe. Two is the crime aspect. Those guys aren't going to disappear, especially if Ukraine gets into the EU and has visa-free entry into all of Europe. I mean, those specialty brigades like Azov—they're not going to disappear. The people there aren't going to disappear. They've tried to use them up on the battlefield, but they got a little smart and said, "No, we're not going to do suicide attacks. Screw you. We're leaving."

Well, you know, one of those guys—highly skilled, battlefield-experienced, well-armed—what are they going to do? You're looking at the next worst nightmare for the entire EU. You're looking at a mafia they're not prepared to deal with. You're looking at people willing to take violence to such a level that the police are going to get wiped out in much of Europe. Most of European society is about to get a battle shock they're not ready for. They're going to make the Islamic jihadists in Europe look like kindergartners. Right now, these people are being hired by the Islamic jihadists, by the mafias, by the Nazis.

But they're going to be coming to a neighborhood near you when those borders open, and they're running through them while weapons are already flowing in. Europe has got a problem—the EU, let me phrase that, has a problem. It has no idea what to do about it. Like I said, it's going to make those Islamic jihadists attacking Christmas markets look like absolute child's play. When these guys come in—and if they come in for revenge—then Europe is screwed. It's screwed badly, because these guys are going to have a lot of blood they'll want to spill. And it's not even so much ideological as it is personal revenge for the last three years, if they fully buy into the idea that they've been backstabbed.

#Glenn

Funny what you said before about the air defenses, because that was actually—well, I mentioned Arestovych before—that's how he fell out of grace and lost his job as Zelensky's top advisor. He made the point that when a missile hit an apartment building in Ukraine, it was actually the air defenses that went astray and hit it. But, you know, you have to stay true to the narrative that it was just evil Russians, that they deliberately targeted civilians. So that's, I think, how he ended up getting kicked out of Zelensky's inner circle. Yeah, sorry.

#Stanislav Krapivnik

Arestovych—I didn't get to him, sorry. When you said he's in a lower place, he's not. He's actually going back to his roots. Interestingly enough, Arestovych, back in the '90s, was a Russian nationalist. He was the leader of the Russian Historical Society in eastern Ukraine. The problem was—and a lot of these guys were—some of these guys, like, I can't remember the young guy who formed Tornado. He's dead now.

A lot of these other Nazi organizations were actually Russian nationalists. Interestingly enough, the problem is that in the 1990s, Moscow didn't do anything with them. They didn't support them, they didn't get support—they got abandoned. And they felt upset, they were hurt. Then here comes the West, and they start pumping them full of these other ideas, and they embraced them. They felt like they had been rebuked, or let down, or betrayed by Russia, and they clung to that. Arestovych was one of those guys. But what Arestovych is doing now is, he's been steadily going right back to his old roots.

Arestovych, by the way, was the first one—of anybody from the Western side—who said, "Look what you're fighting. Those Russian soldiers, those officers who know they're going into a possible suicidal attack to break through—they're going, praying to God, 'We're fighting for the Holy Mother Russia,' and forward we go." He said, "You're fighting a whole different people right now. You're not going to beat them because they're ideologically driven on a different level. This isn't Soviet ideology. This isn't fighting for the people or the workers. No, this is a religious war." He was one of the first ones from the Western side to start saying that.

Again, for Bolton, you know, he was being shut up. You can't say that. You can't tell people that, from that side, it's a holy war and we're the baddies. So Arestovych had to leave Ukraine. And steadily, steadily, he's going further and further. I mean, he's flat-out saying, if you didn't know who he was and you listened to some of his podcasts, you'd say, "Man, this guy is a Russian nationalist." If you listen to it, I wouldn't be surprised if in five years there's an evening news show with Arestovych on some Russian channel. I wouldn't be shocked in the least, to tell the truth. A lot of people have been laughing about this, but, you know, it's kind of gallows humor. It could actually happen. Stranger things have happened.

#Glenn

Well, he's also the one who's often cited because he made the point—back in 2019, you can see it in the interview as well—where he said the only way to join NATO would be to instigate a war with Russia. And once the war began, I mean, he was great at mapping out what could happen. He was like 100% correct about where the Russians would go, what they would take—he nailed it. But he was making a point: then NATO would come in and help us defeat the Russians, and that would be the end of it—a great victory. So that was the price Ukraine had to pay for NATO membership, he said, in 2019. Remember that.

I mentioned that also because today, or maybe two days ago, there's a Swiss colonel—former intelligence guy—Jacques Baud, whom he cites. But just two or three days ago, he was sanctioned by the European Union because he's accused of spreading pro-Russian propaganda. And the example they use is that he said Ukraine orchestrated its own invasion to join NATO. Now, what the colonel actually said was essentially quoting Arestovych. So even if you quote a top Ukrainian official,

it's still considered Russian propaganda. And it's not as if they met him with a counter-argument—they just sanctioned him. A colonel. A Swiss colonel. Yeah, an intelligence officer. I mean, this is really crazy stuff. I have him on my program all the time.

This is just... it's really going far now, where there's no dissent at all. But yeah, my last question is, how do you assess the new diplomatic efforts? I guess it's a bit interesting that Zelensky came out and said they're prepared to take NATO membership off the table. I mean, on one hand, yes, of course—at this point, it seems obvious that has to be done. But before Trump came to power, he refused to even talk to the Russians. To take NATO off does seem like a significant step. But still, it doesn't feel like this is going to end in a negotiated compromise. It looks more and more like it'll end up in a surrender. I was wondering how you see the diplomatic process moving forward—or not moving forward.

#Stanislav Krapivnik

It's interesting to watch the P3, the piano penis player—otherwise known as the narco goblin or the green goblin—taking a step back. Seriously, I would... It's a bit of a crude comparison, but I'd compare this so-called diplomacy to masturbation. It's not sex; it's masturbation. This is not diplomacy. This is the Happy Meal drive-thru of diplomatic efforts. You know, there's no plan—let's just begin with that. Twenty-eight, twenty-nine, twenty-two, nineteen... I don't know how many points. This is a brainstorming session. "Hey, let's think of a couple of things we can put down on this paper—what things we could do for this. Ah, okay, let's have amnesty, let's have this, let's have that." So you've brainstormed twenty-eight points. That's not a plan to begin with; it's just a bunch of semi-related points.

Four documents, five documents—who knows how many? You know, diplomacy takes effort. Diplomacy means getting to the root causes of issues and figuring out what those causes are, why they started, and how to work around them. That's diplomacy. Just look at the Americans: the Korean armistice—well, the Korean War never actually ended—but thankfully we've had seventy years of armistice. The Korean armistice and the end of hostilities took two years to negotiate. The Vietnam War and the American exit from it took seven years to negotiate. Combat didn't stop; combat rarely stops. The problem, of course, for the West is that whatever leverage they have—whether it's about these demilitarized Donetsk oblasts or giving up portions of Zaporizhzhia and Kherson—is based on two big problems.

One, they're based on the fallacy that Vladimir Vladimirovich is some kind of dictator who can just do whatever he wants. He's not. First of all, he's a lawyer—let's just begin with that. He's extremely legalistic. He has a constitution, and the constitution forbids, in black and white—read the Russian constitution, ladies and gentlemen of the unelected European government—black and white: you cannot give up a single square centimeter of Russian territory. End of story. It's an impeachable

offense. That's it. It's not going to be given up. Demilitarizing Donetsk Oblast or something like that—for what? For a criminal hellhole where you can bring in any number of terrorists and shoot things across the border and what have you? It's obvious that's what it's going to be.

No, it's not going to happen. He's not legally allowed to do that. He won't do that. So what do you do now? The other problem is that whatever leverage there even is, it's evaporating—at least a dozen square kilometers a day—and that evaporation is accelerating. What do you do when Huliaipole falls and half of Zaporizhzhia province that's still in Ukrainian hands collapses on the spot? You've got just Zaporizhzhia city. Is the Russian army going to stop there? Of course it's not going to stop. They can drag out the negotiation for another week and take the city while they're at it. You know, and so on. And then what happens? Well, it means those territories are all in Russian hands. Odesa is cut off. Mykolaiv is cut off. Poltava is cut off. Kherson is cut off. Chernihiv is cut off. Sumy is cut off.

And the Russian army is sitting on the eastern keel, on the eastern bank of the Dnieper. And now what? You know, at this point, sooner or later, you're looking at a total collapse of the government. And believe you me, the moment that government goes, the Slovaks, the Hungarians, the Poles, the Romanians, the Moldovans, and the Belarusians are all going to take back a chunk of their land. That makes up Western Ukraine. Nobody's forgotten what's theirs. That's a Frankenstein entity created by Lenin and then added on to by Stalin. Nobody's forgotten what's theirs. They're all going to come back for that pound of flesh plus percentages—big percentages. I mean, they may not call it that, but, you know, the Hungarians in Zakarpattia already had a referendum to join Hungary. Hungary just hasn't accepted the referendum yet. But the referendum's already there.

The Poles—yeah, the Poles may walk into a protectorate. Well, you can call it whatever you want, but what's it going to be? It's going to be Polish territory. Same with the Slovaks, same with the Romanians. You know, everybody's going to go; it's going to be a land grab in every direction. So, you know, interesting days ahead—or interesting months, maybe a year, year and a half. For the West, it's very important to get the Poles fighting, because then they can't just take back their old territories and say, "Okay, thanks, Russians are over there, we're over here, we got ours, let's have peace." That's the last thing you want—peace breaking out. So if you can get the Poles in there actively fighting, or the Romanians actively fighting, then, you know, that muddies the waters quite a bit. But we'll see. We'll see.

#Glenn

A strange thing, though, is the whole diplomatic process. If you're sitting in Brussels and you see the situation getting worse and worse, you know you can't negotiate peace overnight. As you said, it's a long process—it can take years while the fighting goes on. But nonetheless, they know this. Nobody wants to talk to Moscow, yet at the same time they want an immediate stop to the war—a ceasefire,

no more hostilities. So, no talking, but end the war right away. That's the whole diplomatic process. If we had been talking for the past four years, at least we might have a foundation for a common understanding.

There could have been something about this obsession, like kids in the schoolyard, that we have to freeze out Moscow. The whole diplomatic process is gone, and now there's no one left to save the situation. It's really diplomacy—or couldn't be more of a spectacular failure. And this is, you know, in these days when everyone has to be labeled pro this or pro that. I mean, it would have been beneficial for everyone to have some talks going, just to have a starting point for some common security. But no, there's really nothing. It's quite extraordinary that this was actually allowed to happen. But yeah, here we are. So, any final thoughts before we wrap up?

#Stanislav Krapivnik

I would say, forget just these three or four years. If there had been real conversation instead of Western moralizing and virtue-signaling lectures, there could have been a moral framework back in 1948, right? None of this would have happened. I mean, look—when NATO was being formed and established in 1949, Stalin actually asked to join NATO for a European security pact. For God's sake, the whole Cold War didn't have to happen.

Can you imagine Europe's trajectory if, in 1948, we'd had a common security pact across the whole continent, edge to edge? What would reality look like right now—what Europe could have achieved if we'd started there, instead of wasting all that effort on the Cold War and the proxy wars around it? And by the way, that might have even moderated the Soviet Union too, while we're at it. Who knows where we'd be right now—maybe sitting on the moon. But in reality, how much effort and how many resources were wasted? In 1992, Yeltsin asked to join NATO. In 2000, Putin asked to join NATO. In 2021, Putin proposed direct talks on a European security pact and infrastructure. And now we're at war. I mean, talk about missed opportunities—one after another, just ignored. Ignored, ignored, ignored. It's been the exact opposite of what it could have been for the last eighty years.

#Glenn

You could have added 1994—the OSCE could have been the central security institution. The 2008 Medvedev proposal for a pan-European security architecture. The 2010 EU–Russia union. I mean, there have been a lot of proposals coming out of Moscow, but then...

#Stanislav Krapivnik

I'll add one. Excuse me for interrupting—I'll add one. Who was the first to propose the League of Nations in Helsinki? Nicholas II. So, going back to Imperial Russia, they were already trying to set up a European infrastructure to avoid wars—to avoid World War I, which destroyed most of Europe. World War I could have been avoided. Russia's been pushing and proposing, if we really look at it,

for the last 140 years to set something up. It's insane when you start to look at history. And how has Russia been portrayed by the West? The enemy, the whore, the evil one.

They're the ones trying to keep Europe from butchering itself. Europe seems very intent on butchering somebody—somebody has to get butchered. Otherwise, the only thing that seems to unite Europe in any kind of organization is, "Let's go have fun butchering somebody—or each other." I mean, it's insane. But for Christ's sake, this whole last century—the so-called golden age of Europe, the destruction of that golden age that started in 1914—could have been avoided. All of it could have been avoided. The last 140 years of history could have been different.

#Glenn

Yeah, I keep thinking—if, you know, I make the point now, always, that the best thing Europe can do, now that America is going other places, is for Europe to end the dividing lines in Europe and make peace with Russia. But of course, that's a very difficult sell these days. Often the feedback you get is, "Well, you know, we can't—we have to stand with Ukraine." But this is what destroyed Ukraine. I mean, if we hadn't made a frontline out of them, Ukraine could have prospered as a bridge between Russia and the EU. It could have been... it's just—no, it's very depressing to see how this has played out. But again, this is the problem: when you have the same politicians in power, they only double down, no matter how bad it goes. So perhaps we just need some new blood, some new thinking.

#Stanislav Krapivnik

An IQ test before they get in—at least a history or economics test. "Do you understand economics?" "Absolutely."

#Glenn

Well, as I mentioned before, now new thinking is sanctioned. So this is the new state of freedom in the EU. I mean, the pushback against Trump's or the U.S. national security strategy—the way they refer to Europe as authoritarian—I guess now they've proved him wrong by sanctioning their own intelligence chiefs and so on.

#Stanislav Krapivnik

It's really crazy. Yeah, look at England—it's an open-air gulag. I don't know how else to describe the UK but as an open-air gulag. Thirteen thousand arrests just this year—for what? For people who, I mean, they're literally letting murderers and rapists out of prison because they don't have enough room for people who said, "I don't like this guy," or "You're a muppet," or "We've got too many immigrants." What offense did they actually commit? Oh, thought crime. Okay, so that makes them political prisoners. The UK is the biggest holder of political prisoners in the world at this point.

#Glenn

Well, on that note, I think we've already gone a bit over time. Thank you very much for taking the time—I really appreciate it. So, thank you.

#Stanislav Krapivnik

Same, same. Thanks, Johan.