

An Open Letter to Chancellor Merz - Security Is Indivisible and History Matters

Prof. Jeffrey Sachs wrote an Open Letter to Chancellor Friedrich Merz: "Security Is Indivisible — and History Matters": <https://braveneweuropa.com/jeffrey-sachs-an-open-letter-to-chancellor-friedrich-merz-security-is-indivisible-and-history-matters> Follow Prof. Glenn Diesen: Substack: <https://glennndiesen.substack.com/> X/Twitter: https://x.com/Glenn_Diesen Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/glennndiesen> Support the research by Prof. Glenn Diesen: PayPal: <https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/glennndiesen> 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. Joining us from the lounge in Belgrade is Professor Jeffrey Sachs. Welcome, and thank you for taking the time out of your busy schedule.

#Jeffrey Sachs

Pleasure to be with you, and thank you for reaching out to me.

#Glenn

Well, the reason I reached out to you is that you've advised governments around the world and continue to have very good contact with many different world leaders. This is interesting because you just wrote an open letter to the German Chancellor, Friedrich Merz, about Germany's responsibility for European security. I was wondering if you could, well, flesh out some of the arguments you make in that letter.

#Jeffrey Sachs

Absolutely, Glenn. The letter arises because Chancellor Merz is beating the drums of war almost every day. He's saying that Russia is an enemy, that we have to prepare for war. He doesn't even attempt to engage in any kind of diplomacy with President Putin. He's the Chancellor of Germany, and he has a responsibility. I'm rather alarmed at the state of affairs in European politics right now because Europe is on the wrong track—it's on a very dangerous course, with no self-understanding whatsoever. And the German Chancellor really should be recognizing this situation.

The point of my letter is that the German Chancellor should understand that Germany has played quite a role in the lead-up to, and the continuation of, this Ukraine war. Germany has not behaved responsibly. At many points, Germany took an absolutely wrong and contradictory path compared to what its leaders were saying. I want Chancellor Merz to reflect on this before disaster occurs. I want honest reflection in Germany. And Glenn, I start out with a very, very basic point. Of course, it's been much discussed, but it's a matter of special responsibility for Germany.

And that is that in 1990, the German government unequivocally and repeatedly promised the Soviet leadership—and the Russian leadership, still within the context of the Soviet Union—that NATO would not expand eastward in the context of German reunification. So Germany has an absolutely central role and responsibility in the disaster that has unfolded. Because, of course, Germany cheated, and the United States cheated. Both Germany and the U.S., in February 1990, on repeated occasions to President Gorbachev and to other senior Soviet officials, said unequivocally, in the context of the negotiations over German reunification, "not one inch eastward." There was no ambiguity about it. The meaning of it was clear.

NATO would not even expand into the eastern part of a reunified Germany, much less into Eastern Europe, much less to the Baltics, much less to Ukraine and Georgia. And that was not an accidental commitment. The unification of Germany in 1990 was the end of World War II, and in order for Germany to be reunified, Germany committed to the Soviet Union—and then to President Yeltsin in 1991 and 1992—that the reunification of Germany, the country that caused the disaster of World War II, would not take advantage of the Soviet Union, and specifically that NATO would not move eastward. Of course, in the Western propaganda world, this is denied or brushed off as insignificant—"that's a long time ago." It is not insignificant. It is the **casus belli** of this war. Everybody who has been close to this war knows it.

Actually, just a couple of days ago, a senior National Security Council figure in the U.S. Biden administration—who was pranked on a call—said unequivocally, yes, if we had said no to NATO enlargement, there would not have been a war in Ukraine. So my point in the letter to Chancellor Scholz is: take some responsibility, Chancellor. This is your country. Your country is at the center of this crisis. Understand this history, tell the truth, and stop beating the drums of war. I go on to many, many other examples of German lack of candor, reflection, honesty, or understanding about Germany's own role in leading to this disaster. And there are many, many cases one could discuss.

Another example is 1999, when Germany, as part of NATO, participated in the bombing of where I am today—Belgrade—for 78 days in the heart of Europe. Under no instruction or accountability to the United Nations, this was a big power play in which Germany played its role in an absolutely illegal action. Or take Germany's acquiescence and silence when the United States unilaterally walked out of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty in 2002, which was the single most important destabilization of the nuclear arms control framework of modern times. And everything about NATO

enlargement needs to be understood in the context of a fractured, destabilized nuclear arms framework that the United States and its NATO allies broke, because the ABM Treaty was part of nuclear stability.

And then the United States said, no, we don't participate in that, and we'll expand NATO—contrary to the promises we had made. Or take the recognition of Kosovo by Germany in 2008, after the NATO bombing. So Europe is all about the inviolability of borders—except when Europe wants to break the borders. Europe broke Serbia. And not only did it break Serbia apart—naturally, not surprisingly—it put the largest NATO military base in Southeast Europe into Kosovo, the part of Serbia it had broken apart. That base is Bondsteel, the largest NATO base in the Balkans region. And then, in the same year, Germany participated in the disaster of the Bucharest NATO summit.

Very interesting meeting, by the way—the one that was the proximate cause of this war. Because in 2008, the United States demanded that the NATO allies announce that NATO would expand to Ukraine and to Georgia. Very interesting. Not only completely contrary to promise, but actually completely contrary to what the Ukrainians themselves wanted that year, because there was overwhelming public opposition to NATO membership. The Ukrainians knew this would get them into trouble. Bush pushed hard. Chancellor Angela Merkel has written in her recent memoirs that she knew this was a terrible and dangerous decision that could lead to war. But she folded her hand, and on the second day of the Bucharest summit went along with the United States, with the commitment that NATO would enlarge to Ukraine and to Georgia—putting us on the path toward outright war.

Then I remind Chancellor Merz that on February 21, 2014, in the context of the Maidan uprising—demonstrations that were stirred, spurred, and funded by the United States in many different ways—Germany, together with Poland and, I believe, France as well, the three foreign ministers of the European Union, negotiated with President Yanukovich of Ukraine that, in the context of this instability, calm would be restored, the constitutional government of President Yanukovich would continue, and there would be elections later in 2014. All of that was agreed to by the German foreign minister and his colleagues on February 21, 2014. Within hours, the so-called protesters backed by the United States—really hard-right paramilitaries—seized the government buildings in Kyiv and installed an extra-constitutional government, lying by claiming that Yanukovich had resigned, while Yanukovich said absolutely clearly, “I am president of Ukraine. I absolutely did not resign.” So where was Germany a few hours after it had brokered an agreement? It went silent. “Yeah, we support the new government. We support the coup.”

No responsibility by Germany at all. When the Donbass region said, “We don't go along with the coup,” and when the coup regime immediately proposed a crackdown on the ethnic Russian population in many ways, including restricting the use of the Russian language, of course the war began. And in early 2015—so not even a year into this war, basically almost on the anniversary of the Maidan, just before—Russia helped to broker a peace agreement called the Minsk II Agreement. That called for an end to hostilities based on the political autonomy of the Donbass region, of

Donetsk and Lugansk. And Germany stood up again—Chancellor Merkel and France said, “We will guarantee peace.” This new treaty was passed by the UN Security Council unanimously, and Germany and France were to be the guarantors in the so-called Normandy process.

They cheated once again, because inside this game of the U.S. and Ukraine, they said, “Nah, we’re not going to give autonomy to the Donbass. We’re going to retake it by force.” And the U.S., of course, built up, at billions of dollars of expense, a million-man army in Ukraine for that purpose. What did France and Germany, as guarantors of the Minsk II Agreement, do when Ukraine refused to implement the agreement that was endorsed by the UN Security Council? Germany did nothing. Not a word. And then, when Chancellor Merkel was asked about it after she had left her position, she said, “Oh yes, you know, really, it was just buying time for Ukraine to gain strength.” For a lot of reasons, I don’t think that was the original intention.

I think it was the weakness of Germany, not that it was a game from the start. I have reason to believe that Chancellor Merkel actually thought autonomy was the right model, because, in part, the Minsk II Agreement was modeled on an autonomy arrangement for ethnic German-speaking citizens of northern Italy, in a region called South Tyrol—something that Chancellor Merkel knows a lot about. So I don’t think she meant from the start that it was a game, but she did not stand up for peace at all. So, Glenn, all of this is to say that you wouldn’t hear a word of this from Chancellor Merz. He hasn’t said one word about German accountability, about German responsibility, about NATO enlargement—which, again, everybody understands is the core reason for this war.

He hasn’t said a word about the Maidan coup, which was contrary to what Germany had promised. He hasn’t said a word about the failure of the Minsk II Agreement, which Germany had promised to guarantee in its implementation. So I find the situation both extraordinarily dangerous and without any reflection whatsoever by these so-called leaders who are leading us to disaster—and leading Europe to disaster. It’s this pair of German leaders: Merz and Ursula von der Leyen. They know each other; they’re working hand in hand—two German leaders who don’t acknowledge for one moment Germany’s responsibility for peace or its role in helping to create this disastrous situation.

#Glenn

The irony, though, is that when Moscow supported the unification of Germany, there were actually some very strong political forces, both in France and Britain, that were not comfortable with German reunification—some even referred to it as a “Fourth Reich.” The argument was that Germany would achieve in peace what it couldn’t achieve in war. Yet, as Moscow supported the unification of Germany, Germany was seen to, well, to some extent, stab the Russians in the back, because when it came time to unify Europe, everyone was eventually going to be included and have a seat at the table—except for the Russians—which effectively revived bloc politics. But this is interesting.

#Jeffrey Sachs

And Glenn, we know that Germany was right there at the start of this deceit—not only violating the explicit promises it had made, but arguing right away that NATO should expand, contrary to every word that had been said. So Germany wasn't just a bystander that let its word go bad; it was an active participant in 1993 and 1994, from the start, in helping to persuade Bill Clinton—who was a very inexperienced and, at the time, rather inconsequential president—to do this absolutely disastrous thing, which was to break a very important diplomatic agreement. And, you know, this has been rehearsed again and again and debated. But there are now countless testimonials that this NATO question was the key, including the one I mentioned just a couple of days ago from an insider in the Biden administration making this acknowledgment. So Merz should tell the truth about this.

#Glenn

This was Amanda Sloat?

#Jeffrey Sachs

That's correct.

#Glenn

She was the head advisor for Europe. This was not a minor position at all.

#Jeffrey Sachs

That is absolutely correct. They know what they're doing. And by the way, as I've said on many occasions, I had exactly this conversation with Jake Sullivan at the end of 2021. I said to him on a long phone call, "Jake, say that NATO is not going to enlarge to Ukraine." And he said to me, "Jeff, believe me, NATO's not going to enlarge to Ukraine." And I said, "Jake, if you say that, say it publicly." "Oh no, Jeff, I can't say it publicly. We have an open-door policy." I said, "Jake, you're going to go to war over something that isn't even going to happen." And he said to me, "Jeff, there's not going to be a war." This is the lunacy we live with right now—the falsehoods we live with from these government officials. And Merz needs to behave honestly before we are dragged into disaster.

#Glenn

Given that Germany has become one of the main authors of this war, what I found very powerful in your letter is the argument that European security has to be indivisible—that this is not a Russian talking point. This was at the center of all our agreements, which we actually signed for a pan-European security architecture. Yet when you listen to the Germans today, they refute the basic notion that Russia should have any security guarantees at all. I mean, how did we go from

recognizing indivisible security as the core of stability in Europe to rejecting the idea that the Russians have any legitimate security concerns or should have guarantees at all? I mean, this is quite extraordinary, but it's become normalized, I feel.

#Jeffrey Sachs

Glenn, you know, I've been looking back at the key moments of the last two centuries. It's a recurring affliction, and Germany has played a role in it repeatedly. You go back, of course, to World War II. At the end of World War II, the main conference in Potsdam said that Germany would be neutral and demilitarized. And again, the U.S., Britain, and France cheated on that. They said, no, our part will be remilitarized, it will become an independent country, and it will become part of NATO. And in 1952, Stalin reached out in what's called the Stalin Note and said to the West, "But Potsdam—you promised: neutral and demilitarized." And that's how the Cold War that was evolving could have ended. And, you know, historians then argued, and Western historians said, no, Stalin didn't really mean it, and so on.

But when the archives were opened, it turned out Stalin absolutely meant it: neutralize Germany, disarm Germany, and the Cold War can end. The one who blocked it was Adenauer, the Chancellor of Germany. He said, better that we're divided than that we are neutral. So Germany played a false card. He actually had his ambassador in London tell British senior officials, in a very secret note, "I don't trust the German people. I don't want to be neutral. Maybe in the future they would side with Russia. So I don't trust my own people." In this communication, the German ambassador explained, "Please, this should never become public, because that would obviously weaken the political position of the chancellor were this to be known." But the point is that Adenauer behaved with deceit, and the claim was, oh, Stalin didn't mean it.

But the historians have shown Stalin meant it. The one that was deceitful was Germany. And I'm sorry, we are seeing this again and again. But the point from my letter today—I didn't even want to go back through all this history. I just wanted to say that in the immediate period of unification, Germany was right there, and it did not keep its word. It has to take responsibility right now to make peace on the basis of diplomacy, not on this propagandistic narrative about what's happening today. And Merz absolutely needs to know this history and tell it truthfully before we all suffer a complete disaster. I just cannot believe that Merz and von der Leyen are trying to put Europe in their hands again, in a twisted way—sorry—that's going to create a disaster for Europe, too. That's the point.

#Glenn

Well, something has to be said for Germany—that during that time, they did have the Ostpolitik, which contributed something good. So it's very sad to see that yet again, Germany aspires to take a leading role in a war against Russia.

#Jeffrey Sachs

But also, just to say—you know, Willy Brandt, of course, with Ostpolitik, was a remarkable politician. Helmut Schmidt. I knew Chancellor Kohl personally. I met and had meetings with Hans-Dietrich Genscher. You know, I thought they were honorable people who wanted German unity, and they had some stature. They explained how this could be done with indivisible security for Russia as well as for Europe. And if they would just live up to this now, this war would end.

#Glenn

Thank you very much. And, well, just one last point—I also found that very fascinating in your letter, the focus on truth, that truth can put an end to all these hostilities. Because it's not just that we have disagreements, as you've said before with Sullivan in our previous talks—you mentioned Merz, now Macron, and again Merz. The fact is, they know exactly what Russia fears, what caused the war. The problem is that they lie. It's not two competing arguments; it's that they don't tell the truth. They say one thing in private and something different in public. It's this deceit and propaganda that's the horrible part of this whole war.

#Jeffrey Sachs

Until the prankster gets someone to tell the truth, they just keep lying to each other.

#Glenn

That's absolutely correct. It's the pranksters and comedians who have to bring us the reality. It's a great tragedy. But, well, I know you're there at the airport, and I have to catch your next flight. So, as always, thank you so much for taking the time.

#Jeffrey Sachs

Thanks. Great to be with you, Glenn Diesen. Thanks so much.