# US-EU Conflict Is Coming - Time to Dissolve NATO

Royal Navy Commodore Steve Jermy commanded warships in the 5th Destroyer Squadron and Britain's Fleet Air Arm. He served in the Falklands War and in the Adriatic for the Bosnian and Kosovo campaigns. Then retired after an operational tour, in 2007, as Strategy Director in the British Embassy in Afghanistan. He is the author of the book: "Strategy for Action: Using Force Wisely in the 21st Century". https://www.amazon.co.uk/Strategy-Action-Using-Wisely-Century/dp/1908134003 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. We are joined again by Royal Navy Commodore Steven Jermy, who commanded four warships in the 5th Destroyer Squadron and Britain’s Fleet Air Arm. He served in the Falklands War and in the Adriatic Sea during the Bosnian and Kosovo campaigns. He later retired in 2007 as Strategy Director at the British Embassy in Afghanistan. He’s also the author of the book *Strategy for Action: Using Force Wisely in the 21st Century*. I’ll make sure to leave a link in the description for his book and article. You also have a background, of course, in policy planning and the development of strategies.

I’m very glad you’re here today because I wanted to ask you about what’s on everyone’s mind — this new U.S. national security strategy. It seems to be a complete reversal of the post–Cold War strategy of global primacy in cooperation with Europe. This is, of course, being interpreted very poorly by the Europeans, to say the least. There seems to be some outrage in Europe, and they’re already lashing out or pushing back. I was wondering if you could map out your ideas around this security strategy and also the European perspective — how this affects Europe.

## #Steven Jermy

Yeah, I thought this would be a really good opportunity, so thank you for that, Glenn. You're an international relations specialist. I was lucky—the Navy sent me off for a year to Cambridge, where I read for an M.Phil. in international relations. But I wouldn’t be anywhere near your level of reading, I’ m sure.

## #Glenn

You only commanded the warships to push me into policy. But yes, there you go.

## #Steven Jermy

Yes, so I was in the MOD, Glenn, and it was just when 9/11 happened. I was a deputy director of the department. What we did immediately afterwards was rewrite British defence policy, and that meant doing two central things: rewriting the overall structure of the policy, but also rewriting what we called the defence planning assumptions — which were about how you restructure your armed forces. I thought it'd be interesting to have a bit of a conversation about how that restructuring might take place. I was also lucky enough to head off to places like Afghanistan and really see the policy in action.

So what it gave me was probably a rather unusual insight into how policy is made. As I look at the document, I think it's a much more important one than most European commentators realize, because most of the time they're just outraged. What they don't do is look at the more interesting subtleties in the document. If I had to guess who the key architects were, I'd say that on the European and rest-of-the-world side it was probably Vance and Gabbard, and on the American side, probably Rubio and Hegseth, with Trump signing it off.

Because I'm seeing what I'd call a more conventional neocon approach in the Americas, and a more realist approach, I think, in the rest of the world — particularly in Europe. But I'd also make a distinction between policy, strategy, and planning. Now, the document says that strategy is a plan. That's not right; otherwise, strategy would just be a plan. The difference, as I wrote about, is that policy gives you an overarching sense of what a country wants to do and what it's prepared to invest. Strategy then takes that policy and tries to turn it into action — it does that by answering the "how" question.

So how are we going to invest and execute this policy? Then planning turns strategy into action. That's the way I think about it, and that's the way I'll talk about these three things. But I think the first thing is the strategic context that's set out, because the Europeans have been looking narrowly at their own section and not looking more broadly at the overall context the document's talking about. What I think the document does is accept that we've moved from a unipolar world not to a multipolar world, but to a tripolar one. And I think that tripolar world is a bit of an isosceles triangle, with the United States on one side and China and Russia much more closely aligned on the other.

And I think what it also recognizes, tacitly, is that as a result of America's deindustrialization, they're now much less militarily powerful than they used to be. I'm sure this is the Pentagon starting to feed that back to people and saying, "Look, we can't deliver as many 155-millimeter shells as we want. We probably can't conduct a long campaign in the Western Pacific against China." So I think there's

some realism in that. But I also think another useful point, in terms of the strategic context, is that while they don't explicitly say the regional focus is in priority order, I think it probably is. So, number one is the United States.

And who can be surprised about that? Number two, though, is the Americas, and that's where America is starting to see its vital national interests. Number three is Europe, although I think it'll be worth us talking about that in more detail. Number four is the Middle East. I'm surprised they're in that order, but I understand it. Number five is Africa. But I think what we're really seeing here is a very different set of priorities from the Americans. And one of the principles that stood out to me is that non-interventionism is the general approach. You'll know much better than I do that America has sort of zigzagged between interventionism and isolationism.

And I think what we're seeing here is a move in America—not straight toward isolationism, but toward a much more nuanced kind of intervention. An intervention where they think they have a chance of success, or where they think it's likely to impact their vital national security interests. And that doesn't seem to include Europe or the Russia-Ukraine war. So I think the context is really important. Unless you understand that these are Americans setting out their vital national interests, you're likely to do things—like the Europeans are doing—that actually work 180% against America's national interests without realizing it. So that means being a good ally. But should I just stop there and let you come back?

## #Glenn

Well, I think a mistake the Europeans make is perhaps the same one they made with the first Trump administration. They just said, "Well, he's just an odd duck. Let's wait him out, then we'll go back to normal," which apparently was then Biden. But I think Trump represents a much wider, more fundamental shift in the United States. Again, we always tend to assess intentions as opposed to capabilities—what the U.S. actually can do. I mean, I think capability is what defines its intention. So what really defined the United States, as you said, after the Cold War, has been this hegemonic peace built into former security strategies, such as in 2002, when it made the point that U.S. security is dependent on preserving its hegemonic status.

That is, if you can dominate the world, then there won't be great power rivalry, and this will essentially keep stability in the international system. Now, say what you will about this—either way, whether you're for it or against it—it's kind of beside the point that that era is over. There's a new distribution of power, and you can't just keep pretending it's not. And I think this changes everything. Because in the past, if you were liberal in America, you'd say, "Well, as long as we dominate, we can elevate human rights and advance democracy." They were for it.

And of course, then you had the neocons, who were just more into domination. They got it. So it was this almost unholy marriage saying, "Yeah, let's go for it." And, you know, you can make arguments for it and against it. But I guess my point is that the consequence for the U.S. over time

would predictably be that it exhausts itself economically, militarily, and politically. And, of course, that would also incentivize this collective balancing. So I think now, more and more in the United States, they view hegemony as a burden—something that exhausts the U.S. Republic and makes them unable to compete with China.

And so it's unsustainable. If you look at where they are now compared to the ’90s—with $38 trillion in debt and all these problems building up—it’s not sustainable. So there’s a very rational case to be made for why they’d want to change course. Now, obviously, Trump isn’t going to define America for the next few decades, but he is a transitional figure. I think the Europeans delude themselves, thinking this is just a policy choice, a weird ideology—MAGA radicals or something. I think that’s a mistake. But of course, you’re there doing the policy planning with your European colleagues, making these mistakes?

## #Steven Jermy

Yeah, I think their focus has been far off—or at least, as far as I can see from the European mainstream media and the main opinion formers. They’re making a number of mistakes, but probably one of the most important is not being in a position, or not even trying, to analyze the balance of power. I wrote an article about this—I think it was published in *The New European* or something like that; I’ll let you know for those who might want to read it. In it, I said that the balance of power overwhelmingly favors Russia. But the point of the article was that it explicitly focused on what the key determinants of that balance of power are.

In that piece, I wrote about two things: energy and industry—and how those two together are what allow a nation to be powerful. This was explicitly mentioned by Admiral Yamamoto before the start of the Second World War, when he said—well, I won’t get the quote exactly right—that anyone who’s seen the oil fields of Texas and the factories of Ohio would know we could never win a long-term war against America. The article focused on the Russia-Ukraine war, but I think it’s equally true when we talk about America’s balance of power with China and Russia.

And I think when you look at it through that lens, you start to see that America is no longer in a position to dominate. I think the key factors are, as you say, that they’ve exhausted huge amounts of money—as indeed has the rest of the West—on interventions in Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, and now the Russia-Ukraine war, for very little obvious benefit. But there’s also been something else going on, which is deindustrialization. I put that down to the Chicago School of economists, who leave everything to the market. And what happens then is that the market moves companies and industries abroad, particularly to China, where things are cheaper.

And as a result of that, we're now in a position after 20 years of deindustrialization, which means that America is now at a point where, even if it wanted to take on a hegemonic role, it doesn’t have the power to do so. Money goes with that, of course. But I think it’s both the money and the fact that America is now deindustrialized—though not completely. It’s still a lot more industrialized than

some other areas. But we know that Russia has out-industrialized, in this war, the whole of Europe and America put together, and is continuing to do so. So I think there's a tacit recognition in the document that hegemony is no longer possible, even if they wanted it. I happen to think it's not a good idea either. So there's a tacit recognition that we're now in a kind of tripod world.

As regards the Europeans, I just see no sign of them getting this yet. And it's difficult to understand why, other than that they seem to have completely seduced themselves with a political narrative. I said many months ago—I think it was about a year and a half ago, in a podcast with Danny Davis—that European and NATO operations in the Russia-Ukraine war are being driven by a political narrative, while the Russians are driven by military strategy. And surprise, surprise, the military strategy is winning out. It's a solid military strategy, which I have the greatest respect for, because it is winning. But unfortunately, we seem to have what I can best describe as cult thinking among the European elites.

And it's not just the politicians. I've seen it in military officers, I've seen it in intelligence officers, and it's almost as if they're captured by the cult. The problem with cults—or with cult thinking—is that when something happens which goes against the narrative, you try to rationalize it in a way that makes sense of the narrative, instead of seeing it as an opportunity to say, "Perhaps we've got this wrong." And I see no sign yet of Europe thinking it's got it wrong. I think it was Schopenhauer who said that truth has three stages: first, it's ridiculed; second, it's violently opposed; and third, it's taken as self-evident.

And I think America now tacitly takes the truth of the Russia-Ukraine war as self-evident, whereas Europeans—or European leaders—are still violently opposing it, notwithstanding the fact that it's obvious, and has been obvious, to people like you and me, and John Mearsheimer, and Scott Ritter, and Doug Macgregor, and Daniel Davis, that this was a lost war two years ago, and it's even more of a lost war now. So no, I don't think Europeans get this yet. When they do, they're going to face a very unpalatable situation: either coming clean and saying, "We got this wrong, and we need to work out how we're going to move forward as Europeans," or just trying to double down and hope—which, so far, is what they're doing.

## #Glenn

Yeah, this is a problem with ideology, I think, as well, because ideology has some positive purposes. It creates conformity around some common shared truths—ideas we all subscribe to. But the problem with ideology is that when reality changes on the ground, there's often less flexibility to adjust to new realities. And this is unfortunate for us, because openness has been one of the strengths of Western civilization. That is, you're open, you recognize the situation as it is, you're able to see mistakes, correct them, and adjust away from the former, weaker position. But it feels like we've really locked ourselves into this.

As you said, as soon as any evidence comes forth that contradicts this, the main assumption is that it's an attack—not just on our country, not just on the narrative, but on our entire reality and who we are, how we view ourselves in the world. Especially for the EU, they see themselves almost as having some divine function: to transition from the chaotic world of the past to some new liberal democratic order. I mean, this is how they define their foreign policy—"We're going to change the world, make it more liberal democratic, essentially reinvent the world in our own image." So for them to change course is very difficult, because they'd have to change their identity, the foundation of their common policy, and their entire set of shared truths. It's a lot to ask. So I can understand why they're so stubborn—but yes.

## #Steven Jermy

I think what they might have missed is that they're now fighting a war on two fronts, Glenn. They're fighting a war against—well, they and NATO, in the NATO-Ukraine war—but they're also fighting a war now with the Americans. Because, explicitly, and this is not about European nations but rather the EU and other transnational organizations, the Americans come out directly against those organizations in this document. So what they're actually saying is that they believe one of the key problems in Europe lies within those institutions. And I suspect that message will land quite well with a lot of the European population.

A lot of it won't, but I'd imagine a significant portion of the European population will think that. I mean, when Britain came out of Europe—I voted for Brexit, and I voted for it for structural reasons, because I could see it was likely to be unsustainable in the medium to long term. I thought you couldn't have a European superstate without complete control of fiscal and monetary policy, and that's impossible unless you have a single organization in charge. The second thing I felt was that the euro was also likely to be unsustainable.

And if you look at the euro now, what are called the Target 2 imbalances between the northern nations—the wealthier nations—and the southern nations, as far as I can see, the debts there are unrepairable. So it seemed to me that as soon as things started to come under economic pressure, and Germany started to run short of money—Germany being the major banker—then the Germans would start to think it really wasn't worth their while continuing within the European Union. And then quite a few other nations would see that if there was no value in terms of investment from the northern nations, who would be drawing back, they too would start to question the utility of the European Union.

So I think the European Union is in deep trouble now, and I don't see a way out of it. A lot of it is self-imposed, frankly. I mean, the policies in the Russia-Ukraine war have only intensified this, inasmuch as they've championed sanctions on energy which, speaking as somebody who works in the energy industry, were always likely to be boomerang sanctions. They're doing much more damage to Europe than to Russia. And yet everybody seems to be waiting to see if Russia will

eventually collapse. So we get into the nineteenth round of sanctions. To me, sooner or later the Germans are going to begin to question how much they want to keep paying for the European Union—and so will the other net-paying nations, such as Holland and so on.

And at that stage, the utility will start to be questioned. I think there's an open question as well about NATO, but we can perhaps come back to that in a second. I think it's about time the European Union actually started to think to itself: we're fighting a war that the Russians see as existential, and we know isn't. On the one hand, we're up against the Russians, but we also now have political opponents on the other side of the Atlantic. And while the neocons and the "Make America Great Again" crowd—the different parts of the American political spectrum—may disagree on what should be done about the Russia-Ukraine war, I suspect they're all completely agreed about the European Union. The European Union is now in America's crosshairs, and it's not in the best shape in its relationship with Russia either.

## #Glenn

Yeah, I think that's why this framing of how they view the EU is important—because they use the phrase "civilizational erasure," suggesting that European civilization is destroying itself. They point to the economics, the demographics, the inability to reproduce culture. So they go through the whole list, more or less, of all the indicators of a dying civilization, and they put that on the shoulders of the European Union. Now, this is quite significant, because then it's not merely recognizing that the EU might be a competitor or have some unfortunate policies, but rather making the case for saving European civilization—which, in their view, means getting rid of the EU. And as you said, the EU is in the crosshairs of the United States, and they've made a kind of virtuous case for it: that we're going to save Europe by getting rid of this institution.

Now, I'm very happy to move on to NATO, as you suggested, because one of the scholars I really like is David Mitrany, a Brit who wrote in the 1960s about the EU. The reason I cite him often is because he always contrasted functionalism and federalism. He made the point that you have two pathways to integration. And he said, you know, if you have functionalism, you look at where it makes sense to integrate—in terms of security, governance, or economics—and wherever it makes sense, they integrate. So, in other words, the function of integration should dictate what kind of form it takes in the end. But he said that what's dangerous on the European continent, among his continental counterparts, is that many of them, especially the Germans, had a federalist model—they had already decided on a form.

We're going to centralize into the United States of Europe. And in order to do so, we'll just transfer competencies and centralize power wherever we can. In other words, the form is decided, and that will determine the functions later on. From this, he made the point that we're not going to become the United States of Europe—we're going to look more like the Soviet Union when this is over. It's going to be less economically competitive, worse democracy, worse security. And, you know, I like it because—not because these are things one would hope for—but it's quite accurate in terms of

understanding what's happened now, sixty years later. But the reason I want to bring it to NATO is that it feels like this is the same kind of problem for NATO as well.

I mean, when it was formed, it had a clear purpose: how do we contain the Soviet Union? That was the ideal form—wonderful, it worked then. But after the Cold War, we became obsessed with keeping the form. The United States would remain on our continent forever. So we openly asked, how can we keep the form? Well, we'd have to start expanding, or go "out of area." All of these became new reasons to exist. We needed the form, so we looked for other functions that would allow us to keep it. And then, of course, things began to go very bad, very quickly, I think. But no, I' d like to hear what you think this security strategy will do to NATO, because it doesn't look great so far—well, if you like NATO, that is.

## #Steven Jermy

And I strongly agree. I mean, I've served with NATO formations. I think I might have mentioned before that when I was in Standing NATO Force Mediterranean, we jokingly used to say that NATO is for nobility to organize. One of the issues with NATO is that it's not the great alliance people claim it is—and this is obvious. But, but, but I think you're quite right. I love that distinction between form and function, because I think it really, really matters. Up to the end of the Cold War, it was functional, and that all worked. Those of us who served in it—I was proud to serve in it—and it was a powerful form.

But largely speaking, the Americans provided not only the backbone of it in terms of military muscle, but also the framework for how it was commanded and how it was all put together, because it was a single unified command, with two deputies: Supreme Allied Commander Europe and Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic. And the system worked. I can remember doing NATO exercises where we crossed the Atlantic with four U.S. carrier battle groups moving at speed, one or two British carriers going ahead of them to sweep for submarines, all ending up in Vestfjord, probably in the northern parts of Norway, where they would be ready to respond to a Russian attack in Central Europe. But, you know, the Cold War ended.

And then, as you said, people started to look for other functions for NATO, instead of asking the fundamental question: do we need it? Even in those early days, great strategic thinkers like George Kennan were beginning to question some of the ideas being presented—not least of all NATO expansionism. And of course, NATO expansion, as we now know—and many of us knew beforehand—was a fundamental mistake. It did exactly what the Russians predicted it would do, which has led to war on the continent of Europe. But I think when you look at NATO, you see some other things as well. I wrote a paper—I'm happy to leave this with you for viewers—but it was for Responsible Statecraft.

And I explained that NATO, as it currently stands, is weak. I gave a bit of history—NATO was partly responsible in Kosovo, although Kosovo was a very questionable intervention, I think. Even though I

was part of it and didn't see it at the time, the logic NATO used for intervening in Kosovo is exactly the same, if not worse, than the logic the Russians used for intervening in the Donbass. So we can't really have it both ways. What came next? Afghanistan. I was out in Afghanistan in 2007 with NATO in place. There was no strategy, and it became clear to me at that stage that NATO couldn't do strategy.

My brother was—well, I say recently, but it was a few years ago—still serving at NATO headquarters, and he was struck by how overmanned it was in terms of senior officers. "Bloated" would be the best way I'd describe it. In the article, I explained that if Europe were ever at war with Russia, we would lose. The key to actually winning a war against Russia would be an American army, which at the moment is too small anyway—about 427,000, I think. Next, you'd have to get that army across the Atlantic.

That would mean we'd need substantial anti-submarine and mine warfare forces. They're now about a third of the size they were at the end. Thirdly, when they get across here, they—and all our energy infrastructure—are vulnerable, with no defence against Russian hypersonic missiles. Imagine a hypersonic missile hitting somewhere like a liquefied natural gas facility at Milford Haven in Wales. The results of that, which we analysed in 2002, would be sub-nuclear but would still cause massive damage to Britain's infrastructure. The same goes for places like Rotterdam, and I can't remember which one it is in Spain—there's another...

## #Steven Jermy

The big hydrocarbons—how do you then fight the war? We have forces in the West that would be up against a Russian army with three and a half years of experience, while we've got none. I think we'd be decimated, if you want my honest opinion. And last but by no means least, NATO can't do strategy. I explained that they couldn't do it in Afghanistan, and that was lost against a ragtag bunch of Taliban. And we've now lost again, notwithstanding the fact that we know there are American and British generals, and probably others, in Ramstein directing operations.

So, you know, it all tells me that NATO is well past its sell-by date. I think the way to approach this is to start thinking about the functions, as you say, as opposed to the form. And I think there's a philosophical change that's needed—a change from what we call deterrence. Our approach to deterrence is, "Let's deter Russia by marching up to its borders." Now, that's not deterrence; it's actually confrontation. And I think we've got to shift from an idea of confrontational security, which we know hasn't worked, to one of cooperative security.

So I don't know what the right mechanism is. But if I had to have a starting point, I'd close down NATO tomorrow, even if the Americans didn't do it. And I think it's likely they will. I'd look across to the OSCE. It's not a perfect organization by any means, but the clue's in the title—cooperation in Europe. And I do like the phrase, which you'll probably know better than I do—it's Gorbachev's phrase, "a common European home." I think actually moving toward cooperative security across

Europe, across the mainland of Europe, and starting to work again with Russia is the way to develop that common European home.

## #Glenn

I think that's the challenge the United States will have to address. During the hegemonic peace, it didn't have to take Russia's security concerns into account, because by definition, hegemonic peace means you're so dominant it doesn't matter what the Russians think. But that's why it's interesting now, if you look at Ukraine as well. The Europeans are essentially saying that lasting peace depends on a powerful deterrent—something like an 800,000-strong army backed by the Europeans, armed to the teeth. And this, they believe, will make sure Russia never again dares to attack, that there won't be another "special military operation."

Meanwhile, the Russians are making the point that they never had any hostile intentions. And if you ask, will there be another special military operation? Well, only if NATO continues to deepen its involvement in Ukraine—then there will definitely be another one. So what is security for the Europeans? That deterrence is a security threat to the Russians, which is what will start a war. It's this whole principle of security competition, where you have to find a way of taking into account the other side. I don't think we—well, again, under a hegemonic peace, we never had to take into account the security of the other side.

And that's why I think the whole strategic thinking is going to have to shift. But in terms of the future of NATO, the reason people think it's all about Trump is mistaken, because even Obama, back in 2016, was the one who said we have to pivot to Asia. Why? Because a new center of power is emerging. We have limited capabilities; we can't be everywhere. So that implied we'd have to pull back a bit from Europe, too. This isn't all on Trump's shoulders. But if you extend that logic—if you recognize that China is a new power—then why would you expand NATO? The national security strategy specifically says we shouldn't have more of this NATO expansion.

Well, if you expand NATO, that would deepen the U.S. commitment in Europe and intensify tensions with Russia. It would draw even more resources and push the Russians toward China permanently. Asia is actually where the main U.S. rival is, so none of it really makes sense for U.S. national interests. I think that's why this is a very durable shift we're going to see over the years and decades to come. So, to think that Trump just doesn't love democracy or freedom as much as we do—that this is why he's doing it—I think that's a miscalculation.

## #Steven Jermy

Yeah, no, I agree. I strongly suspect—I don't know, but I strongly suspect—that on the NATO side, and also on the broader European side, part of that document, Vance would have been a key author. Even two or three years ago, before the election, he was one of the few—possibly the only—senior American politicians actually arguing for a much more nuanced approach to Russia and

suggesting there might be a problem with the war. He would occasionally give speeches on the floor, which almost nobody attended, but when you listened to them, they showed a very nuanced understanding of what was going on—much better than the neocons. I think there's still a debate, of course, in America, and I'm sure there are neocons and neolibs saying, "Well, we just have to be a bit more rough and ready with Russia and sort of heavy up on them."

I think, though, that increasingly people will start to see, in the same way that Vietnam failed, that actually they couldn't do it even if they wanted to. So what I would hope is that, over time, we'll see an increasing consensus in America as the defeat unfolds. And I think what we'll also see—I would imagine—is that the Americans will start to say the key irritants in this, the things stopping us from drawing this war to a close and re-establishing a relationship with Russia, are the Europeans, but particularly the E3—or, as Judge Napolitano has called them, the three blind mice—who are actually acting in a way that's counter to America's vital national interests. Which is a very bad way to think, I think, if you're trying to retain America and NATO. It's perverse.

But unfortunately, again, I think it's another example of this cult thinking. I think what will happen, as next year starts to pan out and the Russians move from what I would call an offensive attritional war into an expansion—starting to secure the territories they believe will guarantee their security, whatever that means—then I suspect we'll start to see a recognition, an increasing consensus across the American political establishment, left and right. Not least because, why would they want to pay any more? And if the Russians and the Europeans can't afford to pay, what's the point of trying to sell us weapons if they know we can't afford them, given that we'll just use them up and the Russians will just destroy them?

So I suspect that we'll actually start to see the war not reach its conclusion—because I think there's still some time before that—but move into a stage where it's impossible to ignore. And when it becomes impossible to ignore that NATO's been defeated, Ukraine's been defeated, and Europe's been defeated, then I would at last start to hope that there will be, perhaps, some political change in Europe. It's difficult to say where that might happen.

But I think what will become clear is that Europe needs to think again—that America has shifted its view of its own vital national security interests. Europe's no longer at the top, and indeed probably about third on the list, if that. The American contribution to European security will not include security guarantees; it will not include Article 3 or Article 5. So really, we're starting to talk not about NATO, but about "NATO Minus," which is NATO without the Americans. NATO Minus is not a powerful organization, and I just hope it will actually start to encourage a period of better strategic reflection and strategic thinking.

And so, hopefully, we'll at least be able to start having a debate about this in Europe—and that Europe won't try to shut people up, as they've done to, you know, Jacques Baud, who you and I are both great friends with, and who's been silenced simply because he's actually telling, as far as I can see, the truth—and a very well-referenced truth. But because it goes against the ideology and the

narrative, he's been shut down. In a way, they're demonstrating that the Americans are right when they say democracy and free speech are being subdued in Europe, because the Europeans have just done it by shutting down Jacques Baud's voice. But let's hope. I don't quite know what that will look like, but I think it's going to be quite chaotic politically over the next year, and possibly two years.

## #Glenn

Again, he's a colonel in the Swiss Army working for NATO. And I think he's going into the history books as not just being on the right side of history, but showing that the EU made a massive mistake. Of course, it's a symptom of a wider problem. Let me just ask one last question, though. Where do you see the possibility of an EU–US conflict going? Because you do mention these "three blind mice"—the UK, France, and Germany—which are now acting in direct opposition to U.S. national interests. But you also see now, in the U.S. National Security Strategy, that it talks about cultivating opposition in Europe, which is kind of what we've been doing around the world with the Americans—that is, a bit of regime change. But you also have this leaked U.S. report saying the U.S. envisions different MAGA allies—that is, Austria, Hungary, Italy, and Poland—which should be pulled out of the EU. So there's almost a battle plan in place for how to "rescue European civilization," if you will, by breaking up the EU. So we're already seeing not just the rhetoric, but the intentions and actions lining up against each other.

Do you think—well, not armed conflict—but where do you see the U.S.–EU conflict going? Because, you know, I always think about when the British left the EU, there was this saying the British always had: it's better that we're good neighbors than in a bad marriage. Let's get some distance, because the U.S. and the EU also have overlapping interests. Their cooperation would be good, but I think we have to redefine the relationship—find a new form—because if we keep the same one, that's what will cause a lot of the conflicts. But again, I have very little reason for optimism these days about the willingness to flesh out these ideas and redefine the relationship between the U.S. and the EU. So, to make my question shorter: where do you see the U.S.–EU conflict going?

## #Steven Jermy

That's a really good question. I think if I were in America, the way I'd be thinking about this—if I wanted to get it right—would be that I doubt we'll have CIA operatives acting against the EU, although it's not impossible. It's not impossible if they feel the EU is acting against their national security interests. What I think is more likely, and much more practical, is that the Americans will offer support to people they believe are prepared to act in America's vital national interests, and make sure there's no support whatsoever for anybody who's not. But I'd also hope there's another line of thinking in the EU, where people start to ask: do we really want to act against America's vital national interests? And furthermore, is it in our own national interest to do so? The answer is surely not.

The answer is surely not, because we have long and strong relationships with the United States, going back decades—most of the last century. And yeah, we share many values. So, to me, there's a values-based part of it, and there's also an economic part. At the moment, it's not in our national interest to actually force ourselves, through sanctions, to bear some of the highest energy prices in the world. We are significant net importers of hydrocarbons—I think we're the world's largest region—and we're imposing on ourselves some of the highest prices for those hydrocarbons. I work in the offshore energy sector, and I can tell you that one of the key factors driving prices up has been a regime of sanctions that replaced Russian LNG with American LNG at twice the price.

And it means as well that we only have two obvious sources of LNG in the world. The first is the United States, and the second is Qatar. And if the United States decides that things are a bit tight—that they're struggling a bit for energy reasons and energy dominance—don't think for one moment they'll keep exporting LNG to Europe and cut off their own noses. They won't. So we need to be super careful and think really, really carefully about our energy supplies. Not only because of the centrality of energy itself, but also because of its centrality to industry. So, in terms of economics, things aren't looking terrific in the EU at the moment. I can't speak for the rest of the EU countries, but we're into our second month of negative growth—0.1% for two months.

I suspect that's going to roll out across Europe. I think Germany is already in recession. So there are good reasons to start thinking about that relationship in a very different way. The fundamental question for Europeans to ask is not how the EU operates with America, but whether the EU is the right vehicle for that relationship. The Americans clearly think it isn't. And we should consider whether we need some other form—some kind of "EU minus"—which might be easier for the Americans to understand and work with, and perhaps might also fit better with the way some EU political parties are moving.

If you look at reform in this country, AfD in Germany and National Rally in France, all of them are looking askance at the EU. I think there's an open question about what the EU should look like. My experience is much more on the NATO side, and I've got a much clearer view on that. But if the EU doesn't evolve, then I think it's doomed. I think Charles Darwin said that the species that survive best are not the cleverest, nor the most powerful, but those that can adapt. And if the EU can't adapt to this new, changing context, then I think its time is limited.

## #Glenn

Now, adjusting to the vital interests of other great powers, I think, is quite important. This is something I often cite Kissinger saying back in 2014, when he was talking about the Russians. If we recognize that the Russians are a great power, then the first thing we do is define their vital interests and see to what extent we're able to live with those. If that's possible, the rest can be

arranged—things can be done. But now I think we have to do the same with the U.S. It's always strange with the Europeans, though: we're either all for the U.S., in full subordination, or we're fiercely against them, with these strong anti-American sentiments.

I think this is why maybe a bit of distance is okay, because there should be a middle ground somewhere. I spoke to some Americans who are quite connected, plugged into the U.S. government, and they tell me, well, what will the relationship with Europe be as the U.S. embraces this multipolar world, where it has to prioritize other regions? What's the interest in Europe then? And you kind of see two different models. One is that we have to extract some industries, like they' re doing now with Germany—find a way to almost pay tribute. The other model is, no, the Europeans should keep their own industries and strength.

However, they should be the exclusive economic bloc of the U.S. But in this instance, you'd have to disconnect from China, Russia, and other rivals of the United States. That would make the EU much less prosperous and much more dependent on the U.S. So it's not as if—it looks like both sides have a deep-seated interest in finding a different relationship, given that the world has changed so much. Yeah. But no, I wish that kind of conversation would emerge in the EU Parliament, you know, instead of just beating their chests, calling for war, and telling us about all their wonderful values. I think that's something that really should be discussed.

## #Steven Jermy

I couldn't agree more. I mean, I've often thought that the vassalage to America has been against Europeans' national interests. We've done things we probably wouldn't have done otherwise. And I think the best friends are those who can tell you something you might not like—at least you know where you stand. It would have been much better, for example, if Britain had not gone into the Iraq war. I think that was a major mistake. They often say the two people who could have stopped that war were Tony Blair and Colin Powell. And I think if Tony Blair hadn't simply gone along with what George Bush wanted, things might not have turned out the way they did.

But the point I'm making is not about that war, but about having a relationship where you can say, "Well, yeah, we understand you want to do this, but actually it's not in our national interest." A very good example was Vietnam. Now, I think the Australians joined the Americans in Vietnam, but I don't think any Europeans did, although we were pushed to by the Americans. We just didn't think it was in our national interest. And I think it's about time Europeans started trying to regain a bit of self-confidence, because you can't be self-confident if you just do whatever America wants. We need to be prepared to act in our own national interest and to define those interests ourselves.

In the past, we've said it was in our vital national interest to keep America in NATO. Well, hopefully not, because America's going out of NATO—that's obvious. I've never thought it was in our vital national interest. So I think it's about time we looked at our own vital national interests. They won't be the same across all nations, but we should look at those interests not only in terms of security,

but also in terms of economics, as you suggested, and then work out what sort of relationships within Europe might best support those national interests, and what sort of relationships with the Americans might also support them.

Because neither of the models you've described from America—partners on the American side of the Atlantic—neither of those do I find particularly attractive. And I think we should be prepared to actually look after ourselves and think about our relationships with Russia and China. We seem to be rabidly anti-Russia here in Europe at the moment, and a little less rabidly, but still anti-China. Let's work out how we can have better relationships with those two great powers. People often say it's difficult to have a relationship with China and Russia because they're authoritarian.

Well, why, in that case, do we have strong relationships with Gulf partners who are equally, if not more, authoritarian? You know, it's hypocritical. I'm not saying those relationships would be easy, but it's much better to have relationships where we talk to people, at least understand their situations, and are much more pragmatic and less interventionist—less inclined, as Europeans often are, to impose our values on others. So I think it's time for—I don't know what John Mearsheimer would call it—but perhaps I'd call it "pragmatic realism" in those relationships. And perhaps that's the best place for Europeans to think about cooperation in our common European heartland.

## #Glenn

I agree. And I think this is why, when there's all this pressure to always be so closely allied, we end up being forced into the same policies—the same economic policy, the same foreign policy. That's what prevents us from actually pursuing our basic national interests, because we don't all have the same interests. In a multipolar world, those interests will diverge even more. So this attempt to force everyone to walk in lockstep all the time, as you said, has led Europeans to make some very foolish decisions that haven't been in our interest—and now it's coming back to bite us, I guess. Anyway, thank you so much. Do you have any final thoughts?

## #Steven Jermy

No, it's just been a pleasure again, Glenn. And let me say to your listeners, I always find this a terrific podcast. I've thoroughly enjoyed a number of your recent episodes, particularly the one with Ray McGovern. He's always very, very interesting and insightful. And I think for your listeners—certainly in my country—if they're interested in what we're saying, please spread the word. There's an appetite out there, and I read the comments, and what's clear is that people are fed up with the lack of intelligent analysis or even debate within the mainstream media. We need to break out of that. We will, because defeat will force the mainstream media to break out of it. But the sooner we can get out of that closed, ideological thinking you described, and the sooner we can get into intelligent debate—start real discussions in our societies about the issues you and I have talked about today—the better.

## #Glenn

And I always make the point that maybe I'm wrong, maybe I'm mistaken. Surely I'm not correct all the time. But again, one doesn't have to be right all the time—there should at least be a discussion. The fact that there's no discussion about these tremendous changes, I think that's a concern, a big concern. So thanks again.

## #Steven Jermy

Thank you, Glenn. Thanks for all you do.