

Failed Diplomacy & Collapse of Ukraine

Larry Johnson is a former intelligence analyst at the CIA who also worked at the US State Department's Office of Counterterrorism. Johnson outlines why the negotiations are failing and what the pending collapse of Ukraine will entail. 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. We're here today with Larry Johnson, a former CIA analyst who also worked at the U.S. State Department's Office of Counterterrorism. Thank you, as always, for coming back on.

#Larry Johnson

I'm the world's biggest has-been.

#Glenn

Well, I've been looking forward to getting your take on these recent developments. The European Union, the United States, and Russia all seem to be playing three separate games when it comes to resolving—or avoiding resolving—the war in Ukraine. How are you assessing this situation now? There seem to be a lot of moving parts.

#Larry Johnson

There was a book several years ago—we need to find an updated version of it. It was called *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus*, or vice versa. They're living on two different planets. We can say the same about Russia and the West, with the West being the combination of the U.S., Europe, and the Zelensky regime. The Russians have been unequivocal—very, very clear—about their position on ending the war in Ukraine. Vladimir Putin reemphasized it on Friday during his marathon end-of-year press conference, going back to the same points he made on June 14, 2024, in a speech before the Russian Foreign Ministry.

So it's not confusing, it's not complicated, and they've laid it out. I wrote about it at sonar21.com. Meanwhile, back in Europe, they're operating on this completely delusional basis—they think they have some chance of defeating Russia, that they've got some leverage over Russia, and that they

can compel Vladimir Putin to accept their terms. And, you know, I always say there are two ways that'll happen: there's no way, and then there's no way in hell. It's not going to happen. So, I mean, they might as well be talking about how to create a herd of unicorns and then sell them to farmers on Venus. It's that fanciful, that out of touch with reality.

The Russians are in a stronger position now than at any time since the start of the special military operation—both in terms of their own troop strength, their dominance with respect to various weapon systems, the dramatic decline in the size of Ukrainian military forces, and an equally dramatic drop-off in Western aid flowing into Ukraine. You can't point to a single thing that's giving Ukraine an advantage they can sustain and act on going forward, something that would give them more leverage or make Russia more willing to cut a deal. This is going to be more along the lines of when Zhukov's forces surrounded the 6th Army of Paulus at Stalingrad. And, you know, they were compelled to negotiate an agreement of surrender there. So, you know, Ukraine is going to be forced to surrender. And I think what we're seeing right now is that Russia is taking advanced steps to isolate Odessa and preparing to take it.

#Glenn

Yeah, well, I think that's an important point, because one of the complaints from the European Union seems to be that this deal isn't fair—as if we have to reach some kind of compromise where we meet in the middle. But that deal was really the Istanbul agreement back in April 2022. I don't think they appreciate that. The reason this deal coming from Moscow seems... well, thank you very much—we kept the war going for too long. And now, of course, we're losing, and the Russians are in a position to dictate the terms. Every day we wait, it just gets closer and closer to defeat.

But that's what I wanted to ask. It doesn't appear that the EU is prepared to accept any of this. And there's something strange going on these days—the war propaganda is escalating, and so are the attacks, both direct and indirect, on Russia. So how are you seeing this? I mean, just this week I saw some British newspapers claiming that Russian soldiers are so hungry now they're eating each other. I mean, it's becoming a bit sad. I remember when British propaganda used to be top of the line. This is kind of sad stuff. But how do you explain this propaganda war, and also how the EU is setting its objectives?

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, I guess they're turning the Russian army into that Argentine soccer team that crashed in the mountains between Argentina and Chile—you know, where they ended up having to eat each other. But that's certainly not Russia today. Russia is in a much stronger military position now relative to Ukraine than at any time during this war. If we go back to February 2022, the size of the Ukrainian army roughly matched the size of the Russian army—each around 300,000. Ukraine at the time had reserves of over 900,000. Russia surpassed that; they had at least three to four million reserves they could call upon. But Russia only launched the offensive against Ukraine with about 125,000 to

160,000 soldiers, which sounds like a lot, but when you stretch them out over a thousand-mile front, it's nothing.

And yet, the stated objective of that initial move was to get Ukraine to the negotiating table. It succeeded, but then it was sabotaged by Great Britain. Well, now let's jump ahead—we're coming up on the fourth anniversary. Russia, according to Putin, has at least 700,000 soldiers on the ground in Ukraine. So that's an increase of four to five times what they had in February 2022. And in terms of their total ground forces, they've doubled that—or more than doubled it, actually. I've heard other reports that the ground forces total close to 1.3 to 1.5 million. That's significant. And they still have this massive reserve force they can call upon. That's why Russia always refers to this as a special military operation.

It hasn't required the mobilization of society. And let's put those numbers into perspective. Right now, Russia is spending roughly 6% of its gross domestic product on the war—on the defense industry. The United States, which isn't even directly involved but is providing support, spends about 3% to 4% of its GDP on defense. During World War II—the Great Patriotic War—about 40% of the U.S. economy was dedicated to the military effort, and I think the numbers were similar, if not higher, in the Soviet Union. So that's the difference. That's what separates a special military operation from a full-blown war, from full mobilization.

Vladimir Putin, in his end-of-year address and question-and-answer session, seemed extremely confident that Russia would be able to complete its military campaign in Ukraine without further mobilization or changing the nature of the war. Russia enjoys advantages on every front—whether we're talking about the production of artillery rounds, barrels and replacement barrels for artillery pieces, drones of various types, combat aircraft, tanks, or armored personnel carriers. They've outmatched and outpaced NATO as a whole in every one of those areas. This has caused panic within NATO and a lot of belligerent, tough talk, but so far reality hasn't hit them hard enough to make them step back and say, "We can't keep up with the Russians—they're far ahead of us."

#Glenn

Over the past few weeks, we've seen the EU not only talking about seizing this shadow fleet that's taking over its oil tankers—similar to what the U.S. is doing with Venezuelan tankers in the Caribbean—but also carrying out, or at least being linked to, direct attacks, such as the one on a Russian tanker in the Mediterranean. Now, they're saying these are Ukrainian drones, but I find it very hard to believe this is being done either by Ukraine alone or without Ukrainian contribution and European assistance. So these are more direct attacks on Russia's civilian vessels. At the same time, we're hearing almost weekly now from British or French generals that we have to prepare to sacrifice our sons and daughters in a war with Russia. And as all of this is happening, it seems to be ramping up toward a direct war with Russia—without the necessary capabilities, which is a problem in itself. And we see the Russians also preparing for this, it seems.

I mean, rhetorically, we hear Putin referring to this, but the capabilities are also being built up—the massive number of missiles, drones, and the Oreshnik missile, which is a very powerful weapon that seems aimed solely at Europeans, since the Russians don't want to use it in Ukraine. Do you see us moving toward a direct war between the Europeans and the Russians? And how do you think the United States would react to that? Because the U.S. also seems to be a little bit in, a little bit out, or at least handing the war over to the Europeans.

#Larry Johnson

Well, we're in a different position than, say, if you go back to 1939 or 1940–41, when the European countries actually had a military-industrial base. It wasn't just Germany—they could produce weapons, steel, airplane motors. The UK, for example, was doing a fantastic job building state-of-the-art airplane engines, which carried them through the Battle of Britain. Europe's not in that condition now; it's just the opposite. They're talking tough, but they can't act. Did you see there was a boxing match on Saturday in the United States? Yeah, there was this guy—he's sort of a social-media-declared boxer. He fought Mike Tyson and beat Mike Tyson. His name's Jake something or other.

#Glenn

Jake Paul, I think. Yeah.

#Larry Johnson

Jake Paul, yeah. And then he got in the ring with a bona fide heavyweight boxer—and that bona fide heavyweight boxer broke Jake Paul's jaw on both sides, to the point that on the left side of his mouth, the teeth were pointing inward. That's Europe. Europe can talk big, put out a lot of propaganda, but if they have to get into the ring with Russia, Russia will knock them out—knock them out quick. Because Europe does not have the offensive muscle to punch at Russia. And this notion that Russia wants to go in and conquer Europe... it's like, why? I mean, you know, go back to the days of the paperhanger named Adolf. He wrote about *Lebensraum*—wanting expansion, new space for the German people to move into. Or, you know, you could argue, the absence of resources.

We need oil. We need gas. We need diamonds. Who knows what? There's nothing in Europe that Russia needs. The only thing Russia wants with respect to Europe is: leave us the hell alone. Stop meddling in our internal affairs. Go your own way, do your own thing, but leave us alone. Russia's not looking to expand territory—good God, they cover eleven time zones. And they don't need resources from anybody, particularly, you know, the Latvians, Estonians, Lithuanians. "Oh, the Russians are going to come get us." They don't have anything that Russia needs, wants, or desires. It's almost as if Europe is convinced they've got to use this external threat to justify policies that, if left to the people to decide on their own, they'd reject in a heartbeat.

So I see Europe trying to stumble into war. We've seen these recent incidents—from, as you point out, the attack on the tanker in the Med, to a ship seized up in the Baltic Sea. And then you had the murder of that Russian general yesterday—a car bomb planted on him. I think the ones whose fingerprints are on all of this are the Brits, who are doing their best to provoke a war, hoping they can get the United States to come in and rescue them. But I don't see Donald Trump in any mood—or frankly, with all the military force parked off the coast of Venezuela, the U.S. doesn't have a lot to respond with.

#Glenn

But it seems that for so long in Europe, they've embraced these narratives that are so far from reality. For three and a half years, we've been told Russia's winning—until they're not. We're told Zelensky's government is pure democracy, no corruption—until it's not. Then, of course, we hear Russia can conquer all of Europe. Nord Stream was probably the Russians. After a while, this whole narrative of an “unprovoked invasion” just becomes foolish. And the idea that NATO had nothing to do with starting this war—that narrative drifts too far from reality. You've probably seen the news now about the EU going to great lengths to silence critics, even sanctioning a colonel in the army, Jacques Vaux.

Yeah, I've had him on this channel many times as well. The main argument was that he's spreading propaganda, and they cited him quoting Arestovych, the former adviser to Zelensky. So it's quite absurd that they're going to such lengths just because they don't agree with his analysis. They freeze his bank accounts, put a travel ban on him—I mean, this is very radical. And if you also put this in the context of how they're throwing out their own rules to permanently freeze or steal Russian assets, and the way they're going after Russia's civilian shipping—how do you make sense of this, though, especially the attacks on Colonel Vaux?

#Larry Johnson

Well, I go back to—I'm not sure what to call them—the good old days or the bad old days of the Cold War. When the Soviet Union got increasingly desperate to shut down opposition and control the narrative, it had the exact opposite effect. It brought more attention to the issue, undermined Soviet credibility, and strengthened the image of the West around the world. But today we're seeing the opposite. It's the West that's trying to control narratives, shut down dissent, and stop anyone from speaking the truth. It's Russia that's actually turned out to be more of a safe haven for freedom of expression, despite U.S. claims to the contrary that Russia is some sort of authoritarian state.

I wrote about this last night. There was an article in the New York Times yesterday about the deputy chief of staff to Putin, a guy named Dmitry Kozak. According to the article, in February 2022—two days after the start of the special military operation—Vladimir Putin ordered Kozak to call the Ukrainians and try to set up a negotiated deal. Reportedly, Kozak told Putin to go to hell, that he

wasn't going to do it, saying, "You can't tell me what to do. This is wrong. You can shoot me." The article said he told Putin he could shoot or arrest him. And according to that same piece, Kozak retired from his job as deputy chief of staff to Putin in September of this year.

Now, Alexander Mikouros sent me a note earlier today thinking it was September of 2022. But whether it was September of 2022 or just this year—and again, the article written by the former bureau chief of the New York Times insisted it was this year—forty-four months after this Kozak character was insubordinate to President Vladimir Putin, who the West says is a tyrant, an authoritarian, a murderer, a guy who brooks no dissent, we're told that his own deputy chief of staff disagreed with him, was insubordinate, and Putin didn't have him killed, didn't have him arrested, didn't grab him and drag him to the top of one of the St. Basil's onion towers in the cathedral there in Red Square and toss him off. They didn't torture him. They let him stay on the job, and he got a retirement party forty-four months after he was insubordinate.

So right off the bat, you're going, gee, this seems to undermine that narrative of Vladimir Putin as this bloodthirsty, maniacal authoritarian. In fact, it looks like he allowed dissent even in his own government. Look how Donald Trump treated Elon Musk—Trump didn't tolerate any kind of opposition for one second. So what I'm highlighting here is how the West's effort to control the narrative is failing on every front. They can't decide whether Putin is so weak that any minute now his government's going to collapse, that he's got so much internal opposition there's no way he can survive, or, on the other hand, that he's like the Incredible Hulk—you can't stop him, he's unstoppable, and we've got to stop him because he's a threat to the future. It's just, you know, like watching a tennis match—back, forth, back, forth—but nobody scores any points in the process.

#Glenn

Yeah, that's a very consistent thing with the coverage on Russia, though—not just for the past few years or decades, but for the past centuries. It's always both hopelessly weak and about to fall apart, and at the same time overwhelmingly strong, ready to conquer all of Europe. And you'll often see that shift day to day. One day, oh no, the economy is crumbling, Putin is dying from some new disease, the political class and the oligarchs are turning against him, the people will rise up, he's running out of missiles. And the next day, we all have to be careful because he might march on Berlin or Paris.

So it's quite unique. And as you said, there's no consistency. The only consistent thing is, if it's hopelessly weak, we just have to fight a little bit longer. If it will invade Europe thereafter, we have to continue to fight a bit longer. So the commonality is always, "let's keep the work going." Same with Ukraine and NATO. That is, we have to get Ukraine into NATO because Russia would never dare to attack NATO. But also, we have to help Ukraine because once they conquer Ukraine, they'll attack NATO. So you want it both ways. And of course, there's a massive inconsistency in the narrative.

#Larry Johnson

I don't remember if it was you or Alex Cranor—or maybe it was you interviewing Alex Cranor—trying to explain the European roots, particularly in Britain, of the hatred toward Russia. Yeah. And I remember a book that referenced the period around the 1840s or 1850s, which is really when this hatred of Russia took root. Do you recall the name of that book?

#Glenn

Yeah, I wrote a book on Russophobia, and I cite that one. There's one that came out in 1950 about this, but there was a lot written in Britain in the 1830s about Russophobia, where they made the point, you know, why do we confront Russia all the time? We exaggerate the threat, and it goes against our own national interest to do so.

#Larry Johnson

Let me stop you there. Give it a plug—what was the title of your book?

#Glenn

Russophobia: Political Propaganda in the International System, something along those lines. And what was your major conclusion? Well, there's always a narrative. So if you look, for example, at the Crimean War in the mid-19th century—at that time, prior to that, Turkey or the Ottomans had a very negative reputation because of what they were doing to the Greeks. But as soon as they went to war with the Russians, a new narrative was created. Immediately, the Ottomans became the victim, the Russians were obviously the aggressor, and the French and the British were then portrayed as these selfless knights in shining armor coming to save the victim.

So you always have these roles each side plays. And of course, that's what we see in this conflict as well. Ukraine is the victim, Russia is the bad guy, and NATO is just here to help. It's very much the same script—no self-interest at all. I mean, as if NATO didn't capture the Ukrainian government in 2014 and essentially use it against the Russians. But I wanted to ask you, how do you see the American position moving forward? They're quite divided internally. It seems Witkoff and Kushner are pursuing a very different path from Rubio, for example. How is this internal struggle shaping U. S. foreign policy?

#Larry Johnson

Well, I think—let's focus first. There's an economic, or let's call it the business-deal side of it, and that's where I think Witkoff, Kushner, and Dmitriyev are focused. This falls outside the regular, if you will, foreign-policy agenda. Hang on a second—Rick Sanchez is calling. I'll call him back in a bit. If you go back and look at when Henry Kissinger held both Secretary of State and National Security

Advisor, he set the agenda. In concert with Nixon, he set it and they followed along. But that's not what we're seeing today. Even though Rubio has got Secretary of State, National Security Advisor, and head of USAID, his power is actually pretty constrained, because here's Steve Witkoff, who's an old golfing buddy of Trump.

You know, I've said, tongue-in-cheek, that maybe what Rubio needs to do is improve his golf game and get out on the links more often with Trump, where he can chat him up and maybe try to get some control. Rubio clearly represents the Washington establishment position. Now, there are some things happening below the surface. One of those—well, I did an interview last week, or maybe the week before, with John Kiriakou. John was employed by RT, Russia Today, and he had a show called *The Whistleblowers.* Well, lo and behold, about a week ago Thursday—no, two weeks ago now—I was back on the show. And I said, "Hey, I thought you had to quit under sanctions." He goes, "They've been lifted."

So the United States has lifted the sanctions on RT that led to people like Garland Nixon being kicked off the air, Kiriakou being kicked off the air, and Scott Ritter—he's got a regular gig with RT. So it appears those sanctions have been lifted. The Trump administration isn't making a big deal about it. And even if Donald Trump—let's say Witkoff and Kushner cut a deal with the Russians, and the Russians tell Trump, "Okay, we'll sign off on it"—unless that agreement, as part of the deal, stipulates that it has to be presented to the U.S. Senate and ratified as a treaty between the United States and Russia, Russia's not going to agree to anything. Because the reality is, if Trump just signs off on it, the deep state, the establishment, is simply going to dismiss it as meaningless.

That's just Trump's private deal. And whatever Trump agrees to—once he's gone, and he will be gone one of these days, whether through natural causes or when his term is up—whoever comes in next isn't obligated to continue or uphold that agreement with Russia. So it would be like another Minsk II, just a convenient rest stop for Ukraine to refit, retool, and rearm. That's why I think there's too much attention being paid to, "Oh, what did they agree to? Have they compromised on this?" It doesn't matter. Because unless Russia and the United States agree to a treaty relationship, and until that treaty is ratified by the U.S. Senate, there's no agreement worth the paper it's written on between the United States and Russia.

#Glenn

This is why I find it so strange that the United States is pressuring Ukraine to accept that it won't join NATO. Because at the end of the day, the Russians wouldn't really trust anything they put on paper. They had neutrality in their constitution—by law—and the Ukrainians could just change it. I think they'd rather have a treaty signed with the United States, something more solid. But now we're getting this news that Washington believes we're close to a deal between the United States and Russia.

Meanwhile, we hear from the Russian side that whatever talks or amendments the United States made to the deal after meeting with the Europeans and the Ukrainians actually pushed them even further away from an agreement. So, while Americans are suggesting we're getting closer to a deal, the Russians are saying we're moving further away from one. How are you assessing this? Is it that they don't know what they're talking about, or is it about managing the media? Or is this just normal negotiation behavior, it seems?

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, I'm fond of quoting Ray McGovern on this. You know, Ray spent many years right in the middle of the CIA's analysis of Russia—then the Soviet Union. He said, "Hey, listen to what the Russians say, and then watch what they do." Well, the Russians have not been ambiguous. They haven't been trying to muddy the waters. They've been very, very clear about what their position is. And the West, instead of accepting that, keeps trying to redefine it into things that fit with our own narrow objectives. I continue to maintain that there is not a sincere desire on the part of anyone in leadership positions in Europe or the United States to have a normal relationship with Russia—one based on mutual respect, on economic cooperation and collaboration.

Instead, the ultimate objective of the United States remains the subjugation of Russia—using Russia as a tool to go after China and constrain it. And while that has been the stated goal of the United States, and it was established in the Rand Corporation documents on this subject in particular, the facts on the ground—particularly with respect to China's development and its economic power—show that it's surpassing the United States in almost every industrial capability, in its control of key supply chains, and in its economic, political, and military partnership with Russia. And that partnership is not temporary. You know, this is not a one-night stand between Russia and China—they've decided to get married.

They've bought furniture together. They've bought a house together. They're moving in. And, you know, they've taken vows, essentially—for better or for worse—because they recognize they're up against a threat from the West that is potentially malignant, potentially dangerous. Nonetheless, the key advantages, both economic and military, lie with Russia and China, not with the West. We're witnessing the end of the colonial empire that started to emerge in the 14th century and really took off in the 15th. In the 15th and 16th centuries, you had this competition with the Ottoman Empire as it was fading. But really, when you get into the 19th and 20th centuries, that was the pinnacle of European accomplishments.

You know, the advances in science took place in Europe in the 19th century—not in the United States, not in Asia. Similarly, the Industrial Revolution, that's where it was centered. But now, what does Europe have to offer? Just step back and ask: can Europe offer anything that Russia or China needs? Or the United States, for that matter? Is there anything that Europe has as an essential resource, an essential technology, an essential talent? No. The answer is no—nothing. They've now

made themselves irrelevant. And, you know, that's something the European leaders are really having a tough time coming to grips with.

#Glenn

You know, the unipolar moment is breaking down now. That's this aspiration by the U.S. and the EU to establish a kind of collective hegemony across the world. The assumption by many Europeans is, well, if we're back in a conflict with Russia, we have to retreat into the old Cold War arrangement—that the U.S. and Europe will ally together and wait out the Russians because, collectively, we're much stronger. What they're missing, though, is that both the United States and Russia would actually like to pivot away from Europe. They both want to look toward Asia.

So all this talk about wanting to invade Poland and Germany—it doesn't make sense. As you said before, there are no interesting resources. The only thing you'd get is a lot of land full of people who don't want you there. It's quite absurd. To be honest, I interpret this statement about Russia planning to attack as meaning that Russia might start responding to the escalations we're making. You know, we're seizing their ships. If we were to launch some terrorist missiles into Moscow, they might attack us. So we have to deter them from responding to our own escalations.

#Larry Johnson

Let's think about the historical ignorance reflected in those kinds of attitudes. Because there's this talk—oh, if only we supply Ukraine with some Taurus missiles and maybe some other U.S. cruise missiles—that that will turn the tide in this war. Ignoring the fact that, if you look at how many missiles, rockets, and bombs Russia has launched on Ukraine over the course of the last 44 months—an astonishing volume—it's caused significant damage to Ukraine, but not to the point that Ukraine is collapsing. Well, similarly, can anybody argue that the West, together with Ukraine, can produce even a fraction of that volume of missiles and launch them against Russia?

No, forgetting that—let's assume the worst case. Let's assume Ukraine gets those missiles and starts attacking. You know, these missiles have a range of about 300 to 400 miles. There's a thing called the Ural Mountains in Russia. Just like the Soviets did after they were attacked by Germany in Operation Barbarossa in June 1941, they literally packed up the factories in the Donbass and moved them east of the Ural Mountains, where the Germans couldn't reach them. And frankly, if the current Russian government decided to do that, they could move everything to places the West couldn't touch. The West keeps forgetting that Russia covers eleven time zones.

And they can actually locate troops and facilities in places where they can't be touched. Whereas in Ukraine, there's not a single spot of ground where they can set up a training camp, safely assemble soldiers, and train them without being attacked and destroyed. They can't just keep moving west, because then they're in Poland or Germany. So there's just no military path forward for Ukraine, period. It's a foolish fantasy. But, you know, Russia is pressing—they're continuing to press forward.

They're under no time constraint; they don't have a ticking clock saying, "Oh, you've got to be done in the next 30 seconds."

I know there's some frustration among some of the military guys I've spoken to. They tend to be more of the enlisted folks. They feel like they've been fighting with their hands tied behind their backs and want to be unleashed so they can just go pound the hell out of Ukraine. But that's why, you know, Putin is in the position he is—he's trying to balance military progress with keeping Russia on the diplomatic high road, not sinking down into the mud. I think what we're seeing right now is a decisive turning point in the war. Russia is now focused on isolating Odessa, knocking down bridges that connect Odessa with Romania, for example.

And in the course of doing this, they're setting the stage. Russia will take control of Odessa. They will take control of Nikolaev. I think they'll also take control of Kiev. And then, once they've secured those areas, they'll come back with another offer to the Ukrainians to negotiate. Only this time, because Ukraine has been authorizing strikes against Russian ships in the Black Sea—Russia had previously avoided shutting down the port of Odessa—that's now, as Putin has made clear, going to change. As a result of these attacks, they're going to shut down Odessa, and Ukraine is going to have an important economic lifeline cut off.

#Glenn

This is the frustrating part here in Europe, though. It's that "you're either with us or against us" mentality—the Bush mentality. It's really dominant here. So if you criticize the attacks on the Russian ships, for example, they say, "Well, then you're backing Russia." That's the logic. But they don't understand what they're doing. Of course, now they're going to lose Nikolaev and Odessa. It's the same if you criticize any of the things they're doing—the expansion, the direct attacks on Russia. They don't understand that we're actually destroying ourselves with this. Everything we're doing now will have consequences.

And this is not ideal when the opponent is holding all the cards. You want to—once you see this happening—you want to scale it down. You want to find a new status quo before things get worse tomorrow. And it is getting worse tomorrow. But you mentioned Odessa, and it's all falling. How do you see the next couple of weeks and months playing out? Because, you know, the Ukrainians have been in a weak spot before. The West has done its best to turn the situation around, but we don't seem to have that many more cards to play here. And things are really going from bad to worse rather quickly. Do you see a collapse coming?

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, yeah, I do. I mean, look, the most important thing Ukraine needs in order to stop the Russians is trained manpower. Based on—and these are not Russian sources, these are Western sources—Ukraine is losing through combat casualties, killed and wounded, and desertion, a

minimum of 60,000 troops per month. So just, you know, multiply that out over a year—that's 720,000 a year, almost a million men. So if you're losing that many, you've got to have a replacement rate, which means you need to be able to recruit 700,000 or 800,000 men. But the reality of recruitment is it's less than 20,000 a month. And even when they're recruited, you know, a modern army requires that the troops get about six months of training.

You know, the first three months are just basic training—learning how to be in a military unit, how to march, getting physically into condition. And then after that three-month period, you go through what's called advanced individual training, where you're trained for your particular mission. Because it's one thing if you're cooking food or if you're a medic; it's another thing if you're firing a mortar or attached to an artillery unit. How do you know how to set the elevation on a particular howitzer, for example? Or maybe you're trained to be a drone operator or to drive a tank. And in those three months, you don't become proficient—you just get familiarized with it so you can then go out on the battlefield and start developing real experience.

This is a process. It's not just a one-time thing. Once you start that process of recruitment and training, finish the full six months of training—the minimum—and then cycle people into the units, that has to keep going. Ukraine doesn't have that. So without it, they'll continue to fall behind, because Russia does have that system well in place. There are at least 30,000 conscripts a month, and on top of that, they're getting soldiers signing contracts—volunteers who do it because they can make some money this way—and then there are the existing forces on the ground. And the Russians, despite Western propaganda to the contrary, are not suffering massive casualties. So they've got an advantage, as they're taking far fewer losses than the Ukrainians.

They have a complete supply line intact for everything they need to fight the war. By contrast, Ukraine does not. So now, with the Russians having, you know, 700,000 to 800,000 men stretched out along that thousand-mile front, Russia has the luxury of launching attacks in regions that are undefended and forcing the Ukrainians to rush to that sector. And when they rush there, the Russians then attack the sector they just left. Because of all this, you're going to see a collapse of the Ukrainian front back toward the Dnieper River. I wouldn't be surprised if by the end of February, Russia were up against the Dnieper River—at least from Zaporozhye, starting to move north into Dnipropetrovsk.

#Glenn

This is why the Russians don't want a ceasefire—because the attrition numbers are now favoring them so much. As you said, the Ukrainians have to pull a lot of people off the street. They don't have time to give them proper training; they just send them to the front. And because of that, they take heavy losses since they're not properly prepared. Their supply lines aren't secure enough, and they have problems with logistics. So if you gave them two or three months of breathing space, they could provide at least some basic training to many of their new troops. They could start filling in the gaps and improving their logistics.

Then suddenly the attrition rates could improve, and then we're back to more stable—well, not stable or equal, but more equal, at least—casualty rates. And I think that's what the Europeans are really hoping for. But the problem is, they're very transparent; they're saying this more or less outright. That was in the British media—was it yesterday?—that, well, Ukraine is losing, but the good news is it's still in the fight. Which is not good news. Why would you want them losing more slowly if it just means losing more people, more infrastructure, and more territory? It's this idea that as long as they're killing Russians, then, you know, we have to keep this going.

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, they remind me of that. You know, I've been using the film reference of Jim Carrey in the movie **Dumb and Dumber**. I don't know if you ever saw that. Oh, yeah? Okay, so Jim Carrey plays a character of limited intelligence and not very socially aware. And in one famous scene, this beautiful woman he wants to have a relationship with—he's saying, "So what about us, us getting together?" And she's going, "No, it's just not going to happen." And he goes, "So what are my chances? One in ten? One in a hundred?" And she says, "No, more like one in a million." And he pauses and goes, "So I've still got a chance!" That's Europe. Yeah. Europe's been told they've got a one-in-a-million shot, and they go, "Great, man, those are great odds."

#Glenn

There's this expression I always think about—you know, when you're in a hole, stop digging. That's the first rule of crisis management.

#Larry Johnson

The first rule of crisis management.

#Glenn

Yeah, we're not just destroying Ukraine; we're destroying Europe at the same time. It's... yeah. No, I think this is a crisis of leadership, to be honest. It's quite sad that this is the strategy—or absence of strategy—we currently have. Anyway, do you have any final thoughts before we wrap up?

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, no, I'm with you. I'm just completely puzzled by the self-destructive policies of these European leaders. Instead of seeking cheaper access to fuel, they're racing to make sure they pay higher prices for oil and gas. All along, they've been shutting down nuclear power plants. You know, you go to Germany and rely on solar energy—well, I spent a lot of time in Germany, over 23 years, when I was working with the U.S. military, particularly in Stuttgart. And you know what? Between October and March, it gets dark in Germany a lot earlier than in other places.

And so, solar power doesn't work too well in the dark. You need a lot of sunlight. And Germany—unlike my state, Florida, which is known as the Sunshine State—has never been called that. So it's just one example of the detachment from reality. The only thing that can save Europe, I think, is if the people themselves suddenly rise up against these crazy leaders, boot them out, and say, "Hey, we want to live in peace with Russia. We want to have prosperous economies, and we don't want to, you know, use hatred of foreigners as a foundation for our foreign policy."

#Glenn

Well, during the Cold War, balancing the Soviet Union was a strong foundation for unity within the West. But these days, the Europeans are provoking war with Russia, alienating India and China, even alienating the United States, and also fragmenting Europe. They refer to Belgium as an asset of Russia, and they're going to punish everyone from the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Hungary for not toeing the line. This can't go on forever before we end up destroying ourselves. So, yeah, for all the dreams about going back to the Cold War, I think this will be a very different time around. But there's not that much discussion, unfortunately, because the EU could sanction you for spreading propaganda. Yeah, yeah.

#Larry Johnson

Well, I'm going to give myself an early Christmas gift. I'm going to go online and see if I can buy the Glenn Diesen book, *Russophobia*.

#Glenn

The publication date was January 2022, which was an unfortunate time to release it, because by the following month—February 2022—there was no appetite for any kind of self-criticism. So anyone who wrote a book on Russophobia then was pretty much painted as a pariah.

#Larry Johnson

Well, let's just remember: a prophet is without honor in his own country. So you, my friend, are a prophet—not just a professor, but a prophet professor.

#Glenn

I'll put that on my CV. Thank you very much—and yeah, have a Merry Christmas.

#Larry Johnson

Yeah, Merry Christmas to you too, Glenn. Thanks.

