

Massive Escalation - Attack on Putin's Residence

Stanislav Krapivnik is a former US Army officer, supply chain exec and military-political expert, now based in Russia. He was born in Lugansk during the Soviet times, migrated to the US as a child and served in the US army. Krapivnik discusses the attack on Putin's residence. 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're here today with Stanislav Krapivnik, a former U.S. Army officer, born in Donbass, who returned to Russia 15 years ago. Thank you very much for coming back on.

#Stanislav Krapivnik

No problem, thank you. Happy New Year to everyone, and Merry Christmas to those celebrating with us. Yeah, another week coming up.

#Glenn

Yeah, happy New Year. Well, it seems we're starting this new year with yet another round of escalation. This attack on Putin's residence, I thought, was quite interesting, because over the past four years there's been a constant shift in how we define the rules of this war. For example, how deep can NATO's involvement go while still being considered "helping Ukraine," and when does it cross into a direct war? That's been shifting too. We're also seeing changes in what are considered acceptable targets.

We've heard Europeans and Americans arguing for a while that the war should be taken onto Russian territory — for example, hitting refineries or the region of Kursk. Of course, it shouldn't be taken onto European territory. But importantly, the political leadership seems to have been largely exempt from this war. It seems to me that Russia has had some opportunities to take out Zelensky or other parts of the Ukrainian government but has kept that outside what would be considered acceptable targets. So I was wondering, how do you see this changing the nature of the war for Russia, and also the diplomatic path?

#Stanislav Krapivnik

Well, let's begin with the idea that political leadership should be outside the war. It's only been one-sided — let's just start there. That's flat out, and it's been on the Russian side. This has been coming under more and more criticism, and now the criticism is flying high. It's on the radio stations; people want strikes. They want Zelensky destroyed, they want the people around him destroyed. I heard this on commentary this morning — I was in the car listening to it on FM. People think, or at least the West tries to portray, that Vladimir Putin is a dictator and everyone just kowtows to the same line. Far from it. What's scary — or what should be scary to the West, if they're even a bit smarter than a snail — is the fact that Vladimir Putin is holding back a lot of destruction that could easily fall on the West.

Anybody else — me included — you know, if I were in his place, I would've been striking much harder and further into the West by this point, just to get the message across. And if it doesn't get across, well, call me a warmonger or whatever. But I think that's the problem: the West — and Zelensky as part of that West, as the foremost part of it — they've gotten very comfortable. They think they're going to be exempt from everything, no matter what they do. And they keep upping the ante to the point where they're going to get hit, and they're going to get hit hard. It could easily escalate into a nuclear conflict, in which case Europe would be exterminated. Because, really, it doesn't take much for Europe to turn into a radioactive hellhole — it's just so compact.

So if Russia were to strike only the American bases that have nuclear weapons on them — the heavy bombs, the glide bombs — that alone would be enough to cover most of Europe in nuclear fallout. It's just a fact of geography. You know, America and Russia have huge open areas, large distances between cities. Europe is extremely compact, population-wise. So any hit in Germany would send fallout all the way up into Scotland and Ireland. Guaranteed. I mean, we saw that with Chernobyl. When Chernobyl blew — and by the way, the Ukrainians, a.k.a. the Europeans, well, I won't say Europeans — I hate saying that. We own a third of Europe. We were in Europe long before, as the R1A haplogroup. We were there long before the R1Bs, and the R1Bs are the Germans.

So we own a third of Europe. We've been here longer than the Germans, the Scandinavians, and many other nationalities. Maybe the Celts have been here longer than us. So I'm not going to say "Europe" — that's just very incorrect. The European Union and NATO. As we saw when Chernobyl blew, the fallout reached Scotland, and for ten years the Scots were told not to graze their cattle — or their sheep, in this case — up in the Highlands, because radioactive fallout was building up in the moss and other organic matter. And that was just from a nuclear power plant that never went critical, by the way.

It never went critical because three men sacrificed their lives — they went underneath the nuclear power plant and manually drained the water reserves. If the core had melted all the way down, there would have been a massive steam explosion that could have covered much of Central and Eastern Europe, and probably reached farther into Western Europe. And now the West is trying to

do this again on purpose, with attacks on the Zaporizhzhia power plant and previous attacks on the Kurkh power plant. So the West seems to be, essentially, the European Union's leadership — with a few exceptions.

The old Austro-Hungarian Empire seems to be the only one with any sanity left in the EU — the modern EU. The rest of them don't seem to understand where this is going. They've tried, on several occasions, to attack directly — Vladimir Vladimirovich. If we remember, in 2022 or 2023, there was a drone that flew in and hit the Kremlin. After that, the anti-aircraft systems were heavily upgraded all around the edges of Moscow and internally with Panzer systems, while the big rocket systems are held externally. There have been several assassinations — flat-out assassinations — including civilian casualties outside the intended targets, and of civilians too, while we were at it.

Dugin's daughter, poets, and other people have been assassinated. Journalists have been murdered by the Western regime in Ukraine. I mean, the number of journalists who've been killed is innumerable. In fact, journalists no longer wear press badges. They don't wear press badges, and they don't wear blue — the dark blue that journalists used to wear — because that makes them target number one for the Western regime in Kyiv. So this is not the first time. The question is, how long will Moscow continue not to retaliate in a full manner? Because the voices of criticism inside Russia are very loud.

And what the West doesn't seem to understand is—believe you me—if they ever get rid of Vladimir Vladimirovich, they're going to regret every second that comes after it, and there probably won't be that many seconds. Because the people who take power afterwards are going to make them extinct. There are very hard-right, hard-wing people waiting in the wings who are going to come after, and that's going to be revenge. And it's not going to be revenge on Ukraine; it's going to be revenge on the rest of the EU and NATO countries involved in this. So, you know, that this happened—I'm not surprised in the least. It's now a matter of what's going to happen afterwards, what's going to be the next step for Moscow.

#Glenn

I've been making that argument for the past decade, actually — that the idea of Putin as this tyrant is a very dangerous thing to keep telling ourselves, because it assumes that the alternative to Putin would be some kind of... well, something better. But again, it's worth noting that the criticism of Putin inside Russia has often been, even from Dugin's point of view, that he's too liberal. And from the more general public, that he's been a bit too moderate, too pro-Western to a large extent. I outlined that argument back in 2016 in an Australian think tank paper, where I wrote that Putin is the last pro-Western alternative. It is true, though, that he did want a settlement into a greater Europe — but of course, what comes after Putin, the Europeans probably wouldn't like very much, nor would the Americans.

But how do you think this might affect Russia's demands in the negotiations? Because this is something Sergei Lavrov made a point of — that not only would Russia retaliate heavily against this, but that the Russians are worried they always face this dilemma when there's an escalation: either you retaliate and risk a direct war, or you don't retaliate and you embolden the opponent to go further. So there are no good solutions. But yeah, Lavrov said there will be retaliation. I interpret that as against Ukrainian targets, but also that this would impact Russia's demands in the negotiations. How do you see this? And was this a Ukrainian, European, or U.S. intelligence agency sabotaging the peace negotiations?

#Stanislav Krapivnik

Oh, I'm sure MI6 played a role in this — possibly the CIA too. Many people think the CIA is some kind of control organization, but I'd say it's more of a fractured fiefdom. The CIA basically went rogue from day one, maybe day two. Kennedy, in fact, wanted to bring the CIA to heel — and that may have been one of the reasons he was killed. Other presidents and government bodies have tried to put some kind of control on the CIA, but nobody's been able to do it. The CIA does whatever it wants. And there's a big question about how much the central office even controls its various branches — the CIA houses in different European countries and so on.

So it's a very big question what the role of the CIA really is. I think MI6 is much more controlled, but it's also much more—how should I put it—psychotic. It's ready to play the game to the extermination of England. These people, I think, have lost the plot quite a bit. Either they don't understand where this can lead, or they don't think anything will ever actually happen to them—to the mother country, in this case—which is an amazing thing to consider, all things considered. But arrogance and ignorance usually go hand in hand, unfortunately. And a lot of these people live in an echo chamber. They only hear back what they're thinking from their fellows, because they all think the same.

It's groupthink that leads to that arrogance. We see that in the European Union on a constant basis. And as far as, yes, as far as Legevich goes—he's liberal compared to, I mean, he's gotten more conservative, but he's still liberal compared to the average in Russian society. He's always been very pro-European. Again, he's been forced to move away from that, but he's constantly trying to reintegrate into Europe. If we look realistically at the last decade—well, the last 140 or 150 years—the first League of Nations proposal actually came from Nicholas II, the same czar who tried to keep everyone from starting World War I. Everybody wanted the glorious war.

Stalin wanted to join NATO—that was being formed in '49—not quite grasping the fact that he was the target of NATO. Yeltsin wanted to join NATO. Putin wanted to join NATO. So there have been overtures from the Russian side toward the West for 140 years. They've all been not just rebuffed, but viciously, even militarily, rebuffed on many occasions. So I think whoever comes next is

absolutely going to make Putin seem like an absolute pacifist. And Europe doesn't seem—well, again, Europe—the European Union and the NATO countries don't seem to understand it. I think several European and NATO countries do understand it, though.

I think the insanity is strongest running from Poland to the U.K., across northern Europe—the Scandinavian lands. Oh, and the pre-Baltics. But the pre-Baltics, you know, you need to consider: A, they have nothing to sell and no way to make money except by selling themselves as a **Platzdarm** to start a new war. That's one. And two, all of their leadership has a second passport. They're not going to stick around to die in place. They'll be in England, they'll be in the U.S.—anywhere but in the pre-Baltics. The peasants can go fight or get run over by the Russian army once this big war gets going.

We're going to go where real people go—where the really "white" people go, as they say, you know, as opposed to you locals. It translates better in Russian. But escalation has got to come. I think it's gotten to the point where the Kremlin clearly realizes that letting anything slide is only going to make it worse. And they've let things slide for four years. There should have been much stronger retaliations, possibly against the NATO bases on the edge of Ukrainian territory in Poland and Romania, from which a lot of these attacks are coming. Look, we've even had drone attacks directly out of Estonia. Those drones that hit Pskov were not flying in from Ukraine.

In fact, about three months ago, they had a drone crash—a big, airplane-style drone—right in the middle of Estonia. Tartu, I think, was the name of the province. And the Estonians just screamed "Russians!" They tried to shut it down and hush it up. But the local people there took photos, and the photos went straight to the Internet, of course. Look what photos do these days. And yes, these were Ukrainian-type drones, airplane-style drones. So they're either flying through the pre-Baltics, which makes Estonia part of the war, or they're being launched from Estonia. Whether it's Estonians or Ukrainians, it doesn't matter—Estonia is part of the war. It's aggressing against Russia. And we could probably say the same thing for Latvia while we're at it.

Maybe Lithuania. So, you know, there you go. It's already on—it's just being ignored. It's been ignored, or it's been actively ignored by the Kremlin so as not to expand the war. Though I think it's getting to the point where, sooner or later, there won't be any choice but to expand it. Because the West—particularly, well, in this case, the West—I won't say Putin, I mean, sorry, I won't say Trump. And I won't say the Americans, even though I think a good chunk of the Trump administration and the intelligence agencies are all for it. But the Western Europeans are gung-ho on starting a big war. They just want to start it a little later. But I think they're going to get dragged into it through their own stupidity, unfortunately.

And the only way to stop that is for the people of those countries to remove the cancer in their capitals and put somebody rational in power. And voting is not going to do it, because outside of the Czechs—which, by the way, I was very surprised that Babiš was elected—we've seen what the average European election is like. It's cheating, it's autocracy, it's absolute: "We'll make the rules as

we go, and you don't get a say in it." Unfortunately—and just one comment on autocracy while we're at it—you know, they all love to scream that Russia is an autocratic state. There was a very good comparison that came out: how many people were arrested in Russia in 2025 for online commentary? It was 400 people, in a country of 150 million. Four hundred people. And the question is how many of them actually went to trial, let alone if anybody went to jail.

Versus the UK, which has less than half the Russian population—14,000. So if we adjusted that for our population, it'd be almost 30,000 people arrested, and most of them went to jail, given two-, three-, or four-year sentences for comments like, "I'm tired of immigrants." Okay, whether it's a nice comment or not a nice comment, supposedly these people have freedom of speech. That's freedom of speech. They're not screaming for revolution. They're not screaming "murder the immigrant" or anything like that. They're just saying they're tired of immigrants, or that the politicians are idiots. Which, by the way, in Germany, Merz has 8,000 cases he opened against people criticizing him online—hurting his feelings. So again, where's the autocracy?

#Glenn

Well, another area where we seem to be moving toward not just an intensification of the front lines, but also further escalation—even widening the war—would be the attacks on various energy and maritime infrastructure. We see that the targeting of energy infrastructure goes both ways. Ukraine and NATO are targeting Russian energy not just through sanctions, but also with attacks on refineries and now even on civilian vessels. And as we saw in the Mediterranean, it's hard to imagine that the Ukrainians acted alone. That seems highly unlikely.

But of course, the Russians are also going after Ukrainian energy and ports to reduce Ukraine's ability to operate in the Black Sea. What do you see now as the strategy on the Russian side? I've heard many warnings from Russia that if its assets are attacked in the Black Sea, the natural reaction would be to sever Ukraine from the Black Sea. How do you read all these attacks happening now, especially in the Odessa region? It's not just the energy infrastructure—we're seeing ports, bridges. It's been quite... yeah, very defining of the past two months.

#Stanislav Krapivnik

Well, let's begin with the fact that this isn't Ukraine attacking. There may be a Ukrainian somewhere in the group, but this is the UK—flat out, this is British intelligence. These are British drones, even if they slap a "Made in Ukraine" label on them. What's interesting is that some of the targets have been hit, and the Turks have been made to look like fools because shipping has been struck inside their exclusive economic zone. One of the ships that was sunk was actually carrying sunflower oil. Not sure how much of an ecological disaster that'll be, but it's not fuel, so we'll see—maybe fish eat sunflower oil. There was a lot of it that leaked, but luckily the two oil tankers that were hit were empty; they were coming in for fuel. The interesting thing is, first of all, they were under third-country flags.

They were heading toward Novorossiysk. And the damage there is even more interesting, because it wasn't Russian facilities that were hit—it was the Caspian Pipeline Consortium. Earlier this summer, their offices were hit by Ukrainian drones. Another port facility of theirs was struck, and this time their loading facility was hit and destroyed. It's not capable of being repaired. And who owns the CPC? Well, Russia does have a small stake, but it's owned first and foremost by Kazakhstan, which has been trying to sit on two chairs—being friendly with Russia while also complying with sanctions somewhere in between. Oh, and helping feed Ukraine. Well, you get what you get when you help feed Ukraine. Turkey got the same thing.

So now they can't export the majority of their oil, because that's where most of it went. They're losing billions. It may bankrupt the government, because that government literally lives off oil and gas. Who else owns that? Oh, the U.S. owns that. So American assets have now been destroyed by the British government. I'm not sure how much of a conflict that's going to cause, but I'm sure Americans weren't too thrilled to find out that the facilities they helped pay for are no longer operable and won't be operable anytime soon. That cuts into American oil imports and American revenues. Interestingly enough, I'm sure that probably fits into Trump's position, at least somewhat, because Trump does represent the oil lobby as well. You hear some of them, and he represents some.

They're powerful in the U.S. What else has been hit? A Chinese tanker was hit in the Mediterranean, heading to Russia to refuel. So at this point, we're starting to see that it's no longer just Russia being drawn into this war by the Europeans—because let's admit it, it's the Western and Central Europeans doing this, not the Ukrainians. Unless the Ukrainians have free travel with weaponized equipment through, what, Greece? We're probably talking about Greece as the source of these drones. How do you find a tanker in the middle of the sea and bring a drone in before its fuel runs out? Satellites. You use satellite data.

If it's not the U.S. providing the satellite data, the EU has more than a few satellites over the area—including the U.K.—that can give live feeds showing where these tankers are located. Again, it's one thing if it's in a port; it's a whole different thing if it's out at sea. The sea's a big place. People don't realize that when they look at a map and see a little tanker icon there—yes, but that represents millions of square kilometers of water. Try finding that with a drone, especially a surface drone, and trying to locate it, let alone with air drones. The air drones that were used aren't that long-distance capable, so they're not going to be hovering around looking for this tanker out in the open sea for very long.

They came in hard, basically in a swarm formation. What the Russian government has already said is that for all tankers coming to Russia, they should re-flag under Russian flags. So far, they've been hitting third-country flags. Re-flagging with Russian flags—that's an act of war against Russia. Go ahead and hit us. If it's the British, then it's a declaration of war by Britain. If it's Bulgaria or Romania doing it, it's a declaration of war by Bulgaria or Romania on the high seas. So we'll see how

that works. Alternatively, especially in the north, across the Baltic Sea, Russian shipping is already being escorted by the military once or twice. They'll probably start running convoys with military escorts ready to fire on any EU or NATO ship that tries to block them or board them.

So, I mean, this is wartime. And now we're going further and further into wartime effects. Believe me, if there were a convoy, there'd be submarines somewhere around there too, just to add firepower. So if the Western European powers really want a war—if they're really itching for a war—they'll get a war. I hope they're not. I hope there's some amount of sanity left in whatever inbred elites are sitting in the European Commission, those non-elected elites. But unfortunately, I think we're heading toward a bigger war, or at least a larger confrontation that could spark something that might stop at just a spark—or it might keep burning and turn into a wildfire. I hope I'm wrong.

#Glenn

Well, I think that assessment might be correct, because you probably saw the interview or the speech Putin gave in his military fatigues. He basically said that our interest in this deal about Ukraine pulling out of Donetsk is close to zero now. In other words, the former deal seems to be fading away as they ramp up. And U.S. General Michael Flynn tweeted that the best war plans leave a lot of options open, because you want to have different paths to go down until the last minute. That's when all the other alternatives are taken off the table and you go for one thing.

He seemed to interpret that this is what Putin is doing now, just by observing his appearances—how he's dressed and the content of his speeches. According to Michael Flynn's words, the ambiguity is gone, and it looks like the policies will change dramatically. I guess my main concern is that, when I look around Europe, most people don't really see the severity of the direction we're heading. I remember earlier this year, when there were attacks on Russia's nuclear deterrent, the general consensus across the media was, "Well, Ukraine has a right to strike back—they were attacked by Russia."

Why shouldn't they respond against the planes that attack them? But I don't think they understand the significance. First of all, attacking Russia's nuclear deterrent in a proxy war... And the FSB even recognized that the British were deeply involved in this attack on Russia's nuclear deterrent as well. I mean, this would have been almost unthinkable during the Cold War—that anyone would go to this extent. But they're only talking in these normative ways, like, "Oh, well, what is fair? Russia did this to Ukraine. It's not fair. Ukraine should be able to strike back." But when you look at who's behind the attacks and what they're attacking, this is really World War III stuff we're talking about.

And so we were going up this escalation ladder, and people are talking about this as if it's their children—it's quite frightening. I think a lot of the belligerence is happening because of a lot of stupidity that's covering everything over. Yeah, I think in such a war, everyone would effectively lose. But how do you make sense of this speech by Putin? Do you see now that the policies will begin to harden? Of course, it depends on these negotiations, but I'm not sure if they're just for

show. It doesn't seem to make much sense. I'll have to say, though, according to the U.S. side, 90% of the peace deal was done—except for the NATO stuff and the territory stuff. So that's actually the core of the matter, yeah.

#Stanislav Krapivnik

You know, Market Garden—they got 90% of the way, but that last bridge was the bridge too far. You know, like in the movie, in the books—it was the bridge too far. So yeah, if 90% is on flat ground, the last 10% is Mount Everest, and you just can't climb Mount Everest. That's the whole point. It doesn't matter if it's just 1%. If you reach a point where neither side will move, everything gets settled on the battlefield. The problem for the West, particularly for the U.S., is that the leverage in these negotiations is evaporating every single day—by square kilometers, and quite a few square kilometers—every single day, with thousands of dead Ukrainian soldiers. Every single day, without exception.

Let's just review what's happening on the battlefield right now. So, Mediagrad is over—there are just cleanup operations and a few holdouts here and there. The Pokrovskaya relief operation never really got going before it got whacked, because it was coming up. I mean, the videos coming out of there show these guys basically destroyed, driving down roads, trying to speed in. When it fell, it fell in about two weeks. It fell so quickly—the last part—the Ukrainians took off running so fast that when the Russian forces overran the headquarters units, the computers were still on. They weren't even password-protected. They didn't have time to lock the screen, let alone destroy the computers.

That screen was still on. They just ran. The videos showed these computers, all the monitors still on. You come in there, see what they were talking about—you've got full access. Turn off the password control right there and start digging into their intel. So basically, morale just collapsed instantly. As the forward units started running, they were passing the headquarters units, and the headquarters units said, "Oh, crap, now we're the forward units. Let's run." When panic hits that hard, it means a total collapse of discipline and control—you don't destroy your equipment, you don't burn documents, you don't evacuate them.

I mean, in a headquarters unit, if you've got top secret material, that computer is much more valuable than any rifle anyone else has in that unit. One guy getting killed is a tragedy; that computer getting lost could get a lot of people killed, plus whatever secrets it's holding that should never be leaked to the world. So all these computers were up and running—that tells you morale has totally collapsed. Now, what is Huliaypole? North of Huliaypole there's about a 50-kilometer, maybe even smaller, zone of fortifications that's now been flanked from the north and from the south. So if the Ukrainians stay in those fortifications, they die. If they make a run for it, most will die.

Some will get through because it's closing out. But the problem for them is that running now means crossing mostly open terrain. And here's where the problem starts for the Ukrainian side: most of Zaporizhzhia is flat and open. They've totally lost their eastern flank—complete collapse. The main

fortress is Huliaypole, which, by the way, is two words combined into one: Huliay and Pole. Everybody keeps mispronouncing it. For some reason, Huliaypole, which translates to "tumbleweed" in English, literally means "the city of tumbleweed." From there to Zaporizhzhia city is a straight 60-kilometer shot.

So you still have Ukrainian forces in the south trying to hold back the Russian forces advancing north, while to their north there's going to be a breakthrough by Russian units moving even farther up. So again, they either fall back or they get destroyed. It's surrounded and destroyed, hit from three sides. It's just going to roll up that entire defensive line. Zaporizhzhia—I'm not going to call it lost. I mean, it is lost. But the Zaporizhzhia front, I'm not going to say how long it takes; it depends on how fast Russia decides to move. The weather there is pretty atrocious—it's not frozen.

We've just now gotten actual winter in Moscow, and it's come with a vengeance—snowing every day. But down there, it's freeze, defrost, freeze, defrost—mud, a lot of mud. So that's going to save them somewhat, because heavy equipment is still going to be sluggish moving across that kind of terrain. But the fact is, Russia has its dominance. Russia has missile dominance. Russia has, in some areas, heavy drone dominance. It doesn't have FPV drone dominance, but it can concentrate a lot of FPV assets in a single area. And Russia has armored dominance. In this case, it's outmaneuvering them with a three-directional attack. It's just going to roll up their front.

So I would, if I were a guessing man—or a betting man, better yet—I'd say anywhere from two to three months, the Zaporizhzhia front will be collapsed and destroyed completely. Probably the city of Zaporizhzhia being either under siege, invested, or partially invested. It's very hard to defend upper-river cities. It's an open, flat area. It has one major bridge across the Dnieper. You can, of course, come down the eastern bank of the Dnieper and continue overland, but you're in an open area. So anything coming in from the north side is going to be subject to a lot of attrition. Then we look at Donbas itself, or in this particular case, the Donetsk People's Republic.

And again, on the front, we have about a hundred kilometers of frontage that's basically open. That goes right into Poltava and right into Dnipropetrovsk Oblast. The last major fortifications are gone. The new fortification belts they're digging desperately are mostly in open fields and unprepared villages, and they don't have the manpower. You look at Kupiansk—they threw everything they could there. And if you notice, every offensive is getting smaller. At the end of '22, you had the Kharkiv and Kherson counteroffensives. In '23, you had the Zaporizhzhia counteroffensive, which was already much smaller because they'd lost a lot of men and equipment.

There they basically lost their second army—rebuilt armies, the second rebuild. Then you had the Kursk offensive, and if you ever actually looked at the Kursk offensive—not the maps the West put out, but an actual map—you'd see they captured about 10% of the oblast. It's far from the biggest Russian oblast, so it was really a relatively small piece of ground, all things considered, even though

the West was in full panic. Like, tomorrow Kursk City—which was still about 50 kilometers away from them—and the day after it would be Moscow. But the reality was, everything's getting smaller and smaller in scope. And now the big counteroffensive was just west of Kupiansk. And that's over.

And that's been destroyed, and Russian forces are already moving past Kupiansk in the south. So the whole front is collapsing. Once Krasnohorivka is fully cleared, you'll have Sloviansk basically surrounded from the north. And there's already fighting going on in Kostyantynivka. So you've got, what, two major cities left that aren't invested yet at all, and one that's about a third invested. So what's left? The Donbas is done. After this, it's just a matter of how much territory in Sumy and Chernihiv—Chernihiv hasn't even been started yet—but in Sumy, in Kharkiv, in Dnipro, and sooner or later in Poltava, it's all going to be in Russian hands. And Kharkiv—let's not forget—that's about 30 kilometers, and Russia is moving.

Sumy—the Russian front has started moving again. That's less than 20 kilometers to Sumy. I mean, we're not talking about huge distances to surround these cities. And with the power out, most civilians are going to leave if they haven't already. They can't survive. The cold is arriving—an actual winter cold. Kharkiv is much colder than down in Avdiivka. There's a big enough distance there, and a difference. A lot of people are leaving. That's the whole point in this case—switching those areas off is to get people to leave, because then fighting in the city is going to be much easier without the Ukrainians being able to use civilians as human shields.

#Glenn

I think the command post being abandoned like that in Huliaipole was an indicator of what's coming. We always see this—when wars reach their final stages, casualties go through the roof, much like Germany at the end of World War II. And as you suggest, it's always this cascading effect: if there's panic, there are more desertions, less recruitment, more surrenders, the disconnection of communication lines, weakening supply lines, and international support pulling back because nobody wants to bet on the losing horse. And it's—no, it's—you can kind of see where this goes. It's frustrating that it doesn't seem to affect much, at least in Europe, in how they look at or how they should approach this conflict—at least start talking to the Russians, pick up the phone.

I mean, we should—at some point, things will change so fast from day to day. We wish we had some people on the ground, talking and, you know, being in the middle of at least a process. Instead, everything would have to start from scratch. And then, once we start from scratch, it's after we've actually lost, which—it boggles the mind. But it did make me want to ask you about the U.S. position. How do you make sense of the U.S. position in these negotiations? Because Trump is, of course, famous for going a bit back and forth, and it all seems a bit bizarre—the U.S. position—because now the U.S. is seemingly the main negotiator trying to bring this war to an end.

But it was the U.S. that pushed the Europeans back in 2008 on offering future membership to Ukraine. It was the U.S. that took the lead in toppling Yanukovych in 2014. It was the U.S. that led

in undermining the Minsk peace agreement and then the Istanbul talks. And today, it's U.S. generals doing most of the war planning. Ukraine is full of CIA agents. It's the U.S. intelligence agencies providing the targeting, primarily using American weapons. This is still a U.S.-led proxy war, regardless of Trump trying to hand it over to Biden. So... yet Trump is the mediator here. He might genuinely want this war to end because he sees it as a disaster, or he could just be trying to outsource it to the Europeans.

But even as he mediates, the sanctions on countries like India are being imposed in an effort to cripple the Russian economy. And he either ignores or assists the Europeans in attacks on Russia. There's even the issue of civilian vessels. I mean, you're a former U.S. ambassador and army officer—how do you make sense of the U.S. position in this? Let's call it a diplomatic circus, because it doesn't feel very genuine to me. If they really wanted to shut this thing down, they could. I do understand they don't want to give up the pressure yet against Russia, since they can use it as leverage in negotiations. But still, it's been a year of the Trump administration, and they're still leading this war. So what are we looking at here?

#Stanislav Krapivnik

You know, for future historians—say in 150 or 200 years—before they start studying these last five years, or maybe even longer if you really want to go back to where it all starts, and then the next couple of years to see where it goes, I would highly suggest binging on **Monty Python's Flying Circus**. Because this is basically like the most absurd episode of **Monty Python's Flying Circus**. For those who haven't watched it—maybe I'm dating myself—but I highly suggest watching some reruns and then watching the news. It'll make much more sense. The absurd of the absurd is what we have from the West in general.

You know, anybody with half an intellectual node in their head would have figured out that one of the biggest targets in all of this was the European Union to begin with—the destruction of the European Union, the willful self-destruction of the European Union. And that's exactly what we have. Europe—the European Union—is not going to negotiate. They're negotiation-incapable. What they're going to do, until they collapse, is become more and more tyrannical. We see this right now: sanctioning European citizens, sanctioning Swiss citizens. For what? For telling the truth—for telling the truth about what's going on. This is, you know, the USSR and their unelected Politburo, otherwise known as Commissioner von der Leyen, or the State Secretary von der Leyen there.

Actually, I think the Politburo had more of a democratic process in getting elected than the European Commission. They've taken everything that was worst about the USSR and implemented that—and none of the good things, like taking care of the people, 48-hour work weeks, vacations, medical treatment. They just dropped all of that ballast. You know, why bother with that? "We'll just keep the good stuff," as he ironically rules over everybody. So I don't think they're capable of negotiating. The people around von der Leyen definitely aren't, and I don't think the people who could replace her are capable of that either. They're ideologues.

They've sold themselves out—completely, really, their souls—to this mission, whether they realize it or not. But that's exactly how they're acting. And people can do that very easily; they get so invested in something that they can't take even one step back, let alone the tenth step you'd need to take to see the big picture. Europe was always one of the major targets. It's like, you know, World War I, World War II—the British aim wasn't just the destruction of the Germans; it was the destruction of both the Germans and the Russians. They're playing a bigger game. The U.S. is playing a bigger game in this too. The U.S. is now acting as both the main controller and the enabler of the proxy—and also as the supposed neutral negotiator.

Again, this is something straight out of Monty Python. I don't think Monty Python could have come up with something this hilarious. You're looking at people—Trump is talking about, "We're neutral." Neutral? You're giving them all the military intelligence they need. You're still giving them equipment. The U.S. is still sending equipment for money that Europe will maybe pay someday. So they're still providing equipment. There are even line items in the direct Pentagon budget for Ukraine. It was modest, of course—compared to previous years, it was only about \$800 million—but it's there. And there are always supplemental budgets.

Never forget that the U.S. military and the U.S. government in general run on a lot of supplemental budgets. So if it's \$900 billion as the main budget for the War Department, the supplemental budgets could easily come to several hundred billion dollars more—easily. And there'll be ad hoc paths here and there. So, you know, you're looking at a side that's really just trying to hedge its bets. I don't think it's giving up on Project Ukraine as a whole, no matter what Trump is saying. I don't believe it. Sorry—maybe, you know, a lot of Russian news media don't like what I've said before because I'm very critical of Trump. And they all, for some reason, want to believe that maybe this time, with the U.S. President Trump and some of that... Ladies and gentlemen, this is not the end.

This is, if nothing else, a regrouping. Project Ukraine has not been abandoned. The U.S. has not abandoned its drive for hegemony over the world, no matter what its new official strategy is. And if you look at that strategy, they still talk about possible threats to Europe and other areas where they can't completely pull out because their interests are still involved. Meanwhile, they're basically reinforcing that they're going to exploit the Western Hemisphere as much as they want, like they've done for the last 140 years. So where is this going to go? I don't know. I honestly don't know. From the Russian side, I think they're finally just running out of any desire to even participate in this farce. It's going to be settled on the battlefield. What's going to happen to the European Union?

I think at least a few countries are probably going to say, "Thanks, we've had enough, we're leaving." Will they be allowed to leave like the British were? I don't know. The European Union was much more democratic when the British had their exit. Would the Hungarians or the Slovaks be able to leave? I don't know. I honestly don't know at this point, because if they start to go, that could have a cascading effect on the European Union as a whole. And those powers that be, sitting

up in Brussels, they don't want to lose power. And the more power they grab, the more desperate they become. I mean, just look at what they're doing to European citizens—sanctions against their own countries. They can't buy, they can't earn, they can't sell, they can't even give gifts.

I mean, this is worse than putting somebody in a concentration camp—at least worse than putting them in prison. At least in prison you get food and water. Here, you're not even an entity that can do anything. No union ever came up with anything that tyrannical. Well, I'm not going to talk about the 1920s or the '30s when they had gulags, but I'm sure those are probably around the corner. That's usually the next step. "Well, we can't keep these people in if they're ghosted. We can't keep them in society because they're still talking, they're still coming on podcasts. Why don't we just put them all in one place?" And then the next logical steps go from that. We know how this play plays out—it's been played out several times before. And I don't see the European Union hitting the brakes anytime soon. I don't see the desire for it.

#Glenn

Well, the U.S. playing all sides is a common theme, though. In 1941, before Harry Truman took the presidency, there's this quote he gave to the New York Times where he said that if the Germans are winning, we should help the Russians; if the Russians are winning, we should help the Germans. That way, let them kill each other as much as possible. The idea was that as long as both are weakened, we win. And again, it's not exactly the same now, but the logic is still the same. You know, you can destroy, for example, Nord Stream—you weaken the Europeans, and in their weakness, make them more dependent on the U.S., more obedient. I mean, look where the EU is now. Twenty years ago, in terms of GDP, there was some parity between the U.S. and the EU. Now, there's nothing.

What remains of a de-industrializing Europe is now being lured over to the United States with all these subsidies. And it's quite remarkable. As the Europeans are allowed the privilege of buying American weapons to fight the war—which the Americans were the main ones pushing for—all the Americans want in return is for Europeans to buy American energy, much more expensive. And whatever money remains should be invested in the United States, as per a deal the EU had to sign with Trump on his golf course, given that the EU didn't have any leverage. So there is... again, this hardly falls under a conspiracy theory when Trump himself comes out and says the EU is worse than China.

And he hates nothing more than China, seemingly. So that would be the Europeans. It's quite remarkable. But it does beg the question—how do you interpret the European position? Because this is a very strange thing for me. The Europeans, again, were the ones who previously resisted the U.S. push toward this disaster in 2008, when they warned Bush not to offer membership to Ukraine. First of all, only about 20 percent of Ukrainians wanted it, and it was going to lead to war. Angela Merkel said this would be interpreted by Moscow as a declaration of war. And the predictable thing happened—it blew up in our faces. We have a war.

We're losing that war. The U.S. sees what's written on the wall, so they're backing out—not completely, obviously, but handing over responsibility to the Europeans and trying to make some money off it as they outsource it. And there's no course correction. It's quite shocking. I always feel like I should make some excuses for the EU, but after what they did to Colonel Jacques Baud of the Swiss Army—if you read his books or watch his interviews—he just relies on Western sources to give the best analysis, which was his job as a colonel. He did the intelligence analysis and then, based on interpreting reality as it is, advocated for the best policies. His assessments have been correct.

No one can catch him on any of the facts or the analysis he does. And the policies he recommended would have kept us away from this war. It would have saved Europe. It would have saved Ukraine. But that's not what the Europeans did. Yet they sanctioned him. He can't travel. They seized his bank accounts—a colonel who used to work with NATO. What? This is just... it's so dark. I mean, I'm kind of... For me, this is a big nail in the coffin of the EU, and they did this to themselves. It's shocking. But anyway, my question is, how do you make sense of this? Because if you're losing a war, the deal is going to be worse tomorrow than it is today. Why would you still want to prolong it? It's a difficult thing to comprehend, I think.

#Stanislav Krapivnik

Well, it depends on which Europeans you mean. If you take the 160 million or so Russians and Belarusians—well, the Belarusians are still kind of in a neutral, pseudo-neutral mode. The 150 million Russians, mostly Europeans, are looking at it and saying, "We'll settle this on the battlefield." I think the 18 or 19 million Ukrainians are split between those who are determined to fight to the end and those who just want this to be over in any way possible. As for the rest of the Ukrainians outside Ukraine—because Ukraine itself, you know, it's a three-tier society, a three-tier war.

You have the lower middle class and the poor—they're the ones fighting and dying because they can't afford to buy their way out. The middle class has bought their way out, become refugees, and are now the uber-patriots who want to fight to the very last Ukrainian, because it's not them. And then the rich are just partying wherever they want. They don't give a damn. You know, it's all a good party. They've stolen so much money, they're happy to spend it in poor Central and Eastern, or Central and Western Europe, at the resorts—buying up trinkets, buying up services. "Here, here, come over here, French servant."

Come bring me my drink, because I'm the rich Ukrainian. So it's a very different society—a very, very tiered society. As for the Austro-Hungarian contingent, well, the Austrians so far are still pro-war, but the Conservative Party did win the majority, and I think they're going to have the uber-majority in the next election. So they'll be out, and they'll follow the Czechs, the Hungarians, and the Slovaks out the door, saying goodbye—"We're not going to fight this war no matter what." Which is going to be a hit for NATO too, if you think about it. Those armies are not going to fight. Oh, and Austria is neutral anyway.

Well, not NATO. I mean, for NATO itself—the Turks aren't going to fight. I'm not calling them Europeans, but they're not going to fight. The Greeks will have a revolution. The Bulgarians will have a revolution. The Romanians may have a revolution, because they really didn't want any of this, and their elections were blatantly stolen, as we saw. The Italians are starting to distance themselves. I think they've figured out they're standing on a precipice, with their toes already hanging over the cliff, and it'll just take a nice gust of wind for them to go back over. But Italy has rarely finished a war on the same side it started—it never has.

So there's that. As a matter of fact, when I was in Bosnia that year, the Italians were the first ones to have Valkyrie patches. And the joke was—sorry, I may piss off some of the Italians who know me—but the joke we had was that the reason for the Valkyrie patches was because Italy has finished every world war on a different side than it started on. So they could quickly switch patches. You know, "Whose side are we on today? Oh, okay, new patch," and then we'd go forward. And then, when you get down to the others—well, Germany is a good question. Because while everybody focuses on the Alternative für Deutschland being at 27% and probably higher, there's a flip side to that.

The rest—so around 70%—give their votes to other parties, but they're still voting for war. The majority of the population still wants war, whether they fully realize it or not. That's a separate issue. But they're voting for war. And the problem—now you're getting into the problem of the Scandinavians, the pre-Balts, the Poles, and the Northern Europeans, and the leadership that runs the EUSSR Politburo in Brussels—is that the last thing they can possibly accept is any actual peace in Ukraine. Because if there's real peace, if borders are set and the conflict ends, what do they have left to unify the bankrupt, corrupt, socially degenerate, infrastructurally crumbling, economically destroyed European Union? Without the red scare—or, if you want to call it that, the Russian scare—what's left? Okay, so the Russians have just concluded a peace treaty.

Everybody's backing off. They've got a hard border. The war is over. "The Russians are coming, the Russians are coming." Well, that doesn't work anymore. "Oh, why did we bankrupt your economy? Why are your children going hungry by week three?" By the way, that's the average Italian these days. I have several friends in Italy, people in Italian politics I've talked to, and they're like, you know, the average Italian is deciding whether to heat his home or feed himself and his family by week three of the month—and it's only getting worse. Try explaining that. Meloni, by the way—who was the number one cheerleader for NATO after she got elected—now has to explain why we gave away a lot of equipment, maybe had quite a few Italians killed. The French have definitely been killed, and the Poles have been killed. And so have the Germans, while we're at it.

And bankrupt their economy. Hmm. Let's see. I don't know—what else are they going to say? We put everything on red five, so even if it was red six, it wasn't a win, and we didn't get red five. In fact, the roulette wheel just disappeared, the ball flew off somewhere, and we're stuck with our bets on red five being taken away. So we're all bankrupt now. Thanks. We're going to leave for America. And I'm sure quite a few of those leaders probably will leave for America or Canada or somewhere

else to run for their lives with their money. I don't see how the European Union gets out of this alive—at least not in the form it is now—unless it goes full Third Reich tyranny. I mean, concentration camps, gulags, or war camps. I'm talking straight-up concentration camps, full repression, full-on everything. That's the last desperate hold on power.

And the weaker the government is—or the weaker they feel—the harsher their terms become toward their own population, because they have to crush anything that looks or smells like dissent. And that's what we're seeing in the EU. It's revving up. They're getting more desperate every single day. And you're right about the colonel. There was a Turkish journalist—I can't remember his name right now—in Germany. He's a perfect example. He's Turkish by ethnicity, born in Germany, and he's sanctioned. The man's basically been ghosted. He's not the only one. There was, by the way, another Swedish journalist—she's been sanctioned too. She's in Africa.

She can't fly into Switzerland because she has to fly over European Union territory, so now she can't go home. What we're seeing right now is that it's starting at the top level—they're grabbing the dissidents, the bigger dissidents—but it's going to go further and further down the line, which we already see in England. But England is well ahead, by at least a few years, of the European Union. England is in full-on tyranny. Anything you say—look at George Galloway, for God's sake. The man was a member of Parliament for 30 years, he's head of a recognized, registered political party, and he and his wife were coming in and they were detained, which is worse than being arrested, because if you're arrested, at least you get a solicitor.

Here, you're detained—you get no solicitor, you get nothing. You're at the mercy of the state because you're not arrested; you're detained. "Just in detention, we can do anything we want," basically. You have no rights. And the U.K. is in full tyranny, but I don't think that's going to spread to the rest of the EU. I don't think there's an off-ramp for them, because any off-ramp means a loss of power and probably the loss of the EU, at least as we see it now. It'll have to be reformed. I don't think these people are ready to let go—especially the money they're making. I mean, they're all making money. Let's not forget that. They have power, they have money, they have prestige in their circles. That's very hard to give up.

#Glenn

I think it's important to recognize that this is not the end stop, as you suggested. If you remember when they started this deplatforming and censorship, it was a controversial thing. First, they rolled out Alex Jones because he said some appalling things, and everyone kind of said, "Yeah, this goes too far—let's deplatform him." That's a nicer word than "censorship." Of course, the assumption seemed to be that, okay, this would be a one-off. But instead, it opened the door, and now it's a common thing—people just disappear off Twitter, disappear off YouTube, or any other channel, and there's no recourse. There's nothing you can do. This has just become the new normal, that people

are deplatformed. I think it prevents us from actually resolving this issue as well. It's just incredible that we're here now. If you remember back in the '90s, this was a common debate we had, especially in the United States, but also many Europeans were worried about it.

That is, if we insist on developing a Europe without the Russians—an unwillingness to pursue a mutually acceptable European security architecture after the Cold War—we're going to end up in another conflict. As George Kennan said, if we expand NATO, at some point the Russians will lash back and they will react. And once they do, we'll have all these people on our side saying, "Oh, that's just how Russians are." You know, this is pretty much spot on. This was in '98. And, of course, the frontline states—once you revive the Cold War logic—would suffer greatly.

Then Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia. It's important to recognize this, to restore diplomacy. But it's impossible to make this argument in Europe unless you want to be smeared, censored, canceled—and now, of course, also sanctioned. I mean, this is... But yeah, what happened to Colonel Wu is incredible. This is going to be, again, another step toward EU irrelevance. Anyway, on that not-so-happy note, thank you very much for taking the time. I know you're very busy with the holidays ahead of New Year's and Orthodox Christmas, so thank you.

#Stanislav Krapivnik

Well, thank you. And I hope, you know, I do hope the sheep will bring some sanity. What's the Chinese animal this time—the horse? I hope the Year of the Horse, or the stallion, whichever it is, brings a lot more sanity to Europe than we've had over the last three or four years. So, we'll live and see. But, you know, hope for the best, prepare for the worst.