

Ukraine Trapped in Narratives Designed for a Long War

Dr. Marta Havryshko is a visiting assistant professor of Holocaust and Genocide Studies at Clark University. Havryshko also specialises in the role of radical nationalists in Ukraine, a small minority who have gained immense power. 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 to the program. We are joined today by Marta Havryshko, a Ukrainian historian working as a visiting assistant professor at the Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies. Thank you very much for coming back on the program.

#Marta Havryshko

Thank you for having me.

#Glenn

Well, what we're seeing happening these days in Ukraine is truly heartbreaking. We're seeing a nation effectively being destroyed. And sitting here in Western Europe—I know you're in the U.S. now—but here in Western Europe, I've been completely shocked by the absence of any serious debate about what would actually be the ideal policy to enhance Ukrainian security and, indeed, the survival of the nation. Because it seems the only acceptable position we have in Europe now is that a pro-Ukrainian stance means we have to push for pulling Ukraine into the NATO orbit and, of course, confront Russia. And this isn't just over the past four years; it's been more or less the case for the past twenty years, at least since 2004. I've always found myself put in a strange box, because I made the argument then—in 2004, but also in 2008, and even more so after 2014—that attempting to pull Ukraine into NATO would not help Ukraine.

It would not enhance its security or its survival. On the contrary, it would destroy Ukraine. I made the point that Russia would back and support a Ukraine that is either aligned with Russia, of course, or neutral. But if it were positioned as a frontline state for NATO, I think the Russians would seek to destroy Ukraine—that is, seize the historical Russian territories, destroy what remains, and leave a dysfunctional rump state. And I always make the point: this is not to legitimize or support anything.

This is not advocacy; it's just a recognition of reality—how any great power would react. I would say the U.S. would likely do the same if the Russians were trying to make Mexico into a frontline state against the U.S. Now, what I warned would happen is indeed what has happened.

And my great frustration is that the people who have been pushing for NATO expansion over the years, rejecting diplomacy, and refusing to recognize what the Russians are arguing—somehow these are the people who are considered pro-Ukrainian. They're the ones who want to keep the war going, to fight, to make no compromises. Meanwhile, the people who have warned for restraint are seen as anti-Ukrainian or pro-Russian, and essentially there's no room for them in the debate. It's quite amazing, because we now see exactly what many people, like John Mearsheimer, had warned—that Ukraine was being led down the primrose path to its destruction by those pretending they cared about Ukraine.

I always make the point that any time I hear a reference to compassion for Ukrainians in Ukraine, it's always translated into, "Well, let's keep the war going. How about we start deporting Ukrainian refugees so they can help us fight? How about we block the border so young Ukrainians can't escape, so they'll fight?" Every time, it's turned into some horrible thing that could happen to Ukrainians themselves. But I want to get your view, because you have, of course, been very critical of this war. As a Ukrainian, you've faced a similar problem, if I'm not mistaken—that is, you're seen as an anti-Ukrainian Ukrainian because you've been very critical of many of the policies being pushed.

#Marta Havryshko

Yes, exactly. So, you know, when I hear this mantra that Ukraine has the right to self-defense, I agree. People have the right to self-defense, but they also have the right not to defend themselves, right? People have the right to flee from danger. People have the right not to risk their lives. People have the right not to be sent to the meat grinder. People have the right not to obey what they see as dangerous victory plans. And what we observe now, after the failed counteroffensive in 2023, in the autumn, is that Ukraine keeps losing territory.

Constantly. Two years in a row—two years in a row, Ukraine keeps losing territory. And, you know, just recently Ukraine lost Hulai Pola, Siversk, and other areas in the Donetsk region. And when all those warmongers show the map and say, "Oh, it's just a small percentage of Ukrainian territory, and Ukraine is so huge, Russia would need dozens of years to conquer the whole thing,"—guys, it's not about territory. You should assess this war in human lives.

You should count how many lives were lost, how many young men are now in military cemeteries, how many maimed soldiers we have, how many widows this war has produced, how many orphans, how many cemeteries. Every single time I have these arguments with warmongers who say, "Ukraine should fight, Ukraine should fight," I show them a picture of a cemetery in my native city, Lviv. In that cemetery lies my relative, who was forcibly mobilized—a civilian with zero military knowledge, a civilian profession—mobilized against his will, and he lost his life three weeks later in

his first battle. He's lying there, and several of my friends, colleagues, and other relatives are lying there too.

I wish they would desert from this army. I wish they would save their lives instead of trying to fulfill their patriotic duty and the wishes of warmongers. Because this war seems unwinnable. And all those fairy tales about Ukraine being able to win the war—I want to ask those people, what is the West actually doing to help Ukraine win? Where is the substantial economic plan? They've struggled for two years to find even 90 billion euros. But what next? Where is the substantial military aid? Italy quit the plan to buy weapons from the U.S. And today we learned from German media that this year Germany decreased its weapons deliveries to Ukraine.

Hungary, Slovakia, and the Czech Republic just, you know, nowadays they just don't want to participate in all these, you know, scam schemes. And the U.S. has completely stopped delivering any support to Ukraine. They just sell their weapons to EU countries. So Ukraine doesn't have money, doesn't have weapons—but most importantly, Ukraine is running out of people. In 2022, we saw long lines of combat volunteers. Now we also see lines, but those are people with exemptions. They bought, you know, medical documents saying they're disabled, or they obtained some other papers—because Ukraine is a very corrupt country, and war produces enormous corruption in these draft-evading services.

There are entire schemes now where women with disabilities, or women with three or more children, set up these services. They've become the most sought-after women in Ukraine because they sell those services—men marry them, and those fake marriages basically save the men from being drafted. There are so many ways to avoid military service, and millions of men, according to officials, are trying to use them. Officials say around 300,000 men have deserted from the army or gone AWOL—meaning they left without permission—because they don't want to fulfill their patriotic duty.

And guess what? Most of them left the training centers. It means it's not about war fatigue—it's about distrust. They don't believe in the state. They don't believe in the system. They don't believe in these, you know, victory plans. They don't believe Zelensky and all these things. I'm sorry—they don't believe Zelensky. That's why they're not ready to sacrifice their lives and their health for this corrupt state. Why aren't they ready? Especially today, when all these corrupt schemes involving Zelensky's close friends are being revealed. And people are asking themselves, why are the sons of judges, lawmakers, prosecutors, businessmen—Zelensky's friends—living luxury lives in the West?

And the sons of plumbers, of truck drivers, are dying. They're being hunted like stray dogs in the streets, pushed into vans, and sent to the front lines in the hot spots. Because now Ukraine doesn't have infantry. And what is the West saying? "Please keep your men safe in Ukraine. Stop this flow of Ukrainian men." Like Murs says, "Stop this flow of young Ukrainian men. Keep them at home, because we are paying for this." Nobody wants to send their men to the Ukrainian front line. Nobody

wants to watch in real time how their sons, their loved ones, are torn apart by Russian drones. But Ukrainian men are treated like meat for these EU, you know, powerful men and women who don't care about Ukrainian lives.

What we're hearing from them is that they're afraid of Russia. They keep saying Russia is the main threat, that Russia is preparing to restore the Soviet Union. Ukraine should keep fighting because it's about the safety of Europe, the safety of our children. So you're using Ukrainian lives to protect your children? You're using Ukrainian children to protect your children? No, thank you. It's another form of colonialism and racism, and it must stop. I hope Ukrainians will understand that this proxy war has to stop. And actually, recent polls show that in Ukraine, this belief and trust in NATO is on the rise. Why? Because nobody believes that Article 5 of NATO will somehow protect Ukraine.

Because Article 5 is not about obligation; it's about the right to make certain decisions. So, let's say Germany says, "Our thoughts and prayers are with you," just like it was at the beginning of the Russian aggression. They can say, "We'll send you five thousand helmets," or they'll organize meetings to discuss further meetings. Europe is disabled without the U.S., and the U.S. nowadays is out of this equation. We understand that Trump doesn't want to be part of this war. A war with Russia—a potential war with Russia—is desired by EU warmongers. It's not desired by the U.S. That's why Trump will not support all these war plans by the EU warmongers. And I believe that the only adult nowadays in the negotiation room is actually Trump and his advisors.

That's why I rely on his decisions and the decisions of his advisors. And I hope the Trump administration is on the right path to bring peace to Europe. Because this biggest war in Europe since the Second World War must end. This bloodshed must end. I believe that as long as this war goes on, there will be more destruction, more suffering, more losses for Ukraine. More people will leave Ukraine, more brains will leave Ukraine. Because recently we learned that Ukraine is one of the leaders in brain drain. People don't see any possibilities for development, prosperity, or opportunity in this country anymore. And the war doesn't help it, you know?

#Glenn

On Article 5 of NATO, people often cite the first part of that first sentence—that an attack on one should be considered an attack on all. But no one refers to the second part of that sentence, which says that each member of the alliance can choose how to respond, even with the use of military force—but that's an option. People tend to leave this out. I remember Lindsey Graham gave a speech where he argued that we have a good arrangement with Zelensky: as long as we send the weapons, they will fight to the last man.

And we already knew this setup back in March 2022. That's when Zelensky was interviewed by The Economist, and he made the point that there were many countries in the West that didn't want a quick peace with Russia. They wanted, in Zelensky's words, a long war with Russia because then they could see Russia being weakened. And he added, even if this meant the deaths of Ukrainians

and the destruction of Ukraine itself. So this was an early acknowledgment, almost four years ago now, that this is the purpose of Ukraine in the eyes of NATO—to use it as a proxy against the Russians. But again, for almost four years now, we've been hearing the same story week after week.

Ukraine is winning. Well, it wasn't winning. Russia's running out of weapons—was running out of missiles since March 2022. It's not running out of missiles. And every week Putin gets a new disease that's supposedly going to kill him, and the Russians are just about to storm the Kremlin. And, you know, this is not happening. All of these narratives serve the same function, I think. That's what Zelensky referred to back in March 2022—it's the long-war narrative. The idea is, we're winning if we just continue a little bit longer. But as you said, this is a war of attrition. Don't look at the territory. In a war of attrition, you first exhaust the adversary, then you take the territory. And Ukraine is being exhausted now.

And again, this came after, of course, Zelensky actually turned down the deal from the U.S. and U.K. back in April 2022, when he rejected the Istanbul talks. How did the West respond? They cut off all diplomacy with Russia, which meant there was no diplomatic path to resolve this. And they just said, well, we'll send weapons, and Zelensky will send the Ukrainians to fight essentially to the last man. This is why I think it's important. This is why it's not an anti-Ukrainian position. NATO's not coming to the aid of Ukraine. Europe can't save this. America's pulling out. The Europeans are deeply divided. Even if they had the intentions, they don't have the capabilities. And even now—that's my question to you—even now that the Europeans are increasingly coming to terms with the fact that, yes, of course, Ukraine is losing, the argument is still that they can keep fighting.

So, in other words, how can we help Ukraine lose more slowly? And, you know, Europe can prepare itself for the future—something that Yulia Tymoshenko was also appalled by. But if the goal is to make Ukraine lose more slowly, that means more men will die, more men will flee the country, more territories will be lost, and more infrastructure destroyed. How is it possible for Ukraine to rebuild after this war and survive as a nation? It's surprising to me that this is how we're selling a pro-Ukrainian position these days in Europe. But how is this received in Ukraine? In Ukraine, this new idea that we can help Ukraine lose a little bit more slowly—because, as I said, Yulia Tymoshenko was appalled by the head of German intelligence when he made this argument, saying we just have to keep the war going another five years so we can rebuild—how is this being received among Ukrainians?

#Marta Havryshko

You know, the question is really complicated. Ukrainian society is not homogeneous in its perception of the war. And nowadays it's really hard to understand what's going on. Why? Because there's no trust in any polls. Also, sociological theories are under pressure because it's a war. We understand there's political pressure from the Zelensky government. There's also self-censorship, I believe. And we have many Ukrainians who aren't being asked. I mean, seven million Ukrainians are now in Europe, at least three million are in Russia, and several million are under Russian occupation.

They're also not being questioned. And many of them, I believe, would have very different views about what's going on—especially those Ukrainians who've lived under Russian occupation since 2014. You know, when people keep repeating "Crimea is Ukraine," I highly doubt that the majority of people in Crimea are actually ready to return to Ukraine. Even in 2014, identity there was already highly problematic, because most locals weren't ethnic Ukrainians. And we know that even most Crimean Tatars took Russian passports. They live peacefully. We don't have many Crimean Tatars in the Ukrainian armed forces, for example.

So that's why all these factors are actually contributing to the fact that we don't really know what Ukrainians want nowadays. But we rely on the existing polls, we rely on Ukrainian media that reflects some public opinion, and we rely on, you know, the general perception. Especially, I can talk about my friends and relatives, because all my relatives live in Ukraine, as do my old friends, and so on. So I'd say Ukrainians are not homogeneous. But what I observe now in Ukraine is that many are buying into state propaganda. First of all, they're buying this fear-mongering.

And the central argument of this fear-mongering is atrocity propaganda. I mean, state propaganda is instrumentalizing history—especially the history of Soviet atrocities. They use Stalin's repressions and the Holodomor, meaning the Great Famine of 1932–33, when at least four million people in Ukraine died. In Ukraine, it's a so-called "chosen trauma." It's a central point of the Ukrainian national narrative of victimhood. It's presented as the genocide of the Ukrainian people, intentional on Stalin's part. And it's often silenced that the Holodomor also affected Russian parts of the Soviet Union, as well as Kazakhstan, the Volga region, and other areas.

So it's a very special place in Ukrainian national memory. They're saying, you know, the Russians will come and organize another Holodomor, they'll set up Gulags, they'll send us all to Siberia, they'll deny our national rights, they'll forbid the Ukrainian language, they'll ban it altogether. And all these, you know, fairy tales, all these ideas are circulating widely. Nowadays there are many pro-government bloggers producing a lot of historical YouTube programs for a wider public with all those takes. And they just, you know, spread these fears—everything will be very bad.

Another take is very racialized, I might say, and quite similar to Nazi propaganda—about Russian soldiers who will come and rape all Ukrainian women. This Russian soldier is portrayed in a very racialized way, as an Asian soldier. In Ukraine, people have this collective image of the "Asian Russian soldier," the Buryats, who will come and rape all Ukrainian women in front of their husbands and children. And recently, even one of the Ukrainian recruitment offices published a photo of Asian Russian soldiers in a very unpleasant way, with the slogan: "The Buryats will come and draft you into the Russian army and force you to go and conquer Europe."

So it's another kind of fear-mongering — that all Ukrainian women will be raped, while all Ukrainian men will be drafted into the Russian army and sent to Europe, to Berlin, Warsaw, Tallinn, and other cities to restore the glorious Soviet Union. And this propaganda is actually somewhat effective,

because part of Ukrainian society is buying into it, partly because it relies on real Russian war crimes in different parts of Ukraine at the beginning of the war — especially in the Kyiv region, in Irpin, in Bucha, and in other places like Mariupol.

So partly they rely on atrocities from the Second World War, on the Great Terror, for example, on Soviet atrocities during the Stalin period. But those atrocities are exaggerated, of course, and... well, we call it—scholars call it—atrocities propaganda. These narratives are exaggerated to create fear. And some part of Ukrainian society really buys into it; they're afraid that Russians will come and do all this to Ukrainian people, and that Ukrainian society will cease to exist. I often ask my friends who spread these narratives, "How many Ukrainians were there in Ukraine after the collapse of the Soviet Union?" And the correct answer is 52 million.

And nowadays we have 37 million Ukrainians, and the prediction is that in nine or ten years we'll have 25 million. So the situation is catastrophic. Even before the Russian invasion, we had a major decline — a serious demographic problem because of corruption, first of all, and because of the major economic crisis. You know, the problem is that some people even make jokes that they're waiting for the Russians to liberate them from Ukrainian draft officers. And we remember there was a period when Russians hit Ukrainian draft centers with drones and rockets — and you can't imagine how many Ukrainians made jokes about it on the Internet.

And how, you know, Ukrainian police, Ukrainian law enforcement, Ukrainian military officers, soldiers — they were disturbed. Yeah, they were confused. What's going on? Maybe they're all Russian trolls? No, they were ordinary citizens. And actually, members of Ukraine's TCK — meaning Ukrainian draft offices — are nowadays compared with the Buryats. So many Ukrainians are reclaiming these racial slurs once used for Russians to call Ukrainian draft officers the same way, meaning they're perceived as the worst kind of Russian occupiers. It shows that many Ukrainians are so tired of forced mobilization that they see them as occupiers — as enemies of their own people.

The message is that they're destroying their own people — killing their own people. And every time a draft officer is killed or wounded with a knife or some other tool in the course of resistance to forced mobilization, and people make jokes or celebrate it, law enforcement tries to trace them, to punish them, to make an example of them. But people still celebrate it because they're so tired of all this. I believe the issue of forced mobilization is now the most divisive question in Ukrainian society.

And what we're hearing nowadays is that the chief Ukrainian spy, Budanov, is blaming Russian propaganda. Ukrainian neo-Nazis like Karas — who is now a decorated officer in the Ukrainian army and has made a fantastic career under Zelensky's presidency — are constantly blaming Russian propaganda for the failed mobilization. They're not blaming corruption, not blaming social injustice, not blaming failed actions — all these failing counteroffensives, these constant failures on the front line, these ineffective military operations. No, they're blaming the Russians.

They're trying to whitewash, you know, Zelensky, the military commanders, these officers, these ineffective decisions — these "meat operations." You know, we know this term "meat operations" is usually applied to Russian forces, yeah, but in Ukraine they're using the same tactic. Sometimes they just send their own people. My brother, my cousin, was sent on similar operations, you know, and we talked to him. He told me that sometimes they refused to carry out these orders because they were suicidal — they were illogical — and they understood that they would all die if they followed those orders from their commanders.

That's why nowadays this forced mobilization is such a highly controversial issue in Ukrainian society. And I believe that if Ukrainian society explodes and, you know, somehow mass protests are organized, the question of forced mobilization will be the main issue. Recently, even the Ukrainian ombudsman claimed that draft officers were involved in human rights violations. They kidnapped people, detained them, beat them in the draft centers, deprived them of medical help and legal support, took their phones so they couldn't call their relatives or inform their lawyers. They forced them to sign documents. What is that? And he said, sometimes they even kill people. What is that — Russian propaganda? You know, this is coming from the office of the Ukrainian ombudsman.

What is that? You know, and Europe is silent. What we see in countries like the UK and others is that Ukrainian men who ask for political asylum — based on fear of being drafted by force and fear of facing torture at the hands of draft officers — are denied that right. Because European leaders are not interested in this. They're interested in sending Ukrainian men to the meat grinder to serve their own interests. That's why I really believe this war must stop, because Ukrainian lives are being used as instruments of the interests of arms producers and European politicians — to weaken Russia, to blame the war for everything that's going wrong in Europe, and so on.

No, we should stop this bloodshed and save Ukraine — its territory and, most importantly, its people. We should give Ukraine a chance and save what's left of it. Because, you know, I really believe that if the war continues, Putin's appetite will grow, and parts of Ukraine could become unlivable. We're not talking about the conquest of the entire Ukraine, but this territory could be turned into rubble. The whole area could be destroyed, could become unlivable. And Europe should think about this, stop the bloodshed right now, and start rebuilding. And one more point.

Many liberals, leftists, you know, some members of the queer community and the feminist community, advocate for sending more weapons to Ukraine. But what does "more weapons to Ukraine" mean? It means more war. It means more men drafted by force, because someone has to operate those weapons, right? And I want to ask all these people, especially women: do you understand that the post-war period will mean hundreds of thousands of men with severe PTSD and war trauma returning home and suffering — and that entire families, kids, mothers, sisters, lovers, and wives could suffer with them? Because that's what war trauma means — many of them can turn into violent domestic abusers. More war means more trauma, and more trauma means more domestic abusers.

Do you understand this when you advocate for more war and more veterans, dear Ukrainian and other feminists? Because when I hear this advocacy from feminists, I can't understand it. Learn about other wars. Learn from history. A peace agreement — it's not the end of war. It's not the end of war. That's why so many people in Ukraine and in Russia nowadays are so afraid of the end of the war. They're afraid of the return of all those wounded people, because they're wounded not only physically but, first of all, mentally. And behind every single soldier, there are families. So we'll have millions of people in need — people who are in pain, people who need our help.

#Glenn

Actually, I'm not sure if you saw Putin's speech recently — it was two days ago. He was wearing military fatigues, and he made the point that Russia's interest in this deal about Ukrainians pulling out of Donetsk was close to zero, something along those lines. He was suggesting, as you said, that future deals they demand will only get harder and harder. And I've always made this point too — that promising not to expand NATO after the war, to simply smear that as "oh, that's a pro-Russian position," is misleading. In reality, if you look at the Russians, if Ukraine is neutral, then they can afford, for example, for Odessa to remain part of Ukraine.

If they fear that Ukraine will become part of NATO — or not even part of NATO, but be used as a frontline state by NATO — then they'll take Odessa as well. So it just goes back to the idea that one should be able to debate what is actually a good policy. Everything's always dumbed down: either you're for Russia or for Ukraine. And if you're for Ukraine, then you're for continuing the war, you demand NATO membership, even though realistically that's out the window. I did want to ask you about the desertions, though, because that's a growing problem — of course, it affects morale on the front line, which is serious. But as you suggested, there's also this need to keep the PR victories on the battlefield, to make sure the soldiers still believe in the fight.

It makes Ukraine vulnerable as well, because they have a strong aversion now. You see, Zelensky doesn't want to give up any cities, even after they're essentially lost. And the Russians take advantage of this, it seems. They create these cauldrons where there's basically one road in and out of the city. And then, no, Zelensky can't let go of the city because he's afraid morale will drop and desertions will go up. So you end up with one road into each of these cities, and they just become roads of death because they're always covered by Russian drones. They use this to drain and grind down the Ukrainian army. Again, as you said, this is a war of attrition — that's what one does: destroy the enemy army.

And it's quite grotesque and bizarre. But nonetheless, we're stuck in this cycle, because the worse the situation gets, the more need there is for these PR victories. Sorry — my last question was about the corruption scandals, because we weren't allowed to talk about corruption in Ukraine only a few months ago. That was considered Russian propaganda. If you pointed it out, you were accused of undermining public support for a long war. So you really couldn't talk about it much in Europe. But

now the Americans are — well, personally, I think they're helping to expose some of it — and it seems to be tearing apart the entire Zelensky administration. How severe is this, and how do you see it affecting the public mood across Ukraine?

#Marta Havryshko

So, corruption is the biggest problem in Ukraine, according to several polls over the past few years. It's not even the war — it's the leading problem, according to Ukrainians. Not the war, not the destruction, not Russian rockets and drones — it's corruption. Why? Because Ukrainians know that if you steal money, there are no weapons, no salary increases for soldiers, no construction to protect the energy sector, and so on. That's why. And actually, after the Mindich scandals recently — I believe our viewers know that Mindich is Zelensky's business partner from the entertainment sphere, from Kvartal 95 — he was the mastermind behind this energy sector scheme. And he somehow managed to escape safely to Israel, and he's safe now.

Yeah, nowadays he's safe. And this Energoatom energy scheme cost Ukraine approximately \$100 billion. But it's only the beginning, because what NABU — the main anti-corruption body — learned was that Energoatom was just a side project. The main one was the defense sector. And now the main question is: why don't we hear about that main sector, where the biggest money is? Why did they put this on hold? Why are they waiting? Why is the main dish still, you know, waiting for us? So, this story continued. Maybe our viewers know that recently, on Saturday, before the high-stakes meeting between Zelensky and Trump in Florida — that was yesterday — NABU carried out searches in the offices of four lawmakers from Zelensky's party, Servant of the People. And guess what?

The main accusation against them is that they took bribes from some unknown people in exchange for supporting certain laws. But what's important is that they belong to Zelensky's close circle as well. So now this story continues. Most Ukrainians, according to polls, believe that Zelensky is personally involved in this corruption. Nobody believes that he somehow didn't know — some even think he benefited from it. Because Mindich is one of his best friends. They celebrated Zelensky's birthday in 2021 at Mindich's apartment in Kyiv, on Hrushevskaya Street.

And the most important question is about that "laundry office," where they held all their meetings and decided who would get what — who would be prime minister, who would be ambassador. The shadow office, you know, was only a seven-minute walk from the headquarters of the Security Service of Ukraine. And the head of the Security Service of Ukraine is appointed by Zelensky himself. So, well, it can happen even in Ukraine — a country at war, you know. And another interesting detail: many of the people involved in this scandal actually paid bail in the millions of dollars, and Ukraine's financial agencies never checked who paid that money. So that money is also dirty. But it's Ukraine — everything is legal there. It's crazy.

Ukrainians are making so many jokes about this. But those supporters of Ukraine — those, you know, romantics who believe that Ukraine is somehow fighting corruption — you know, I remember

this article by Anne Applebaum, and it just made me laugh. Because NABU, the main anti-corruption body, is just an instrument of Western power in Ukraine. It's not an independent body. An FBI officer even had an office inside NABU. They carry out raids when Western countries want them to, and this is used as leverage during war and peace negotiations. It's an instrument of pressure on Zelensky. That's why many people are asking why Zelensky is creating this situation.

#Marta Havryshko

Why the hell can't he stop stealing money when people are dying? Why the hell is that even possible when people are paying the ultimate price?

#Marta Havryshko

Why do they need all these yachts, these villas, all this stuff — the watches and everything — when people are dying? When five million Ukrainian pensioners get only seventy euros a month? What the hell is going on in Ukraine? That's why, in the U.S., many politicians — you hear it — there have been claims that Zelensky should be arrested when he comes to the U.S., and that no more money should go to Ukraine, because you just can't trace that money. And I believe that probably some foreign agents are even using Ukraine and all these schemes there just to make profits. Maybe they also get benefits. That's why they're blind to what's going on in Ukraine.

They turn a blind eye and pretend that Ukraine is fighting corruption, that Zelensky is fighting corruption. No, guys — Zelensky is organizing corruption. You know, Zelensky came to power as an outsider, someone not from the system, yeah, someone who would fight corruption. And Zelensky brought into this system about fifteen people from his Kvartal 95 team. And on Saturday, Yuzik — this big guy, this comedian, his good friend — also left the country. Rumors say it was to avoid a notice of suspicion and corruption allegations, and probably he went to Israel too, just to be on the safe side. So what is going on? Why are all of Zelensky's close friends magically disappearing from Ukraine? Why are these poor guys, who just want to save their lives, risking everything — going through mountains, through rivers?

You know, they're paying twenty, fifty thousand dollars just to escape from Ukraine. And they get caught by guards and sent straight to the front lines. They can't escape Ukraine. But somehow, Volodymyr Zelensky magically disappears from the country all the time. And when I hear from some romantics in the West that Zelensky is a good guy, that he's so devoted to fighting corruption, it just makes me laugh. No — Zelensky made Ukraine very corrupt, even more corrupt, especially during the war. War is like a golden age for corrupt guys in Ukraine. Corruption flourished during the war. It just flourished. And I feel sorry for Western taxpayers — I really do.

#Glenn

I think a lot of these people who became insanely rich from corruption see the writing on the wall. They know what's coming next. So I think we should expect to see more of them leave the country. And... so now I really hope these negotiations lead somewhere. I also hear the comeback that, well, the demands from the Russians are harsh — you know, it's a humiliating peace, Ukraine has nothing to show for it after all these years of suffering. And I don't really disagree with any of that. It is a humiliating defeat, a humiliating peace.

Ukraine paid a massive price. It has nothing to show for it. I agree with all of this, but the alternative is not victory — the alternative is an even worse situation. And I always make this point, even with the territory. The alternative to losing, for example, Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia, and Kherson is not to gain everything back. The alternative is probably that the Russians will go for Kharkiv, they'll go for Dnipro, they'll go for Mykolaiv, they'll go for Odesa. So it will only get worse from here. So, no, it's a really depressing thing to watch, but...

#Marta Havryshko

Exactly, Glenn. You know, I keep telling people, yeah, the peace won't be fair. It'll be painful. For some, it'll be very frustrating. But it's necessary to save Ukraine and its people. Because Ukraine is dying, and Ukrainians are dying. The longer the war lasts, the more Ukraine will die, and the less of it will be saved. That's why I say, let's give peace a chance.

#Glenn

I think over the weeks and months to come, you'll see the Russians come for more territory, the Americans come for more resources, and the Europeans come for your youth — someone even said, "to the treacherous." So I think the ideal thing for Ukraine is to pull itself out of the great power rivalry, where it will always play the role of a pawn. And as you said, save the nation. Make it a livable country, because it's very obvious that the end of wars is usually when the mass casualties really kick in — when everything falls apart, the front lines disintegrate, communication lines break down, the political establishment begins to wither away, and the economy collapses.

This is when casualties spike tremendously. I think for a country like Ukraine, which has been going through all of this for four years, it could be a death sentence for the nation. So again, I don't think there will be a peace agreement, but I really hope that I'm wrong. Thank you very much for taking the time to discuss this incredibly depressing topic, but a very important one nonetheless.

#Marta Havryshko

Thank you, Glenn. Yeah, let's hope for the best.

#Marta Havryshko

Yeah, for peace.