

John Laughland: Manufactured 'Heroes': NATO Rebranding of Criminal Networks

John Laughland is an academic, author, lecturer, and director of Forum for Democracy International. Laughland discusses how NATO's illegal war in Kosovo set the precedent for whitewashing and rebranding criminal networks as proxies. Follow Prof. Glenn Diesen: Substack: <https://glennndiesen.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> Buy Diesen merchandise: <https://diesen-shop.fourthwall.com/en-nok> Books by Prof. Glenn Diesen: <https://www.amazon.com/stores/author/B09FPQ4MDL>

#Glenn

Hi, everyone, and welcome back. Today, we're joined by John Laughland, an academic, author, and political commentator. Thank you for coming on the program.

#John Laughland

Thank you, Glenn. Pleasure.

#Glenn

It's good to see you again. You know, in the 1990s, I was, well, I was very optimistic about the future of Europe. I would say maybe idealistic, but I also believed that the era of bloc politics and cynical proxy wars, that of the Cold War, would be a thing of the past. And, well, when I joined the army in 1998, and I was still there in March of 1999, that's when I saw NATO expand, thereby cancelling essentially the agreements with Russia for a pan-European security architecture. And then a few days after that, NATO attacked Serbia without a UN mandate as well, making it illegal, but also thereby cancelling NATO's status as a defensive alliance, as was also pointed out by Kissinger. So, you know, we redivided Europe, returned to bloc politics of the Cold War, and also began to use proxies.

And, well, to look at that case, though, of Yugoslavia, the U.S. obviously attempted to successfully break up Yugoslavia. And in Kosovo, they kind of found one of their proxy partners, the Kosovo Liberation Army, KLA. They were an ideal partner, perhaps, to fight the Serbs. But even then, it was controversial. I remember many of the U.S. Republicans, they were expressing concerns about their new partner in terms of them committing terrorist acts, being involved in drug smuggling and other things that would make them a criminal organization. But eventually, as the war went on, this was

all whitewashed and they were rebranded as freedom fighters and being supported by NATO. Which kind of takes me to where we are today with my question. That is, the leader of the KLA, Hashim Thaçi, he became the president of Kosovo. He's now been found guilty of war crimes. So how do you see what is happening here now?

#John Laughland

Well, I'm very glad that you've recalled those events because I am deeply convinced that the attack on Yugoslavia in March 1999, which lasted until early June, three months of merciless bombing over the whole territory of Yugoslavia, including, by the way, Montenegro at that point, that war, it was the foundational moment of the New World Order. And you're absolutely right, Glenn, of course, because you know this as well as I do, to remind everyone watching that this also coincided in time with the enlargement, the first enlargement, the first wave of enlargement. Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic, they joined in April.

And this was the 50th anniversary, by the way, of the creation of the Atlantic Alliance. And the reason why it's the foundational moment—well, there are many reasons, actually. Firstly, because all of NATO was involved. Everyone remembers the Iraq War of 2003, which, of course, was fought by Britain and America alone, without the Europeans. But people tend to forget the Kosovo War, in which all the European states took part. And so it was a foundational moment in the sense that there was a very broad consensus among NATO countries to take part in this war.

And it was foundational as well, because as the then British Prime Minister Tony Blair explained in a speech in Chicago a couple of days before the anniversary summit, I think on the 22nd of April 1999, this war was intended to birth, if I may use that as a transitive verb, to birth a new international system. And that new international system was supposed to be, according to him, built on something other than state sovereignty. State sovereignty was a thing of the past, even though, of course, it's in the United Nations Charter, in the foundational articles of the United Nations Charter, even though the whole principle of the international system since 1945 is based on the sovereign equality of nations.

Blair came up with a long speech which explained that all that was over, and that because we had globalization and one-world interdependence, that we could no longer, as it were, turn our backs on the alleged war crimes being committed elsewhere. And there's a third aspect in which I would regard it as a foundational moment. You know, I've often said that the Kosovo War was a war of the new left against the old left. By new left, I mean the new, obviously, globalist left, progressivist left—progressivist in the most basic sense. I don't mean in any real sense. The new left is not interested, as far as I can tell, in improving wages or whatever. Instead, it's keen to embrace the latest fads. It's very keen on moral framing and so on.

And the target, of course, of that war was embodied. The target was obviously Yugoslavia, but its leader, Slobodan Milosevic, if you like, if we think of this in symbolic terms, embodied the old left. He

was an old socialist, an old communist. He was a socialist, having been a communist. And he embodied the thing which globalism hates the most, which was, of course, defence of national sovereignty, a certain amount of patriotism, and at least, so he claimed anyway, a concern for the ordinary lives of real people. So what happened was, in order to get rid of him—and there's no doubt that this was the goal—it didn't actually work at first because he was to stay in power.

He ended up staying in power until October 2000. In order to get rid of him, to regime-change him, the Western powers—the Americans, the British, the Germans, I think, as well—basically found a subversive force, the Kosovo Liberation Army, which they funded and armed and covered for politically. And the rebellion started in the autumn of 1998. It was being, as I say, funded and encouraged by the Western security services. There are plenty of books about this. There's a book by a guy called Haslam, which I haven't read. There's a book by a journalist from Sky News called *Shadow Play*, a very interesting book.

He was quite closely involved, I think, with those events, possibly as an agent himself, I don't know. But anyway, he was certainly very close to all those people. And, you know, he describes how this was a secret service operation. And it involved basically locating and identifying this subversive group, the Kosovo Liberation Army, which in turn was linked to organized crime. There's a lot of organized crime in Albania generally and among the Albanians in Kosovo. You know, for many years, I don't know if it's still the case now, but for many years they dominated the heroin market in Europe.

So there was an easy partner to find, and they, as I say, funded it. And then, you know, one thing led to another. Some of our viewers may know the sequence of events: the Račak fake massacre in January 1999, the Rambouillet meeting where an ultimatum was presented to Serbia, and then, as I say, the bombing campaign from March until June. And this latest development, which we're talking about now, the conviction of Hashim Thaçi, who led the Kosovo Liberation Army at the time, and who was photographed, by the way, in June 1999. Maybe you want to put this up when you're editing the video.

A famous picture of him, which I've posted—I have it on my computer—of him holding, in a sort of semicircle, holding hands, they're all holding hands together with, among other people, the Supreme Commander of NATO, General Wesley Clark, and the special representative of the United Nations, the future French foreign minister Bernard Kouchner. Bernard Kouchner, who was an ideologue of globalization. His presence in that photo is also very symbolic. Plus, incidentally, the British general currently then in Macedonia and commanding the NATO forces in the Balkans.

So this latest development, and of course, do I need to remind everyone that the war was waged in violation of the UN Charter, without authorization from the Security Council, in violation also of numerous rulings of the International Court of Justice, which over the decades of its existence, and most recently in 1986 in a case concerning Nicaragua and the United States' support for the Contras there, had specifically said, absolutely explicitly said, that human rights could not be a pretext for

war. This was laid down by the court in 1986. And of course, it was implicit in the UN Charter. The war was fought on the basis of human rights, that the Serbs were racially persecuting a racial minority, an ethnic minority.

Tony Blair, the British Prime Minister, himself wrote in an article for the BBC in, I think, May 1999, that what was happening in Kosovo was racial genocide. Racial genocide. In fact, genocide charges were never brought over Kosovo in the end because that was a grotesque lie. But now, of course, with this conviction of Thaçi, who then, by the way, went on, as again many of our viewers will know, to be the first president of Kosovo in 2008, when the same sponsors, the sponsors of the same Albanian separatists, the Europeans and the Americans, put them up to declaring independence, even though the war had been ended with a Security Council resolution which confirmed Kosovo's status as part of then Yugoslavia, later Serbia, it put Thaçi up and the other Albanians up to declaring independence.

And that declaration of independence, which again went against, let's say, at least the spirit of international law, there hadn't been, I don't think, a precedent for that. At least, I can't immediately think of one. The issue of Quebec had been litigated about 10 years earlier, and international law was not very clear, really. It didn't really give the province of Quebec the right to secede unilaterally. This secession in 2008 triggered the...

#John Laughland

It happened at the same time. It didn't trigger it. But in August of that year—the Declaration of Independence was in February—in August of that year, there was the Georgian War. Georgia started to try to recover two territories it had lost back in the '90s. Russia intervened. And Russia then formally recognized, not having done so up to that point, Abkhazia and South Ossetia. But it then triggered, if you like, or at least provided a precedent, for the declaration of independence of the two Donbas republics. They declared their autonomy, as we know, in 2014, and they finally obtained recognition from Russia in 2022, and that provided the legal pretext for the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

So when I say it's the foundational moment of globalism, there is a direct line, an absolutely direct line, from the events of 1999 to the problems that we're facing today, added to which 1999 was also the year in which Vladimir Putin came to power. He was plucked out of obscurity, at least public obscurity, and appointed initially deputy prime minister, then acting president. So there's a very, very direct link, as I say, between the Kosovo War and the catastrophic situation of the world today.

#Glenn

Well, the Kosovo thing was also amazing because the role of, well, for example, the Germans became obvious. That was 10 years after German reunification. German planes were again in the sky bombing a European capital. And I remember then the foreign minister of Germany was making

the point that he was raised on two principles: never again another Auschwitz, and never again another war. And he said, now we have to make a choice between those two. So in the past, because of its history, Germany had a responsibility not to wage war. But he was making the argument now that, in a unipolar order, when the West was no longer constrained, because of its genocidal history, Germany had a special responsibility to make sure it didn't happen anywhere else.

So this kind of a militant approach to humanitarianism. And on Blair, though, I remember his advisor, one of them, Robert Cooper, he even was very explicit that the liberal imperialism of today should be built on the model of the liberal empire of the 19th century, where we recognize that we are in the garden, us civilized folks, and outside civilization is the jungle. And when we enter the jungle, the same rules should not apply anymore. So, in other words, one set of rules for us and another when we engage with the jungle. And as you said, I think the reason why Kosovo was a precedent is because they also announced that this was an illegal war because it didn't have a UN mandate, but it was legitimate, they said.

So illegal because the UN didn't permit it, but legitimate because it was justified based on defending liberal democratic values, human rights, et cetera. And this created a new, what we now, in my argument at least, call the rules-based international system. That is, we have two sets of rules. One is legality, and one is the legitimacy of human rights. And we decoupled legitimacy from legality. So now you can essentially go both ways, which is what, you know, your example, I thought, is good. That is, you know, do you go with self-determination or territorial integrity? So in Kosovo, we said, no, self-determination. In Crimea, we say, no, here has to be territorial integrity. Exactly.

#John Laughland

Well, I mean, the double standards are obviously horrific. You've mentioned a number of important points. It's Robert Cooper, I think you're referring to, who ended up, if I'm not mistaken, working at the European Commission and indeed did write a couple of essays and I think possibly a book about the new, the postmodern world order. And he says exactly what you just said. He says we need to, as it were, embrace double standards. There's one rule for us and there's another rule for everyone else. So he is, yes, one of the prophets of the New World Order. You mentioned the German foreign minister. This is, again, very important. The German foreign minister was Joschka Fischer, the head of the Greens. This is what I mean by the New Left.

The Greens had been the big pacifist party throughout the post-war period in Germany. And through what I believe to be—I don't have proof, but I'm pretty sure is a process of infiltration, rather as happened in the British Labour Party—infiltration by the Americans, I mean, and building up of networks and seduction and so on, the Greens became, as we know now, 20, 25 years later, with people like Annalena Baerbock, who is from the Greens, they have become the most belligerent warmongers. So once again, that's why I say that this war is so important. And the fact that the

same kind of institutions—in this case, the Special Tribunal for Kosovo—the same kind of institutions which were set up—by the way, they were set up actually to start off with in 1993, so many years before the Kosovo War.

The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia was set up in 1993, the Rwanda Tribunal in 1994, various ad hoc tribunals throughout the '90s, the International Criminal Court in 2000, and so on and so on. The same kind of tribunal which they announced at the time, you know, would herald this new world order and would mean that sovereignty couldn't, you know, be used as a shield to commit war crimes and so on. That same kind of tribunal, in this case the Special Tribunal for Kosovo, has, as I say, now condemned Hashim Thaci for a number of crimes. It might be worth saying what those crimes were. I have to confess, I have not read the judgment. I've only read the press release. From what I can tell from the press release, and I should go into this more because I've written quite a lot about international justice, but my understanding is that some of the worst crimes seem not to have been prosecuted.

They involve charges of organ harvesting, of murdering people in order to harvest their kidneys and so on and sell them. I don't know whether that made its way into the trial or not, but what was definitely in the press release was, in a way, kind of almost more shocking, at least from a political science point of view, because he was accused and convicted of murdering his political opponents and of consolidating his power within Kosovo by terror. Well, this is exactly what people like me were saying at the time. We pointed out that the KLA was absolutely not as white as snow, totally to the contrary.

The KLA, by the way, was heavily directed, as I said in my first answer, by the British, the Germans, the Americans. I have a personal French friend who was in the French army in Kosovo in the immediate aftermath, so in the early weeks in June. I think the war ended on the 4th of June, and he was involved in what was about to be a skirmish with armed Albanian rebels, and he was told not to fire on them because there were British soldiers with them in their truck or whatever. So the implication of the British and other authorities in this was absolutely total. Just one last point, Glenn: Germany. Yes, of course, the fact that Germany was engaged in the bombing was very symbolic.

But Germany had already violated its never-again principles in 1990, when the first Yugoslav wars broke out, because Germany very clearly funded and supported the Croatian and Slovenian separatists. And above all, Germany gave political cover to those separatists at the Maastricht Summit in 1991, on the 9th and 10th of December 1991. Germany—the European Union, as it was to become—wanted to have a common foreign policy. It didn't really have one before that. It was very proud of this new tool in its box. And Germany announced a couple of weeks before the conference that whatever happened, Germany would recognize Croatia and Slovenia. So it put the other European Union members in front of a fait accompli.

Either they had their common foreign policy, and they accepted the breakup of Yugoslavia under German initiative, or they didn't get their foreign policy. And unfortunately, they decided to support

it, and that's what led to the initial breakup of Yugoslavia. So Germany had already reverted, if I may say so, to geopolitical type in 1990 and 1991. When I say geopolitical type, I'm referring to the emergence of a bloc mentality, which the European Union, frankly, already was in Maastricht. Of course, it became even more so with NATO enlargement, but the bloc mentality, I think, was already there in the sense that I think Germany wanted to fill the geopolitical gap left by what was known by then to be the collapse of the Soviet Union, or at least of the Warsaw Pact.

Perhaps they didn't know that the Soviet Union was going to collapse, but they did know that the Warsaw Pact had collapsed because that had all happened in 1990. And Germany, as I say, wanted to fill the geopolitical gap and establish herself as the central power—you know, the old German thing, the *Zentralmacht Europas*—wanted to establish herself in geopolitical terms as the central power of Europe around which the other countries would orbit. And that, again, if we take a historical analysis and we take on board the historical memory of the First World War and so on, that's why I say it's Germany reverting to a geopolitical type. Yeah. No, it's...

#Glenn

The way they shifted, I think—well, it's become more obvious in the later years. But you can also, you know, how Europe has organized former Yugoslavia since then is also quite extraordinary. Not just in Kosovo, where they have a strange setting, but in Bosnia. You know, this also takes me by surprise. Please correct me, because I might have my facts a bit fuzzy after all this time, but I was in Bosnia a few months ago. I was invited by General Michael Flynn to give a keynote speech.

#John Laughland

Yeah, I remember, yeah.

#Glenn

Yeah, and anyway, what I thought was fascinating was that, you know, the war in Bosnia ended in 1995 with the Dayton Agreement. And, you know, since it's essentially been run as a colony because they set up this arrangement where, well, the solution was Bosnia wouldn't be staying in Yugoslavia. They were forced to leave. And when Bosnia left, the Serbian territories couldn't stay either. They had to also be forced to secede. So the third option then would be, okay, let's do two autonomous entities, and one of them being the Serbian one. So at Dayton, they set up these Bonn Powers, where you would have some very dictatorial, if not colonial, powers delegated, where the High Representatives, they're called, would then rule Bosnia from abroad to implement this deal.

But then something strange happened because instead of implementing the entity system, they were outsourced to the EU. But then the EU says, well, the only way for Bosnia to be really peaceful is if it joins the EU. And if it wants to join the EU, it has to abandon the entity system. That means no autonomous rights for the Serbs. And now they're essentially using—they were supposed to hold

on to these powers for three years. It's been more than 30 years, and they refuse to give them up. And they're not even using it to implement the Dayton Accords—that is, the entity system. They're using it to undermine it because they said you have to centralize power in order to join the EU, irrespective of, you know, if you want or not. And they say, we don't want to. We prefer our autonomous rights. We would like to join the EU, but not at this price.

#John Laughland

It's been 31 years. I mean, you mentioned the contradiction between territorial integrity where Crimea is concerned, but right of self-determination where Kosovo is concerned. You've got exactly the same double standards in Bosnia. Bosnia was allowed and indeed encouraged by the Americans in April 1992 to secede from Yugoslavia. The Americans sabotaged an agreement, much as agreements have been sabotaged with the complicity of the Europeans, but sabotaged by the Americans in Ukraine. I mean, we're not talking about Ukraine now, but you know perfectly well that the Minsk—sorry, the European-brokered agreements of February 2014 were essentially sabotaged, possibly with the complicity and knowledge of the Europeans, but definitely sabotaged by the Americans.

I'm talking about Ukraine now, who, of course, always wanted regime change and had decided on regime change well in advance. The famous tape, the famous conversation between Victoria Nuland and the American ambassador Pyatt. But in the case of Bosnia, there was an agreement, again brokered by Europeans, sabotaged by Americans, which would have kept Bosnia in Yugoslavia. And as it happens, I understand that Izetbegović, the Bosnian Muslim leader, would have become federal president of Yugoslavia, according to an informal agreement.

And then the American ambassador, Warren Zimmerman, rang up Izetbegović and said, "Withdraw your signature." He had signed it, Izetbegović, and then he withdrew it. And that's when the war started. And there you have exactly the same double standard. So secession for Bosnia, it's a given for the entity, this totally fictitious entity, again, a bit like Ukraine. But no secession for the Serbs. The Serbs are not allowed to secede from Bosnia. The Bosnians are allowed to secede from Yugoslavia, but the Serbs are not allowed to secede from Bosnia. And that was the cause of the three years of killing.

It was a terrible war, the Bosnian War. But there was logically absolutely no reason at all why Bosnia needed to be preserved as a territorial unit. It didn't make any historical, linguistic, cultural sense at all. If you were going to break up Yugoslavia because it was multinational and you wanted to put nation-states on the territory of former Yugoslavia, then Bosnia was even more multinational than the rest of Yugoslavia, and therefore, by the same logic, should itself have been broken up. And if the Serbs had been allowed to secede as they wanted to and join Serbia, then I think the war could have been over very quickly. Just a small point. It's a technical point, but it's very emblematic.

The Bonn powers, which they don't give, but they are invoked, they have been invoked over the decades by numerous High Representatives, by these colonial governors, as allowing them, the EU High Representative, to sack elected politicians, as they did most notably with President Dodik of Republika Srpska only last year. These powers are a complete fiction. They were not designed at Dayton. They were not part of the Dayton Agreement. They were not part of the Paris Peace Accord, because the Dayton Agreement was signed in Paris in November. They were simply concocted, I think largely under British initiative, certainly, I believe, in London, subsequent to the signing of the... They created something called the Peace Implementation Council.

And this was a completely bogus creation. It wasn't in the agreement at all. And then, if I'm not mistaken, the Peace Implementation Council announced these Bonn Powers, which, when you read the announcement, are not powers at all. It simply says that the High Representative will seek to implement peace or something. The whole thing is a complete scam. There's no legality in it at all. And yet, as I say, the High Representatives over the decades—and there have now been many of them, because this situation, this ridiculous situation, has been dragging on now since 1995, so we're more than 30 years—has, as I say, been used to wield draconian and highly undemocratic powers against, in particular, the Serbs in Republika Srpska.

#Glenn

And also, we can draw some parallels to Kosovo, I guess, because again, NATO invaded illegally on the basis that there was an ethnic war. So Kosovo was then forced to secede. But they also forced the Serbian regions of Kosovo to secede, and even not just secede, but to decouple. They're now putting all these limitations on being able to connect with the rest of Serbia. And even after that, then the Serbian regions have been ethnically cleansed to a large extent, I think 90%. So suddenly those principles don't apply anymore. And I think that's what you referred to earlier on. That is one rule for us and one for you.

And I remember once when, in 2014, after Russia took back Crimea, they were essentially referring to, well, this is the, you know, the box, the Pandora's box, which the West opened in Kosovo. And Obama hit back hard, you know, saying no, because he was going for a liberal democratic legitimacy and was making the point, no, no. Well, in Kosovo, you had all these NGOs, you had the OSCE, everyone was monitoring the referendum. It was done according to regulations, blah, blah, blah. And it was quite interesting, the way he described it, because there was no referendum there. He made it up. No journalist wanted to point out that Obama made up a referendum.

#John Laughland

That reference to a referendum, I've forgotten the date of the speech, is made in a speech entitled "Speech to European Youth" or "To the Youth of Europe." It was delivered in Brussels, possibly in 2008, or maybe it was after the seizure of Crimea. Maybe you're right. Now I can't remember the

date now. But anyway, you're absolutely right. He claimed that it had been done after a referendum. There was no referendum, and that it had been done after consultation with the regional powers, which of course was completely untrue, because Serbia has never formally, at any rate, relinquished its claim over its own territory. So it's an extraordinary thing. No journalist corrected it.

That speech is still online. It's part of the official archives, if you like, of the Obama administration. And it is, you know, we hear a lot about disinformation and misinformation and so on. There you have a president of the United States just blatantly lying about something that never happened, and using it to invoke legitimacy, when the fact that it didn't happen is—I mean, I expect the Albanians probably would have voted if they'd been allowed to—but to invent something that never happened like that in a formal speech, a formal policy speech, designed precisely to show how their actions, the Americans' actions, were okay, but the Russians' were not, literally beggars belief.

#Glenn

No, no, I agree. Definitely the Albanians would have voted for this, so I don't contest it. I just thought it was interesting how legitimacy was linked to these procedures, these institutions, when the event didn't actually take place. The last thing I want to ask you about is how you say again that there's a template or precedent that was set in Kosovo, that this explains a lot of what has happened since. And if I look today at the proxy leaders with some criminal baggage, which the West still holds on to, you know, at least two people come to mind.

One would be Jolani, or al-Sharaa, of Syria. Again, which was funny because they wanted to topple the government in Syria. Well, great powers no longer do anything for power reasons, apparently. It's all about altruism and, you know, protecting rights. So they teamed up with different jihadist groups, and at the end, they gave their blessing to installing an Al-Qaeda leader in Syria. And of course, the second will be Zelensky and this Azov crew, which the Americans financed and trained. I mean, actual Nazi groups who, you know,

#John Laughland

Well, you're right to raise that, and I'm glad you have. I mean, it's a huge subject, and we don't have the time to do it justice. You know, Saint Augustine, in *The City of God*, right, so in the beginning of the fifth century AD, writes, "What are states without justice but gangs of armed brigands?" And with that remark, he identifies an important similarity between states and organized crime. I'm not saying that the similarity runs all the way through the whole spectrum, but there is some similarity. Organized crime typically controls a territory, or at least a sector of the economy. It wields its power by violence, as the state does, and, of course, it extracts money in return for so-called protection.

Now, once again, I'm not saying that states—it's only states without justice that can be compared to that. And if a state instead does what it's supposed to do, which is to protect its citizens from

external attack and from internal threat and so on, then we can't make that comparison. But the comparison, I think, is worth recalling because where there is an overlap, of course, is between the secret services of states and organized crime. And this is much more systemic. There's a very long history of this. I'm sure you could find historians and political scientists who've written about this in much greater depth and length than I would be able to do.

But the reason why the collaboration between secret services, security services, and organized crime is, I would say, organic and systemic, it's very obvious. Organized crime operates in secret. So if you need to do something in secret, who are you going to call up? You're not going to call up some public association that operates by the law. You're obviously going to get in touch with organized crime. And history is full of these examples. You know, the American alliance with the Italian mafia during the 1940s and following the invasion of Italy. The British penetration of the IRA. There's a famous case—that's famous anyway in Britain—of an MI5 agent who was run for decades, who was an IRA murderer and who murdered and tortured people while being an MI5 agent.

And MI5 carried on running him, even though they obviously knew what he was doing in his capacity as an officer of the IRA. And the Kosovo example is only one in many, many, many examples of this. It's almost become a pattern. It has become a pattern. You mentioned Zelensky, but what about the '90s in Russia? Who were our friends? Who did we support politically in Russia during those terrible years of corruption? We supported the criminal class. We supported Boris Berezovsky. We supported the people around Boris Berezovsky, who ended up living in London, to symbolize, obviously, this, again, organic and systemic link.

There are other very well-known oligarchs. I'm sure your viewers will know. I'm thinking of one in particular. I'm not going to say his name, who ended up living in London and being very well-known as the London figure, who is also almost definitely very deeply involved in organized crime. Khodorkovsky. The list goes on and on and on. And in the case of Ukraine—well, obviously, in the case of Kosovo, we knew that they were involved in all kinds of trafficking, heroin, prostitution, live organs, and so on. But the same is true of Ukraine. You know, I happened to be in Berlin about, I think, at least 10 or 15 years ago, and by complete chance was in somebody's flat when someone came in who'd just been in a meeting with Angela Merkel.

And during this meeting, they had been talking—this is long before Zelensky—about how corrupt the Ukrainian regime was. It must have been Poroshenko, I think, at the time, because even he was corrupt. And Ukraine, by the way, is more generally—again, we don't have time for all this—but of course, an example of a state that has been devoured by its own criminal class. It's not been able, unlike Russia after 2000, to push back on the criminal class. On the contrary, it's fallen prey to that class. Anyway, this person heard it said quite openly at a meeting of the German cabinet that they knew that all the money was being stolen and all these people were crooks and so on.

Well, now, of course, with Zelensky, the problem has only got worse. We keep hearing stories of, you know, chief prosecutors being fired, of people fleeing to Israel, of huge, colossal sums being

siphoned off. And, you know, it's a bit like the old joke now about, you know, if you owe the bank £100 or £1,000, you're in trouble. But if you owe the bank £1,000,000, the bank is in trouble. Well, they're so deep into this now with the Ukrainian corruption that one shudders to think, apart from any other consideration, of what the paperwork would be like. Who on earth is going to do the accounting for all these missing billions were the Zelensky regime to fall?

You see what I mean? They've doubled down on it so far that they are now themselves, I think, trapped, perhaps in a logic that maybe they didn't foresee. But there's no doubt that they have gone into this alliance with organized crime in Ukraine, but also in many other parts of the world, as you say, in Syria, with their eyes wide open. Because such people, if they're used for regime change operations, as in Syria, or for that matter in Russia, they are the people that you call because they are the subversives. They are acting in secret. They are acting outside of legality and, of course, in criminality. So that's why I say that this alliance is systemic.

#Glenn

But all of these alliances, the cooperation with local criminals, it doesn't only fuel destruction around the world. It also destroys something here at home, though, that is not just the media, but even the political legitimacy of the entire political system. Its, uh, you know, authority, you know, its legitimacy is based on specific rules about openness, democracy, and—and what is awkward is, um, and I remember that as well from the '90s, is you couldn't really talk—well, once everyone was on board that we're fighting the Serbs, then no one should really talk about the KLA, which is a bit awkward because, you know, you know it's there, but you're not allowed to talk about it. But then you see, you saw the same in Syria. That was, uh, we know that Western intelligence services were working with the different jihadist groups. But yet, no one can talk about it. And if you talked about it, it was dismissed as Assad propaganda or whatever the talking point was then. And it's the same with Ukraine. I mean, you can have actual Azov battalions wearing insignia based on the German Nazis of World War II. We know the history there.

#John Laughland

Not just the Nazis, the SS. Yes.

#Glenn

Yes, you have people like Biletsky, which is all the way up top in the system, who's been quoted in the British media as well as saying it's the goal of the mission of Ukraine to advance the white man's or white race's mission, going against the Russian and the Jew and all of this. I mean, all of this is on record, but everyone has to pretend as if it's just some Russian propaganda. My point is we're destroying something at home as well when it's not possible to discuss anything anymore. And if you do bring it up, then it's Russian propaganda and purge from polite society.

#John Laughland

I'm very glad you raised that because I've written for many years on international criminal justice. And I've always said that the sharp practice, the corrupt procedures that these courts have implemented, established—I haven't got time to go into all the arguments—but they're very corrupt, these courts, typically. Corrupt, I mean, in their procedures, in the way they evaluate evidence, the way they allow or disallow evidence, and so on. I've always said that this would indeed percolate down into our own. And, of course, that's what we're seeing now. We're seeing, well, frankly, totalitarianism.

Andy Burnham at the United Nations General Assembly, the British Prime Minister, has just announced, I think it's now the tenth agency in Britain which is going to combat disinformation. But you're dead right. It undermines the legitimacy of our own government. And I've just literally, before coming on with you, Glenn, I was just listening—you may have seen it yourself—Jeffrey Sachs talking to Judge Napolitano. And Jeffrey Sachs is absolutely appalled, quite rightly, by what Donald Trump said yesterday in New York, where he threatened to eradicate the Islamic Republic. So there you have a man threatening to wipe out an entire civilization of 90 million people.

Nobody responds. Nobody in the Senate. This is Jeffrey Sachs's point. Nobody says—none of the Europeans, of course, protest. They all just allow it, allow him to say this. And once again, as Jeff Sachs says, this is gangsterism. That's how gangsters operate. They threaten ridiculous violence. You know, you arrive. That's what a mafia group does. They arrive in a part of town, they smash up a few windows, and then they say, "We know where your children go to school." That is exactly, structurally speaking, what Trump is doing. And if I come back to St. Augustine, that is the hallmark of a state operating without justice.

#Glenn

And again, it's interesting to see in real time, because whenever people look back towards World War II or whatever, they will always ask, "Oh, how could we stumble into this?" Or also, "Why did no one stand up and stop it early on?" But here we are. We can have a state leader, as you say, calling for the destruction of an entire civilization and... nothing. Crickets. Just nobody wants to cause any disruptions or have any consequences by speaking up. And no, it's shocking. Anyways, do you have any final thoughts before we finish up?

#John Laughland

Well, I mean, to encapsulate the shocking nature, I often quote this one. You probably have as well. Kaja Kallas, the European Union High Representative for Foreign and Security Policy, she typically speaks about—we were talking about double standards a moment ago—she typically speaks about Russia's illegal and unprovoked war of aggression in Ukraine and the situation in the Middle East. And sometimes you have these two in the same sentence. Whereas, of course, if she were

consistent, she would also refer to the attack on Iran as illegal and unprovoked, because there's absolutely no doubt that it was. But, you know, the double standards are horrific. And the silence of these people after Trump's remarks—not even a criticism, not even a distancing. You know, we're always being asked to distance ourselves from this or that thing. Nobody has distanced themselves from these remarks, which are horrific.

#Glenn

Yeah, that's a good point. Whenever I'm asked about Russia or what's happening—what happened in Gaza—usually it starts, "Do you condemn this? Do you condemn that?" Nobody seems to need to condemn what is happening, what's being done against the Iranians. But yeah, there you go. Well, thank you so much for coming on. Where can people find you, by the way?

#John Laughland

Well, the main place is fvd.nl, fvd.nl/international. I'm the director, apart from being an academic, I'm the director of Forum for Democracy International, which is the international wing of the Dutch political party of that name. So that's our website, fvd.nl/international. That's my main, and then I have an X account and things like that.

#John Laughland

Well, thanks again.

#John Laughland

Thank you very much, Glenn.