

Putin ATTACKS Europe!? Wars BACKFIRE on US | Chris Helali

Is Putin going to war with Europe? Europe and Ukraine say yes, and soon. Geopolitical analyst Chris Helali joins to discuss how her on the ground experience in both Russia and the Middle East helps us understand the geopolitical developments confronting the increasingly divided world order.

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#Danny

Welcome back to the show, everyone. Danny Haiphong here. As you can see, I'm joined for the first time by Chris Halali of DDGO Politics. Chris, great to be with you. Thanks so much for coming on.

#Chris Helali

Thank you so much for having me, Danny.

#Danny

Yeah, we have a big show today. And I wanted your take on what's happening in the Ukraine conflict first, because Europe has been sounding the alarm about Russia attacking NATO within months. This is coming from Danish intelligence. They say it's a low but growing risk that Russia could launch limited strikes or deploy troops into a NATO country in the coming months. It comes amid a chorus of warnings from European security officials and lawmakers about Moscow's willingness to take greater risks after more than four years of war. We had the EU, the EU's representative, the so-called diplomat, say that now 900 million euros for the EU's military assistance missions to Ukraine has been released.

One billion will fund a new joint procurement for equipment. So Europe is getting ready, apparently. And of course, Ukraine—this is the Kyiv Independent—Ukraine is hyping this up, saying Europe needs bigger red lines. Russia is no longer meddling in elections or just hacking networks. They are attacking Europe directly, citing the Leipzig airport incident of a drone that was claimed to be Russian, and then drone incursions into NATO airspace being common. So Chris, help us understand

what is going on. Is Russia about to attack Europe? Is this war escalating? Or what's the truth of the matter here?

#Chris Helali

Well, the truth is that the Russophobia and the hysteria over so-called Russian aggression against Europe and the European Union in particular, or NATO states, is merely fantasy. There's no reality to it. In fact, President Putin, Foreign Minister Lavrov, and political officials up and down the Russian Federation have continued to reiterate that there is absolutely no threat to Europe, and that Russia is merely continuing to conduct its defensive operations, its special military operation, and that if European space is used for attacks on the Russian Federation, for example, European airspace being used for drones from Ukraine or from other European countries coming into the Russian Federation, or the placement of resources or military equipment that's used against Russia.

Russia reserves the right, as is enshrined under international law, to respond proportionally to those attacks. But Russia is not planning some blitzkrieg-type scenario here against the EU or against any NATO member state. It's repeatedly said it doesn't want that. It's not interested in that. And you saw today, just at the UN, on the sidelines, for the first time in four years, Foreign Minister Lavrov met with his counterpart from Germany. So Russia has always said that they are ready to do diplomacy. They are a strong, stable, responsible state actor, and they're one of the five permanent members of the Security Council.

So they have always said that diplomacy is their first choice. However, as you've seen since 2014, and especially since 2022, there has been ongoing aggression and hostility towards the Russian Federation, now in a military sense. So that's a very, very dangerous escalation. And Russia is trying to avoid everything as much as possible. But here you see this video right here. I mean, this is the first that we've seen in so many years. Another one of the abnormalities that has now clearly changed, at least today, at least with this one meeting. But I want to emphasize that Russia is committed to regional security and peace. It has always said so.

And sadly, Kaja Kallas, Ursula von der Leyen, and the rest of the crew use the fear of Russia, use this kind of Orientalist barbaric fantasy that somehow the Russians are coming and they're going to take over every European capital and you're going to lose your moms and daughters and sisters. This is pure fantasy. Pure fantasy, Russia has said. And Russia continues to say that it wants a good relationship. Russia did not sabotage its own pipeline, Nord Stream 2. That was done by the Euro-Atlantic Alliance. Russia did not sabotage any of these relationships. In fact, there were thousands of companies from Europe operating freely and independently in the Russian Federation.

And sadly, because of the deteriorating relationship caused by the Europeans towards the Russian Federation, we're in the situation we're in today. And the only way that the European Union elite can maintain control is to try to wrench it away from populists. Not to say that I agree with everything that they say, but clearly Viktor Orbán and Fico in Slovakia and many others have said repeatedly

that they want to have a normal relationship, that they want to have Russia as a trading partner, that they want to see Russia as part of the architecture of European continental security.

But the European elite don't want that because their own power rests on Russophobia, rests on the fearmongering and, I might add, the rearmament and remilitarization of the European military bloc overall. So Germany is remilitarizing for the first time in many decades, which is a great threat to Russia. And the European Union has called for either a European-wide army, increased defense spending, so much so that even countries as poor as, you know, my maternal homeland of Greece, is spending 5% and above on NATO. It's absolutely insane. People are suffering. They can't even afford basic medicine and groceries.

And all of these countries have now been pushed by the Trump administration and by the European elite to pay enormous sums of money for this rearmament campaign. And clearly Trump is making a fortune off of the Europeans, reselling American weapons to the Ukrainians. So the real aggressor here is not the Russians, who have not attacked any capital. And this story about drones, once again, this hysteria and false flag is exactly what it is. Russia is not sending drones to Germany. It has no necessity to do that. Russia has Oreshniks and ballistic missiles. If they want to hit Germany, they can hit it without a problem. They press a button, and there go the missiles.

These drones, these drones have no—there's no evidence, by the way. There's been no evidence presented. I see no evidence of any markings, of any "made in Russia," nothing like that. They just simply—a drone falls and they say it's Russia. Well, it could be anybody else. Who knows who it could be? Everybody has drones these days. I have drones. So, I mean, it's pure projection on the part of the Europeans that everywhere Russia is hiding. It's the eternal boogeyman. And that's the real danger. The real danger is that they are going, because of their sort of manic behavior, you know, policies, they're going to bring upon themselves a war that Russia didn't want and Russia doesn't want and has said repeatedly as such.

#Danny

Chris, there's also the question of, I mean, if we wanted to count Ukraine as a part of Europe, even though it's neither EU nor officially NATO. But nevertheless, all of this surrounds Ukraine, and Ukraine as a proxy for the U.S.-NATO and EU alliance. And I want your comments on this. You know, there have been repeated attacks on Russia's oil refineries in recent weeks, including in the last 24, 48 hours. And the New York Post is now reporting that Putin is plotting payback for Ukraine. Drone attacks on oil refineries are going to happen. And he's telling the U.S., now it's our turn. Now, Chris, talk about what is the actual impact of the Ukrainian attacks on Russia's oil refineries, and how do you evaluate how Russia has responded to it?

#Chris Helali

Listen, there's been an impact. There's no doubt about it, and nobody's sugarcoating it that there has been an impact. It hasn't been as severe as some Western commentators have said, but there has been an impact. And even nearby where I live here in Moscow, you've seen that there are now greater defensive capabilities around strategic sites, including petroleum infrastructure, electrical infrastructure, data centers, and computer-sensitive equipment that's out there—you know, telephone lines or poles, cell phone towers. All that stuff is being carefully guarded because the Ukrainian regime is not attacking military targets. They're attacking civilian infrastructure.

This is blatant terrorism. We've seen it over and over again in these past months, that they're attacking gas stations, oil refineries, electrical generation stations, like in Crimea. They're attacking water plants. They're attacking all of these kinds of facilities. They're even attacking schools. I went to Starobelsk. They killed 21 students, 19 girls and three boys, in their beds while they were sleeping, claiming that they were military. This was a school. This was a pedagogical school for people to learn how to be teachers. I mean, this level of terrorism now, which has brought us to this point, surely Russia has reserved the right to respond to it.

And Russia now is striking infrastructure that is used for the military-industrial complex of Ukraine. They're attacking sites in Kiev, in Odessa, in Dnipropetrovsk, in many areas around Ukraine. So there's nothing that's going to be hit in Europe per se, but in Ukraine, absolutely, because the aggression is coming from Ukraine. And if other European member states project military power from their soil, Russia reserves the right. But there is no sort of a return, as in hitting European targets. No, Russia is systematically trying to degrade Ukrainian logistics and Ukrainian military-industrial capability to continue to attack civilian infrastructure in the Russian Federation.

It's totally normal for a state to do that because Russia is now facing brutal terrorism. And I can tell you, because thousands of drones a week come into Moscow. Thankfully, for the heroism of the various units of the Air Defense Corps of the Russian military, most of those drones are knocked down before they even reach the city. But still, some do, and some penetrate, and some are able to strike not only civilian infrastructure, residential buildings. I mean, civilians are killed on a weekly basis here because of these drone attacks. So Russia, of course, it shouldn't be surprising for anyone that Russia can respond.

#Danny

Now, to follow up with this, you mentioned U.S. and European weapons to Ukraine. Well, I'm wondering your reaction to this. Supposedly, Zelensky is announcing that Trump has agreed to let Ukraine make Patriot missiles. We always hear this. This is game-changing, a game-changing decision, according to Zelensky. Of course, this is coming out of the New York Post, but it's being reported elsewhere. Talk about this. The U.S.'s posture has been interesting in this: very little attention openly by the Trump administration, but very little change in the overall policy. It's Europe that has really come out in front on all of this. And of course, now Europe is the one that's feigning

this idea that they are going to be attacked imminently, and Ukraine looking like the authority in the sense that they're the ones telling Europe that they need to step their game up. What's your opinion on Trump's decision here to let—and what does it even mean—to let Ukraine produce Patriot missiles in their country?

#Chris Helali

I mean, it's more symbolic than anything because, as you know, and I'm sure your viewers and listeners know, it takes a long time to build the infrastructure to build those Patriot missile systems. So the already conservative estimates put it at three years. Some others put it at five years to be able to build the military, technical, and logistical capability to carry out mass production of these Patriot interceptors. You've got to have the factories, you've got to have the machining tools, you've got to have the raw materials, you've got to have the technical experts and engineers and workforce to be able to do all of that.

So yes, symbolically, Ukraine is getting the technology. Well, it's back and forth. They get the agreement, then they don't get the agreement. Who knows where it stands? But in any case, it seems that the Americans want to give at least some of this ability to the Ukrainians, but the Ukrainians won't be able to do anything. Not to mention, all it takes is the location of this facility, and there, you know, Russia launches an Oreshnik, and there goes the facility. Spend another three to five years rebuilding the capabilities. So I think it's much more symbolic than it is in any way a game changer.

It's not a game changer because even with the Patriot batteries that were there, they can't even stop the Russian incoming missiles, no matter how many they build. And you know that there's only limited capability to build about 50 to 100 per year per factory or so, unless you ramp up production and expand factory infrastructure. So I can't even foresee Ukraine being able to really change anything on the battlefield with this capability. It's only changing—you know what it is? It's changing the battlefield in terms of our cognitive understanding of the war and in terms of the propaganda of the war. That somehow, oh, Ukraine now has this ability. Now everybody invests in Ukraine. It's not going to change anything. Everybody knows that.

#Danny

Well, right now, Chris, the mainstream Western press is talking about this conflict like this. They're saying, you know, overnight we saw Russia—they struck a Starlink facility, steel facility, data centers. They're striking quite a number of targets that Russia would say are military targets, or at least connected to military targets. So the narrative now goes, well, Russia's doing this, and now Russia is moving more and more towards civilian targets because it's the one that is stuck now. What do you say to this? That's the narrative, but maybe you can help people understand how this war is being fought and why the narrative war by the Western press is taking shape in this way, that every day we hear Russia's stuck, Russia's the one that's on the back foot now.

#Chris Helali

Russia is not on the back foot. Clearly, it's not. I mean, you just have to be a basic mathematician, or at least understand arithmetic, to know that Russia has taken more territory each year than it has lost. So therefore, Russia is not losing in any way. The problem is that Russia is fighting a new type of war that, for example, myself as a former U.S. military officer and as somebody who was in Syria, we never experienced before. This is a drone war. This is a war where, for every soldier, there are at least two to three drones on the battlefield. So what has Russia done? Instead of using conventional tactics, imagine, for your viewers and listeners, they're all thinking about the Great Patriotic War or the videos of the Soviet Red Army from the '60s and '70s, massive troop formations.

Tank columns, great placement of artillery and MLRS systems, you know, even Katyushas. It just doesn't work that way anymore because the proliferation of drones on the battlefield means that you cannot concentrate troops. You cannot concentrate firepower. You cannot move in armored tank columns anymore. Everything has to be done sporadically and spread out. Everything is much more decentralized on the battlefield. So instead of large troop formations, for example, relying on battalions and companies, you go down to squad-level tactics, and you basically send troops in groups of two to five soldiers at a time to hold certain territory, back them up with logistics centers.

And that logistical capability is either done by foot or by motorcycle and ATV. Even a Bukhanka, you know, this old Soviet little van, like a VW van, it can't even get close to the front line because the Ukrainians are going to target it with three, four drones at a time. So the slow, the slow nature of this war is because drones have reshaped infantry tactics, armored tactics, artillery tactics, everything. The entire battlefield has changed. And I've spent, since 2024, I've spent, you know, a lot of time in the Donbass. I've been able to see it both in Donetsk and Lugansk People's Republic, in Zaporozhye and Kherson region, and also in Kursk near Sudzha. Yeah.

The areas that are on the front line, they either have a little bit of woodland or they're open spaces. You can't move troops in open spaces like that anymore because with drones, all you have to do is have a couple of drones above. They then radio in, and in come the FPVs and artillery strikes and missile strikes, not to mention air power. So, I think that everybody who has this idea that somehow Russia has stalled doesn't realize that any conventional army will stall given this change in battle tactics, in this change in warfare.

And that's the real change that has happened since 2022. And I think that the Russian military is changing its doctrine now to be able to deal with the fact that the battlefield has radically changed. So what is it doing? It is combining small-unit tactics with big tactics on logistics, big strikes on military infrastructure. Why? Because if you can degrade Ukraine's ability to make drones and deploy drones, then you can change the outcome of the battlefield. Then you can create logistical kinks and break the chain so that not enough drones reach the battlefield, and then you can move troops in bigger numbers. But at this point, it's not yet able to do that.

We're going to see that down the line. This is a long war of attrition, and people don't quite understand that. But listen, if Russia is having this difficulty, you don't have to look far to see why the U.S. has also had difficulty in the region. Anybody who employs drones and is able to cheaply make them is going to change the nature of warfare. You don't need billions of dollars anymore to defeat large conventional armies. All you need are a couple of Shahed drones or Geran drones, and it changes everything. We've seen that already. We've seen it in the Persian Gulf. We've seen it in Eastern Europe. And I think we'll see it in other battlefields very soon. We're seeing it also in Africa as well.

#Danny

Yeah, well, they're talking—I don't know if you saw it. I think it was—I don't know if it was The Economist. I'll pull it up when I find it in my bookmarks. But they're talking about how drone warfare could also change the possible battlefield for China with Taiwan, despite the fact that the United States—and this is what's so interesting—it wasn't too long ago, within the last few months, that the United States, it was reported, were supposedly begging Ukraine to help them with this kind of, as you said, cheap drone, mass drone production, because the United States isn't really actually employing that anywhere.

But Ukraine is, and another astounding thing about this, too, is Russia's air defenses and how its response to drone warfare is also unprecedented, because I don't think we've ever seen in history a country having to confront a thousand drones in a single day and knock out 99% of them. I mean, they're also changing the way that countries defend their airspace. It's quite something. But yeah, I actually found the image here. Let me pull it up. Here we go. So, yeah. So it's, "The United States now says China would face a hellscape in a war. Taiwan drones and AI may give America an edge," even though the United States is begging Ukraine for this edge on—I mean, AI. I mean, it's been a disaster. It's been a total disaster in Iran. But now they're saying that drones could give the U.S. an edge against China. Your thoughts on all this? I mean, all these wars ultimately do connect with each other.

#Chris Helali

As a drone operator, China is by far one of the most advanced drone producers. In fact, I do believe China is still the top drone producer. You have DJI and so many other companies in China. China was the first real game-changer and continues to be one of the greatest innovators. Of course, it's mostly focused on civilian drones, drone production, for example, in agriculture, in surveying, in lidar, in archaeology, so many other things that these drones have been utilized for, or also in the emergency services. But now Russia and China have shared information, and China is quickly getting into the production of drones for warfare. And we've seen them, by the way, in the 80th anniversary.

We saw them paraded in Tiananmen Square. We saw the different drones that they have that have been weaponized. China has nothing to fear from Taiwan in this regard. Absolutely nothing. Taiwan

doesn't even have the capability to produce en masse the drones necessary to knock out anything that could impact the Chinese military. Not to mention China has the drone technology to wipe out any logistics that come onto the island. Absolutely, because you're going to have to bring those logistics either by air or by sea. Nobody is going there by land because it's an island. So this is just, once again, this is a major cope from the Western press that want to ensure that China doesn't take Taiwan forcefully.

But of course, Taiwan is part of China. And the rationale for that side is that they want to wrench Taiwan away from the People's Republic. It's not going to happen. It's not going to happen. China doesn't want confrontation. We know that. I lived in China for years. I studied there, got my master's degree there. The Chinese love diplomacy. It's part of their culture and civilization for millennia. But if people violate China's territorial integrity, China has a history of defending it to the hilt. Nobody is going to defeat China in this regard. The Japanese Empire couldn't. Other empires couldn't. And certainly the Americans and the Euro-Atlantic Alliance will not.

#Danny

Yeah, that's what I mean. It's astounding. Well, back to—also, we can head right back to the Europe-Russia front, because Putin just actually addressed this at the forum on the St. Petersburg Forum on Culture, I believe it was. And he answered questions from reporters. I can't play the audio because it's all in Russian. But these are some quotes from him with regard to Estonia. So, you know, you have all these countries across, quote-unquote, Europe—of course, Estonia being on Russia's border, a former Soviet republic—talking up the threat of war from Russia. And so Putin responded, "The circus has left town, but the clowns have stayed behind. This is political clownery. Estonia's population is 1.3 million people. The Russian army, just the Russian army, is 1.5 million. Estonia's 1.3 million includes everyone from babies to the elderly."

It's complete nonsense, utter absurdity. These are the kinds of people we have to deal with today. And he addressed the Europe-wide threat directly. He said they want to keep using Ukraine as cannon fodder, a tool for fighting against Russia, to constrain our development, to keep investing their funds in aggressive moves. They're trying to mislead their own people by spreading statements [that] Russia intends to attack someone. Complete nonsense. So, of course, these quotes won't get any airplay in Western media, though. But your thoughts on this? And, you know, to me, it always seems like it's Europe and NATO—they want a broader war. They definitely don't want the consequences of it, but they can't stop. What do you make of all this?

#Chris Helali

It's absolutely true. And the Baltic states are at the core of it. Sadly, the Baltic states, much like Ukraine, have also rehabilitated their Nazi sympathizers and collaborators and have held parades and torch marches and things like that through their central streets. They've also led brutal campaigns of Russophobia, including banning the Russian language, kicking out people from the country who

support Russia. By the way, many of these countries, especially the Baltic states—Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia—have major populations of Russian minorities. So we're not talking about a small number.

We're talking about sizable numbers of Russians who live in, as you rightfully point out, former Soviet republics. And these territories now, including most recently one of them in particular, have now called for changing their constitutions to allow for the placement of weapons of mass destruction on their soil. That is, they have now called for the placement of nuclear weapons—U.S. nuclear weapons or other NATO alliance nuclear weapons—on their territory. That doesn't seem to me to be a diplomatic solution towards bringing about peace and trying to build an architecture of security across Europe or Eurasia.

It seems to me, once again, saber-rattling, trying to instigate the Russian Federation. And Russia's saying, I mean, if we had the Cuban Missile Crisis, and you remember Jupiter missiles in Turkey and then the missiles in Cuba and all of that that followed in the '60s, now we have, once again, not only the expansion of NATO, but the expansion of NATO's nuclear umbrella to include countries where there were not nuclear weapons, nuclear triad capabilities before. So the Baltic states, which are like the little Chihuahuas, you know, sort of always barking at Russia and its neighbor, now they are saying that they want nuclear weapons on their territory. This is a great escalation.

We actually just spoke about this on Russian TV just a few days ago. And the commentators were saying this is basically a *casus belli*. This is an act of war because now they're saying we're going to get rid of what happened after 1991 in terms of all of the Soviet and post-Soviet treaties around the placement of nuclear weapons. Not to mention the expansion of NATO. We won't even get into that. But now they want to change those parameters and they want to place offensive nuclear weapons on their territory, which is only a couple hundred kilometers—I think in one post I saw 500 kilometers—to Moscow, a couple hundred kilometers to St. Petersburg, formerly Leningrad.

This is extremely dangerous. So I don't think that Russia is the one that's doing this. The clear insanity is coming from them. It's coming from them. Russia has been as it is, but they're the ones saying that they want to place nuclear weapons. And not only that, they're talking about war-gaming, how to break that sort of line that connects—it doesn't actually connect—but that would connect Belarus to Kaliningrad, which is the part of Russia that is separated from the mainland, right above Poland. All of these things are gearing up towards a war scenario that they are creating, not that Russia is creating.

#Danny

Do you see that this could eventually spiral, regardless of who starts it? And obviously, as you suggest and provide evidence for, there's no evidence that Russia is going to be the one that starts it. But even if Russia doesn't start it, it may happen anyway because Russia—you just outlined all of these moves across the Baltic states, of course, the EU and the United States. I don't love when

people take the U.S. off the hook on this. That may change when Trump is out of office eventually. But right now, you know, there's a lot of people who talk about the United States as kind of sitting back. But the Trump administration has not changed the policy. So, if this were to happen, how would Russia respond? And what kind of future does Europe have if this is the trajectory that they are obviously so willing to take?

#Chris Helali

Well, to go to your earlier point, absolutely, we can't let the U.S. off the hook because the U.S. is the one supplying arms and, not only that, intelligence and information. And I would add, the U.S. just announced in the past month, and Trump touted it on his social media, that the U.S. will expand its military presence in Poland. Another scenario of sort of this saber-rattling against Russia. Why expand it in Poland when we already have bases in Poland, in Romania, in Bulgaria, and elsewhere? This is all part of the hysteria against Russia. I honestly believe—I would even bet, even up to my life—that Russia would not start a military conflict with Europe. It has no reason to. It's not in its calculus. And Russia doesn't have these imperial aims.

#Danny

Here we go, 4.4 billion. I mean, that's a lot for Poland, too.

#Chris Helali

That's a lot. Seventeen billion zlotys for Fort Trump. Fort Trump. You tell me. You tell me who's causing this situation to escalate. I don't see Fort Putin being created anywhere, but Fort Trump is being created. And you're absolutely right. Listen, the U.S. is in the background in all of this. Whereas before the U.S. would take the lead, now the U.S. is carefully manicuring its image to be in the background. It's hoisting all of the responsibility on the Europeans. Meanwhile, it is the main architect of all of this. Because if the U.S. wanted to, it could simply say, "Either we end the NATO alliance and we're out, or you're going to follow our foreign policy," which would be more towards peace.

But that's why nobody, you know, in Russia now, people are changing their ideas about Witkoff and Kushner and the whole idea of diplomacy. Sort of the spirit of Anchorage is long dead, right? I really do believe the spirit of Anchorage might have been a specter all along. It was just a ghost. It was a fantasy. But the United States has made a lot of money and will continue to make a lot of money off of the Euro-Atlantic alliance, off of the war in Ukraine. And regardless of what Trump says every other day, "Oh, they should stop. They should reach an agreement," he knows that there won't be an agreement because he's the main architect of them not making an agreement.

It is because of U.S. technology, it is because of U.S. infrastructure and capabilities and military equipment, that they're able to launch long-range strikes against Russia from Ukraine. Ukraine does

not have the capability to understand where military facilities are located, where critical infrastructure is located in Russia. It does that with American help and with British help, I would add. And it uses Starlink and other technologies to be able to launch those attacks. Elon Musk is making hand over fist money on this war. You can't let him off the hook, or the other major industrialists and capitalists. For example, Palantir and all of these AI platforms are being utilized on the battlefield. Even CNN was touting it just in May when they went to visit the military facilities, the drone operators in Ukraine.

So that's to say that Russia won't be the start of this. But if it does happen, say hypothetically it does happen, it can very rapidly rise to the level of confrontation with weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear weapons. And that's the great danger, is to pull everybody back from that threshold. But as I said before, the Europeans are really pushing Russia for a conflict with Russia because they also believe that Russia will not respond that way. They want to try to degrade Russia even more because they know that Russia will only go to that level as a last resort. But Russia has said any threat to Russia will be met with all of Russia's capabilities. So it's almost like a game of chicken at this point.

It's almost like two cars are speeding towards each other. One is clearly telling the other car to go in the other direction or to turn and swerve, but it's not. It wants a head-on collision. That's the danger here, because once you set off an action, the chain of events, the sequencing, can take a nonlinear, dynamic path. And that's really the sort of chaos theory within warfare. That's the danger, is that you won't know what comes next. And there could be a series of circumstances that you didn't anticipate. And there, you could have the subsequent launch of nuclear weapons. And that kind of exchange would be, of course, catastrophic for not only the continent, but for humanity.

#Danny

Yeah, that term you use, sequencing, I think is really important here because many also have noted that they can see how, despite the U.S. being, you know, fading into the background, still very much directly involved. It's the appearance of Europe, and especially the Baltic states, Germany, the rest of the NATO countries, as being out in front that plays a significant role in how we're understanding what's going on right now. And then we just have straight-up propaganda. I mean, the Wall Street Journal yesterday said that Russia is now telling businesses that they have to defend themselves from Ukrainian drones.

They're overwhelmed by Ukraine's drones. Orders from the Kremlin are forcing industries to take responsibility for protecting themselves. I mean, I think it's like the combination here is, we get the sequencing thing—very unpredictable—but obviously the United States is trying to put onto Europe and its clients and its proxies the bulk of the responsibility while providing them with as much as they can of the help in doing that. And then, of course, we have just the propaganda, which serves, I guess, the psychological warfare component on all of us and people who don't watch channels like ours.

#Chris Helali

Absolutely. And I would also add that the midterms won't change the situation on the ground in terms of the sort of political motivations around support for Ukraine and support for the Euro-Atlantic alliance. I think the Democrats are even in some ways more dangerous in some of these regards because Ukraine is a shibboleth for them. Ukraine is sort of an idol for them. They cannot abandon Ukraine. They don't want to abandon Ukraine. And my fear is that if the Democrats take the House, the Senate, or both in November, they're going to push and put forward a much more aggressive policy towards Russia.

So we've had an abnormal relationship with Russia, 2022 to, say, 2024-25. 2025 till now, it hasn't been abnormal, but it hasn't really produced anything except a couple of photo ops and some talking points. But the after-effects of a political transformation in the United States could lead to a situation where there's a reorientation towards the Euro-Atlantic alliance and towards NATO. Big support for Ukraine, funding, increased sanctions. Let's not forget, Russia now has the most sanctions against it of any country in history, 30,000. And I just was with Foreign Minister Lavrov and Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova earlier this week.

And it was clear from our conversations with them that the situation is getting out of control in terms of the use of economic coercive tactics and measures. They're trying to stifle anything that Russia is producing or selling or exporting and also importing. So it's clear that the Americans are using these as their last sort of opportunities before even heightening the confrontation with Russia. I don't think the Trump administration necessarily wants that. It wants the Europeans to do that, but it doesn't want to be the one to do that. It can't even deal with Iran, never mind dealing with the largest nuclear power on the planet.

But I think the Europeans are the ones who are basically becoming the contractors of the U.S. They are the contractors now for U.S. foreign policy and war efforts in Europe and throughout the European continent. Therefore, I think that we are entering into dangerous territory here because unless somebody pulls the U.S. back from pursuing this policy, my fear is that, as Zelensky said, he wants Ukraine to be the new Israel. Therefore, we're going to see not only increased fighting, but a militarization of the entire continent towards a war footing that will last years. That's why everyone's like, "Why has it lasted so long?" Because there has been no effort on the part of the Americans, the Europeans, and especially not the Ukrainians, for peace.

They don't want peace. They want to pursue this war footing. Their goal is—it's not even the strategic defeat of Russia. It's regime change. It's the Balkanization of Russia. It's destroying Russia as a major power. And Russians understand this. They're talking about it all the time here. And that's the thing that Americans don't understand. They say, why is Russia pursuing this line? This is

an existential war. This is a war of national defense and security for Russia. This isn't just some one-off sort of far away. This is right on the border. This is within Russian territory that they're being attacked. This isn't something thousands of kilometers away.

#Danny

And you mentioned also the spirit of Anchorage earlier. And I was thinking about how, you know, Xi Jinping just came to the United States, and all the reports are stating there's a variety of ways that this is being framed. But both of them kind of harken to this idea that nothing really happened, that there was an empty-handedness. Some say it's Trump being empty-handed, but much of the reporting is China left empty-handed, right? China didn't get anything from Trump, trying to make Trump look powerful. But nevertheless, the reports are that Trump's Xi visit wrapped up with few achievements announced other than a tariff deal, which is very modest, \$30 billion, and ultimately a desperate move, I think, by the United States to reduce the tariffs that they were the ones to levy.

But nevertheless, Chris, I wanted your thoughts on this. You know, it seems like China, Iran just said that they can't trust anything that the United States says. Russia, the spirit of Anchorage is dead. China—Xi Jinping came, his delegation came to Washington, D.C. They didn't seem very eager, though, to come to any resolution or make any kind of real changes to any of the points. I think they obviously have, for years, been demanding many things to change on the U.S. part, but I don't think they were expecting anything in the months leading up to this. Your thoughts on this? It seems like Donald Trump, he's supposed to be the dealmaker, art of the deal, ends all the wars, but not much is coming out of what he does on the side of diplomacy. And of course, the other side of it, the wars, they've proliferated under his regime.

#Chris Helali

You're absolutely right. And I think that also Trump is a so-called dealmaker, or the art of the deal, as he likes to tout, when he has a power imbalance with the other party or parties. So when Trump is in an advantageous position, of course he's going to do well. He's going to put pressure on the others. He's going to wheel and deal and steal and do whatever he can to come out on top. But when he's confronted with China, the second-largest economy in the world, and in fact, it's going to surpass the U.S. in the coming decades, he then realizes that he's with an equal, and the equal won't move. And the equal is a civilization state that has thousands of years of history and understands how to deal with a wild superpower that has just come in world history and is trying to dictate terms to them.

So China's saying, sure, we'll meet. China always, like Russia, is open to diplomacy. It also is a stable and responsible state actor, a permanent member of the Security Council. And so, of course, it wants to have diplomacy with the U.S., but it will not give up its security, its economic prosperity, its diplomatic red lines for the United States. And so the U.S. is trying to put pressure on China: stop importing Russian oil, stop helping Iran, stop doing this, stop doing that. And China is simply saying,

you can't tell us what to do. And if you want to respond to us forcefully and aggressively with economic coercive measures, we'll respond in kind. So Trump knows this. Trump understands this, that the U.S. is actually in a weaker position in this situation.

It's not in an advantageous position. It's in a weaker position. Given China's economy, given China's integration into the world sort of marketplace and in terms of logistics, China is essential. So an economic war with China will have long-lasting economic impacts for the United States and for U.S. voters, which he needs if he's going to try to win anything, which I don't believe he's going to win much. But in any case, he's trying to get a quick win. But China won't give a quick win because China wants, like Russia, to address root causes to issues. The U.S. is always interested in superficial imagery, in superficial agreements. China and Russia want deeper and long-lasting transformations from below to address some of the root causes of why we get to these points to begin with.

But the U.S. will not address those because ultimately it means the U.S. has to confront its own hegemony, its own nature. And the U.S. can't do that. The U.S. is not able to be introspective. Nor does the Trump administration want to yield because the Trump administration doesn't want to look weak with China. He's always trying to be the big guy. And the image of Trump with the B-1 bombers flying over was a PR disaster for him, because President Xi just looked strong. And, you know, "I'm a military man. I was in the Cultural Revolution. I know how this works." And there's Trump like, "Oh my God." And then, in the middle of the anthem, look, people were like, "Why doesn't Xi put his hand over the heart?" Well, first of all, it's not his anthem.

#Danny

Laura Loomer. That was Laura Loomer.

#Chris Helali

Yeah, Laura Loomer is like, "Why didn't he put his hand?" First of all, it's not his anthem. He's being very respectful. And Trump started talking to Xi in the middle of the anthem. And what does Xi do? Doesn't respond. See? Doesn't respond. He doesn't even acknowledge that Trump's even talking. If you see, Trump turns and starts talking to him, and Xi just is looking forward, right? In fact, a great deal of respect towards what's happening at the moment diplomatically.

But that's the kind... People don't understand this, and I feel like I have to do Diplomacy 101, or maybe people didn't do Model UN to understand how diplomacy functions. But President Xi and the entire Chinese state, they are very much committed to dialogue. That's how they want to achieve the benefits for their people and for humanity. They don't want to achieve it through war. And even China historically didn't want to achieve it through war. However, the United States, that's how they've achieved what they've achieved: through war and violence. There you go.

#Danny

The readers adding context. I mean, there were so many parts of this summit that made me laugh a lot. Like the video that you mentioned. I can pull that up in a bit. But Laura Loomer, too. I mean, I love the spelling of the pinyin here: Xi Jinping. You know, capital P. You have to make sure that there's a capital P in there. Xi Jinping refused to put his hand over the heart during the U.S. national anthem. Readers added context that they thought people might want to know: yes, because he's not American. Which is literally etiquette. I mean, protocol, etiquette, all of that. It's just Laura Loomer would not be able to really understand what that is, given the creature that she is. But nevertheless, really, really funny stuff, and kind of, I think, a demonstration of this changing world.

I mean, you know, the United States, Europe, they are going full steam ahead. I agree with you 100%. I don't know if you saw Elizabeth Warren and Chuck Schumer, um, reacting to Xi Jinping's visit. It was very negative. It was, "China's the biggest threat to U.S. national security. Why would Trump do this?" Right? There's all this panic about Xi Jinping visiting. Um, and, uh, yeah, I mean, I think the Democrats see their war as Ukraine, and of course they would love to continue to saber-rattle with China. Um, they do not see Iran as their war because, well, it didn't start under the Democrats. So that's—yet they don't do anything about it. They didn't say anything about the annihilation threat that Trump made at the United Nations. So all of this is looking—I don't know. I think there's some clarity coming out. Chris, your thoughts, your comments?

#Chris Helali

I absolutely think there's some clarity coming out. And I think that we're going to see a reorientation of at least some of the foreign policy prerogatives after November. And by the way, Trump himself has already acknowledged this is going to happen. Because when Pezeshkian, president of Iran, said, "Okay, we want to reach a deal with the U.S.," which I think was a kind of weak move—but I won't get into internal Iranian politics. I'm Iranian, but I don't live there, so I leave that for our Iranians who live there to deal with. But I will say that Trump responded, and now the media is playing with, okay, this means that Trump is going to do something.

And what did Trump say? He said, "After the midterms, I'm going to bomb." And this was reported in some of the press today, that after the midterms, he's going to resume the bombing campaign. So everybody is watching very closely what's going to happen in November, so much so that it's affecting even the U.S.'s own war efforts. So yes, you're hearing Elizabeth Warren. Yes, you're hearing Chuck Schumer vis-à-vis China. And by the way, you remember the pivot to the Pacific was under Obama. So the U.S. government, whether it's Democrat- or Republican-controlled, it has Sinophobia within it. It has Russophobia within it.

It has Islamophobia. It has all of these prerogatives. It's just a balance of who's more of a threat for which party at which time, right? We know that China, China, China, China for the kind of Epoch Times crew on the right wing, and also for the Democrats, is a big danger. The Democrats are not

as focused on Iran or the Middle East because they've seen that it's caused a great deal of damage to them, and they try not to meddle in those things. But clearly, of course, they will. It won't be that they won't. It's just a question of where will they put more resources and more military effort.

But I think that we're going to see in the coming weeks a transformation in what is going to be the prerogatives of the next two years for the Trump administration. But Trump still is president. Given the fact that Congress has failed to restrain him, even with an illegal war on Iran, even the War Powers Act still failed because Fetterman went to the other side. I think that Trump is going to be a loose cannon. He's still going to do, you know, whatever he wants. And, you know, he's going to say, "Who's going to stop me?" And we'll see if anybody has a backbone to stop him. I don't believe that we're going to see anybody stop him anytime soon. We'll see, but I don't see it. What do you think?

#Danny

No, no, no. I mean, what I think is that, you know, there were reports that if Kamala Harris had won that we would— that, or there are reports that Joe Biden was planning for maybe a similar attack in the spring of, you know, the spring of whatever it is, whatever, sorry, 2026, if he were reelected. But of course, all the things, or, you know, happened that didn't get him— really, he didn't run, first of all, because he was not well, and then Kamala Harris lost. But so there are all indications that the Democrats were likely planning the same thing because, of course, they're just the people, they're just the figureheads. I mean, they're just, they're the representatives of the war machine. And if the deep state and the war machine, if they have a war that they want to wage or they want to begin, then they're going to— maybe it would have been done a little differently, maybe it would have looked a little different. But nevertheless, we probably would have seen a strike. And here's that video. I won't play the noise because it is quite loud. But the wince seen around the world. I mean, you know, Trump.

#Chris Helali

He turns over to say something, and she doesn't even acknowledge it.

#Danny

I mean, it's absolutely—I don't know what to say at this point. I mean, it's ridiculous. I think Putin referred to the only ones left as the clowns at the circus. And the entire unipolar world order kind of looks like that right now. Of course, it still has devastating consequences. You know, we can look at so many places around the world where it is wreaking havoc. And of course, you know, Russian troops are dying. There's, of course, Iranians that are being hurt by sanctions, despite, I think, really impressive efforts to shield from the worst of it. But nevertheless, yeah, there are consequences.

Venezuela... so many consequences to this, but nevertheless, the trajectory seems very clear now, or at least getting clearer and clearer, that the deep state, the war machine, is having a lot more difficult of a time achieving real objectives, like real actual objectives that I think shouldn't be ignored. Some people say chaos, the wrecking ball of the world economy, that's it. And I would say, okay, that's an outcome that they're fine with, or at least that they'll tolerate. But it is, you know, Iran, China, Russia—they don't want these countries to exist as they do. Anyway, in the last five or so minutes that we have, Chris, your thoughts on this?

#Chris Helali

I think you're absolutely right. And actually, I'm looking very closely at Cuba, for example. I'm looking at what's happening in Cuba. And it's very sad, what's happened in Venezuela, for me. I met with President Maduro and Alex Saab last year, and it's sad to see how things have changed so much in a year, and how much Venezuela has really given up in terms of its sovereignty to the United States. There are a lot of people still within our orbit, I will say, Danny, that believe that Venezuela is doing this to protect itself and to try to stabilize the Bolivarian Revolution. But for me, it's a bridge too far in many ways. I can understand diplomacy. I can understand dialogue. I can understand agreements. But the selling off of not only your resources, but not even mentioning your kidnapped president, I think that that's a little bit too far for me.

But I'm really watching closely. We have reports today, over the past 48 hours, that were released. I believe CBS or ABC, I'm trying to remember which one, is the one that released it, that they saw plans for a 90-day or so operation and the buildup that was going to be used against Cuba. And it had military police, it had a surgical unit, it had various other military formations, the engineering unit. That's my real fear, is that the Trump administration will use this moment to try to take the island by force. I believe—this is my belief—I may be proven wrong, but I will hold this belief because I studied in Cuba, because I've been to Cuba many times, and I know the Cuban people. Not 100 percent, but I know them as much as I have experienced them.

They will resist. They will resist because the revolution that they had against Batista and all of their development was forged through fire and struggle. They experienced the Spanish colonial period. They experienced American colonialism and this kind of mafia oligarchic class that absolutely destroyed the island, this casino and sort of brothel that they turned the island into. And they fought for dignity. They fought for the dignity of humanity, or man, as Che said when he wrote his book. So I believe that Cubans will fight back in a different way because, yes, Venezuela was a revolution, but it was different. It has different historical circumstances. It has a different trajectory. And the Venezuelan revolution did not go after the capitalist class like Cuba did.

Cuba went for full nationalization and followed a very Soviet line of communist development. Not at first, but eventually it took that in and tried to model itself. Venezuela didn't. Venezuela was socialism of the 21st century. And you see that it has limitations, given the fact that you leave open

spaces for fifth columns and sort of bourgeois elements to work against the government and work against the national interests of the country. But I believe that Cuba will resist. I don't know your thoughts, but I really do believe. And the sad part, the sad part that I see, is that sadly Cubans and Venezuelans are fighting about what has happened over the past year. Because let's not forget, 30 or so Cubans gave their lives in defense of President Maduro.

#Danny

I think it was very—the U.S. downplays how tough it was. I think it was actually quite a rough fight.

#Chris Helali

I think so too. Let's not forget, there were wounded on the American side. This was not—everybody seems to think that this is like an operation without wounded. No, the guy got his legs shredded, basically. When he went to Congress, he had already a couple of wounds because he couldn't even walk properly. So clearly there was some fighting. Whether it was the Cubans that did the fighting only, I'm not sure, but clearly the Cubans put up a fight. And they went down heroically because that's in their spirit. So I think that we're going to see Cuba fight back. But we're also not talking about Nicaragua. And I've been to Nicaragua. I met with Ortega's sons here in Moscow in June. I will say that Nicaragua is also on the hit list.

Why? Because there's recent congressional moves to go against Nicaragua as well. We saw that over the past week or so in Congress. So everybody keep your eyes out for Nicaragua as well, because I also believe that that's on the docket. And the Democrats have a hard-on for Latin America too. Sorry for the euphemism, but it's true. They also have aggressive policies for Latin America. It's not only, you know, good neighbor, good, you know, friendly relations, kind of FDR style. No, it's open and naked imperialism. It's just a different way of looking at it and operating with it. So I think that we have to see that Cuba and Nicaragua are going to be, in the next two years, well within the scope of U.S. operations in Latin America.

#Danny

I agree with you 100%. Under the first Trump administration, we saw a huge attempt in 2018, 2017, one of those years, to literally try to overthrow the Ortega Sandinista government by way of violence, by proxies. It failed. It did not succeed, but then that led to the sanctions. And of course, yeah, Trump—I mean, Trump-Rubio is really—the Rubio has the dream of getting rid of every single government, independent sovereign government, socialist government in particular, in the region. Yeah, Cuba is going to be tough because there's a lot of pessimism. I see it in the United States, especially among people who even support Cuba. Yeah, blockade, sanctions.

They are having a huge humanitarian effect. However, because of what you mentioned there, how Cuba's political process is deeper than Venezuela's was, that's just subjective. You know, for years I

would, of course, support both and would highlight the strengths of both. But, you know, I have always been concerned that—and I think those concerns have been validated by what's happened in Latin America—that, yeah, 21st-century socialism—some called it the Pink Tide, whatever people want to call it—the kind of push for, like, an electoral social movement revolution where you take power within the existing government and then do your best to improve standards of living that way.

It has limitations, and the oligarchy is still there, and the United States has backed it to the hilt. And, yeah, what's happened in Venezuela, I think, is in part a tragic outcome. I am hoping the Venezuelan people will, uh, wrestle back their process, um, with all the challenges that they have to go through. So, of course, I would never knock them. And I would know that there's so many millions of people in that movement, um, that are going to try to pursue it and push for that over the next years. So I don't think anything is set in stone. But, yeah, no, it's been a big reversal. I mean, I have a graphic here, like this graphic where you have the U.S. and, of course, Israel has big, big plans in the region.

#Chris Helali

Of course, the Abraham Accords and everything like that.

#Danny

The Abraham Accords, yeah. Now Brazil is coming up with an election, and you see here.

#Chris Helali

Lula versus Bolsonaro. Again, we have a showdown. Okay, it's the same, but still, it's another showdown to try to make Brazil blue like the rest of them.

#Danny

Right. It's absolutely ridiculous. Exactly. But this is what's happened, right? You had Petro is gone. You have the old—oh my God, his name is escaping me—the progressive former president of Ecuador, before Lenín Moreno. Before Lenín Moreno, the traitor. Hold on.

#Chris Helali

Rafael Correa.

#Danny

Yeah, so the Correa movement, that's been pushed back deeply. Of course, we know what happened in Peru, Bolivia, the tragedy of the MAS. You just see it over and over again.

#Chris Helali

The Kirchners in Argentina. We saw so many different transformations. I think it's like seasons in these countries. They'll come back, but—

#Danny

It'll always be more unstable. But Cuba itself, Cuba, because it has that deep revolutionary process, there will be people fighting directly with U.S. forces. It's not going to be—there won't be standing down to the United States, that's for sure. I think that's why there's been a delay. I say, you know, if the U.S. was super serious about this over the last several decades, which they have been, they would have done it. The Trump administration may be stupid enough to try to pull something like this off, but it will not be Venezuela. It won't turn out like that at all. Your final comments, Chris, as we start to close out here.

#Chris Helali

No, I just think everybody should, you know, all eyes on Cuba and Nicaragua, also on Brazil, like you rightfully point out, with the election coming up. We've got to see what's going to happen, especially with Iran and in the region. We're not talking about Lebanon. I mean, you know, what's going on in Lebanon is really one of the largest ethnic cleansings. And really, if you want to talk about genocidal intent, I really believe it fits the definition. But what you're seeing in the south of Lebanon is absolutely catastrophic. Over a million to a million point five displaced from south of Lebanon. We have our friends on the ground, Steve Sweeney and Ali Rida Sbeiti, and so many others who are reporting on the ground.

I was with them in late August, and it was catastrophic. Every ten minutes, airstrikes and artillery strikes on places like Mansouri, near Nabatieh, Ali al-Tahir, and that area. It's really, I mean, it's part of the ongoing Zionist aggression in the region. Gaza as well. All eyes on Gaza for what's going to happen there in the coming months. Israel is also going through elections as well. Let's see what's going to happen there. They banned the Arab parties, so the peace parties and sort of the Israeli communist-aligned groups, which, of course, I don't have a good relationship with them. But in any case, they're there anyway. They also are in a deep crisis as well. And we're going to see Iraq as well, because the U.S. is removing forces from Iraq.

I think it's almost done. End of the month, it's going to be completed. And they also said they announced money cut off for the Peshmerga today. I think we're going to see the possibility for confrontation internally in Iraq. That's of the U.S.'s creation as well. Don't forget, a lot of interests involved there. And keep eyes on Ukraine and on the Pacific as well. But a lot of big things are happening, a lot of big things. We didn't even get to Africa as well. A lot of big transformations in

Mali as well, with the pushback. Algeria cutting off relations with the UAE. There's so many things happening. And we didn't even talk about Eritrea, Ethiopia, and how it connects with Yemen. So many things are happening.

#Danny

Oh, yeah. Yeah, there's obviously—no, the U.S. obviously is looking toward—I mean, they've been looking toward Africa for a while. Not for investment or money, even though there's a lot to be made on the African continent. The U.S. can't do it. But, you know, they want to isolate China there. But in that part of the continent, it's obvious, too, there's an attempt to, you know, maybe a forward operating zone against the Ansar Allah, which seems absurd, but people will suffer. People will suffer. It's absurd, but people will suffer because of it. Chris, it was great to be with you. We'll head out here. Hit the like button. Go to the video description. You can find Chris Hedges' Linktree, where you can find all the places where he does his work. So check that out after the program, after you hit the like button. And then all the places to support this show are there as well: Patreon, Substack, and more. All right, everybody. Thanks for watching. Until next time, see you again.

#Chris Helali

Bye-bye.

#Danny

Bye-bye.