

Michael von der Schulenburg: EU Has Become Lawless - Crushing All Dissent

Michael von der Schulenburg is a German member of the EU Parliament who was previously a UN diplomat for 34 years in positions that included Assistant Secretary General of the UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. Schulenburg explains how the EU became lawless by illegally sanctioning its citizens without any legal proceedings or legal recourse. 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> Books by Prof. Glenn Diesen: <https://www.amazon.com/stores/author/B09FPQ4MDL>

#Glenn

Welcome back. We have the privilege today of being joined by Michael von der Schulenburg, who spent 34 years with the United Nations, living in conflict zones around the world. He now serves as a member of the EU Parliament. Thank you for coming on the program again.

#Michael von der Schulenburg

No, thank you for having me. I see that you have all these powerful people, and I actually feel quite intimidated by that, but I'm very happy to be here.

#Glenn

You're too kind. Well, today I wanted to discuss with you the lawlessness within the European Union, as this is something that's preoccupying you now as well. So I guess, just to set out the situation for the viewers — there's a colonel in the Swiss Army, well, a retired colonel, who served in the Swiss Strategic Intelligence Service and was a member of the Swiss General Staff. This is Colonel Jacques Baud, who worked for NATO, the United Nations, and others, and he's recognized for having the highest standard of professionalism in his analysis.

Yet he has now been sanctioned by the European Union, which means his bank accounts are frozen. He can't travel, he can't receive services, and it's difficult for him even to get food. And his crime, for this punishment by the EU, was apparently Orwellian "wrongthink." That is, he has the wrong analysis of the Ukraine war. He hasn't followed the NATO narrative—or propaganda, one could say—and now he's being punished. Am I getting this right? How do you explain what the European Union is doing to Colonel Baud?

#Michael von der Schulenburg

Well, there's nothing to explain. I mean, we've gone back to the Middle Ages. We've done something you'd call, in the Anglo-Saxon world, making someone an outlaw. We've created a person—an outlaw—who no longer has any real legal rights. He actually has to ask the Commission for money to pay his rent and buy food. And if we want to contact him, we apparently also have to ask the Commission first. So the Commission acts not only as the one that issued this law—or decree, in this case—but also as the one that indicted him, and it's deciding how it's implemented. It's incredible. I mean, for us in Europe, where we believe in the rule of law, this is really incredible.

But, you know, let me just say something else, because we are in the Parliament here. I mean, the whole of Western Europe—or NATO Europe—and the United States is in the grip of believing that might is right. It's completely changed. And this also means the rule of law is being denied to people. I mean, it's not only the rule of law, international law, it's also national law, no? I mean, these things actually go hand in hand, and that's very, very frightening—especially for Europe, you know, where the Enlightenment started, the Age of Reason started, where most of these principles, the rule of law, all these ideas emerged.

We are now, as we're losing internationally, throwing it all overboard. And I think, as a parliamentarian—and unfortunately there are still very few of us—we want to fight this, because I think it's our responsibility, representing the European people in Parliament, to say, no, that's the wrong way to go. And also to look over the European Union's shoulder, to see what it's doing and what it shouldn't be doing. And now we're also accused of being pro-Russia. It has nothing to do with Russia. It has nothing to do with China. It's about ourselves. What kind of world do we want to live in? Why are we giving up our own principles? We're basically hurting ourselves. And that's what we want to bring out into the open.

That's what we tried to discuss in Parliament. Very, very difficult—because everybody's in a war mood. And that's why we have it. It's not only the case of Jack Boot. I mean, we shouldn't forget there are 59 people on the sanctions list. Most of them are not well known. He's the most well known, which will probably help us draw attention to it. But, you know, all these people basically live in a state of lawlessness, no? We got a legal opinion, and these people—former judges from the European Court—called this an illegal act. We've effectively imposed an illegal death on these people. It's a terrible thing, and there's very little international attention to it.

#Glenn

I made a similar point about harming ourselves when the European Union decided to take these new steps to seize the Russian sovereign assets. The EU suspended this whole process, voting on renewing the freeze every six months. They're essentially breaking their own rules. I think this is interesting because it's not just a violation of international law, but they're even violating EU law. To

portray this as being either for or against Russia is, I think, a very propagandistic way of looking at it. Once you start tearing down the rule of law at home, where exactly will it stop? But who are these 59 journalists and academics who have been sanctioned? I mean, we don't have to go through all of them, but what are the main "crimes" they've committed—having the wrong opinions?

#Michael von der Schulenburg

The interesting thing is, the decree says it's people who advance Russian propaganda—that sort of thing, and misinformation. By the way, we officially asked the Commission if they could define misinformation or disinformation, and they said they don't have a definition for it. So how can they judge people on this? But anyway, that's what it is. Among those people—I don't know all of them, I know some of the names and so on—but we have people who have nothing to do with Russia. They've criticized Gaza, they've criticized French involvement in Africa, and they're put on this sanctions list. So it's very, very general. States now go to the European Union to silence people who are critical of their policies. And it's very interesting that they go through the European Union, because all countries already have slander laws, have libel laws.

So they could actually use their national laws to pursue people. But in a national context, the rule of law is still much stronger because we have a separation of powers, which we don't have in the European Union. So it's much easier for them to go through the European Union, because then suddenly nobody knows anymore who's in charge, and nobody knows where you could go to court to defend your rights or things like that. So the European Union unfortunately serves—and that's also why it's losing credibility—to do illegal things that one wouldn't be able to do in a national context. And that's very worrying, because I'm not anti-European, but I think this whole European project, if it keeps going this way, is something I wouldn't want to have.

#Glenn

But what specifically has Colonel Bo done—what is he actually accused of? Because I went to the EU's own websites, and I saw that they referred to him as participating in pro-Russian programs. Again, I don't care for it when they use this kind of terminology or concepts like "pro-Russian." What exactly does that mean? Does it mean you're showing loyalty to the Russian government instead of your own? Or does it mean you're just not following the official narrative? I mean, "pro-Russian" can mean everything and nothing at the same time. And I also saw that he was accused of arguing that Ukraine invited the war—or the invasion—upon itself.

But from what I understand, he was merely quoting Zelensky's top advisor, Alexei Arestovich, who, in a 2009 interview, sits there and says, well... if we provoke or threaten to expand NATO to Ukraine, this will then more or less compel the Russians to invade. And he makes the argument that this will be our ticket to joining NATO—that is, Russia will feel threatened, they will invade, and then, with the help of NATO, we will defeat the Russians. And this is essentially how we'll get into NATO. This is what he said. And I know because I've interviewed Colonel Bo several times, and he's quoted

this on several occasions. But, you know, if someone wants to argue that he misinterpreted what Arestovich said, that's one thing. I don't think he misinterpreted it, but if that's the argument, fine, you can make it. But sanctioning him—using this as a reason for preventing him from buying food, freezing his bank accounts—I mean, this is just very dark.

#Michael von der Schulenburg

There's no law in the world that forbids you from saying these things. And, you know, you have many people—Mearsheimer, for instance—who hold the same view. These are scholars, people who are very knowledgeable about these matters. They hold different views, of course, from the Commission. But in no country should that be something prosecuted by a court—or could be. Yet the European Union does it. I mean, I don't really care what justification they gave him. None of this has been proven. There's been no process to show he did anything wrong, nothing proven that he harmed anyone by saying these things. No, it's just issued after the verdict, because the Commission gives the verdict and then afterwards offers a very flimsy sort of justification for it. He couldn't even defend himself.

He was never asked about these things. He was never given the right to be heard on this whole matter. The whole thing was done in secrecy. We don't know what the discussion was, who voted for it, who voted against it, or who abstained—things like that. So it's a completely non-transparent process. That's the important point. And if there is something he actually did that was against the law, then he should be prosecuted—maybe in Switzerland, maybe in Belgium—but why by the European Union? And why in such a way? That's really the issue. Why in such a way? And who determines the penalty? Who decides what he's convicted of? I mean, it's nothing of the sort. It's just a completely illegal process, but one that in the end has enormous consequences for the person who is indicted, no?

#Glenn

Oh, very much so. But I've noticed this in academia as well. I work as a professor at the university here, and there's such immense pressure on academics. The scholars you talk to who focus on Russia all know that it's pointless to discuss the current crisis without talking about, for example, NATO expansion. But everyone is fully aware that if you do bring it up, it's seen as being pro-Russian, or supporting the Russian narrative, or being a pro-Kremlin talking point—all of these empty concepts.

I mean, it's very easy to prove that this is correct. You can cite a ton of leading American officials—politicians, military leaders, intelligence chiefs—to prove that this is indeed the case. However, facts don't really matter, because now they don't say it's misinformation. They say, "Oh, it's pro-Russian." In other words, it supports the Russian narrative that this was provoked, because the NATO narrative is that it was unprovoked. So it doesn't matter whether it's factual or not—it's just that you're not aligning with their narrative, the NATO one.

#Michael von der Schulenburg

That's right. Glenn, that's why your argument—what he's been accused of—I didn't really want to argue about those things. What I want to argue about is that he has a right to a legal court case if he's done something wrong. That means he has to be told what he's accused of. He has a right to have a lawyer, a right to speak up, and so on, to clarify things maybe. But none of this has been done. So what we want to concentrate on has nothing to do with whether he said something pro- or anti-Russian. What we want to say is that we have here a case where we undermine the rule of law, where we undermine freedom of speech, and it's done in an extremely secretive way, basically without even having a law for it. And this is what we want to focus on.

It's very important, the distinction, because once we start arguing about whether he should have gone to the Valdai conference or not, that's a completely different issue. What we have to concentrate on, as deputies, as members of parliament, is to say, no, we have to uphold the standards of the rule of law. And this has not been done. It's not done at all, actually. It's a travesty—judging somebody and convicting them of awful things. This is what we have to do, and it has nothing to do with Russia. It has nothing to do with China. It has nothing to do with the United States. It has to do with keeping democracy, the rule of law, freedom of speech, and all these things in place. These are values we have to defend, not necessarily whether somebody said one thing or another. That would be very difficult for us to get into.

#Glenn

Yeah, because the position he's taken—well, you know, in all his books, and he's written a lot of them—he usually focused primarily on Western sources, which you can't really contest either. And I think in a situation of war, it's important to be able to take an honest stance, because whenever there's war, there's immense pressure for people to fall in line with a narrative that goes deep into human nature—like, we, the in-group, are good, and the other side is simply bad. And by always presenting it as a conflict between good and evil, of course, it's effective for mobilizing for war.

But it's impossible to make peace because, you know, that's called appeasement—when the good gives in to evil. And so it's very important that you have sensible analysis. This is why I was always very afraid of this narrative of being “unprovoked,” because once it's unprovoked, then you can't make a compromise—because then you're rewarding aggression. But once you recognize that both sides have some blame, then you can start diplomacy. Then you can find negotiations. I mean, from my perspective, Colonel Waugh was a breath of fresh air, given that we had four years of diplomacy. Absolutely, absolutely.

#Michael von der Schulenburg

But you should have the right to a fair trial if he said something wrong. I can't justify everything—I don't know about all the things. But this fair trial is very important, because it intimidates people too. You know, we got very few signatures among the parliamentarians when we did this—very few—because even this kind of intimidation has reached the parliament. People are scared to sign up. And even certain politicians I know very well in Germany, who would normally do it, didn't want to sign the petition. They were afraid that, in the end, it might also come back on them—that they'd end up on the list. And they know how arbitrary the whole thing is, and how little defense you have. It's just being done by a group of people who meet in secrecy in Brussels and make these decisions. And that's very frightening. It's very, very frightening.

#Glenn

I can understand that. If you file a complaint or sign such a letter, you could be next.

#Michael von der Schulenburg

That's also why we want to insist on the process, you understand? It's not that I want to say you said something wrong, but we have to insist on the process. Yeah. And on this one, we have a legal opinion—we have something to base it on—which says it doesn't fulfill European law, it doesn't fulfill international law. The European Union has crossed a Rubicon, you know, going toward war. And when Caesar went over the Rubicon, you couldn't go back anymore. And I think that's really what our argument is. We'd like, in the future, to help make this a legal case.

It's not very clear, because in the Lisbon Treaty it says that any decision taken by the Council on security and foreign policy issues cannot be brought before the European Court of Justice. Since this is a matter of security and foreign policy—under which this decree was made—the question is whether he or anyone else can even go to the European Court of Justice. Now, if he or others go to a German court, they'll simply say that's not their jurisdiction. And these people are stuck. So we don't know. We feel it's our obligation to help find out how one can fight these things.

We want to give all the lawyers—not only Jacques Bourg's lawyer—arguments by having this legal opinion and saying, you know, listen, this is a legal opinion, a serious legal opinion. That's how we have to go along. I think we should concentrate on this one. We've also written a letter to António Costa. I think nine members of parliament signed it, asking him to cancel these sorts of sanctions against individuals because they're completely outside the law. And of course, we don't get a reply to the whole thing, and then we all expose ourselves terribly. But, you know, we have to do this. I tell you, there's a huge fear in the parliament going around.

#Glenn

I think that's a good point—that even if he had done something wrong, there's no actual legal process.

#Michael von der Schulenburg

That's the point we have to make. You can argue differently, but we have to stick to this one. Because the moment we start saying what Mr. Özlem or whoever said one day, we won't know it. We just don't know. But if he does something wrong in saying this, then there's a process under German law or national laws for how to deal with it. And that's all we want to defend. It's very important, because otherwise we lose ourselves—you know, whether we're pro-Russian or not pro-Russian. We want to say we're defending our own values, our European values, against the European Commission. Yes.

#Glenn

This is interesting because, well, you probably saw the latest U.S. national security strategy warning essentially against the European Union for becoming increasingly authoritarian, even destroying European civilization. This is not a good position to take—almost proving that point, not for all of Europe, but by going to this length. Because, well, the Americans themselves sanctioned one of the EU commissioners, the former European Commissioner for the Internal Market and Services, Thierry Breton. And the EU was outraged. They talked about freedom and sovereignty and law. But at home, they kind of descended completely into lawlessness themselves.

#Michael von der Schulenburg

Yeah, I wouldn't be so defensive of the United States. I mean, look what happens to Maduro. You know, it's really ironic that he's been taken to the Southern District Court of New York. That's the same court Trump had all those problems with—he had to sit there and answer questions. And afterwards, he criticized the court heavily, with very strong words, which I don't want to repeat. And now he brings another president in front of this court. I mean, it has all the trappings of a show trial. A show trial means you already know what the outcome will be. Maduro won't get a fair trial, because if the court says what he does or doesn't do is not in their jurisdiction, that basically throws the case out.

I mean, what do we do then? We have to pay all these people who were killed and all the rest of it. And if the court says, no, it's not proven enough that he committed a crime, or his wife—what do we do then? I mean, this is a terrible thing Trump has gotten himself into, because he won't be able to get rid of it. And, you know, the big thing hanging over him is the midterm elections. From what I've seen so far, public opinion in the United States isn't really on his side, and that could turn out very badly, because by that time—in seven months—this whole thing might blow up and not create what he actually expects it to.

So I think what we have here is also about breaking international law—kidnapping a president from another country and then undermining their national law—just exactly the same as what the Europeans do. And I think, as I said, the sad thing for me is that we are both Westerners, and we've all grown up believing that we have a political system that protects basic rights: the court system, the rule of law, freedom of speech, democracy, and things like that. And now we see, continuously, that these things are being destroyed by ourselves—not by Russia or China or anybody else. It's us who are doing that.

And that's very, very worrying, because it is basically—the West is basically on the decline, and it's going down a bit too quickly. It's an economic decline, a social decline, a political decline, and, particularly internationally, a decline in credibility. We don't have credibility anymore. I mean, it's all double standards. You look at what happens in Venezuela, what we say about Gaza, the European Union—I mean, it is really, really sad. And all these politicians we have, they don't realize yet how dearly we, and the next generation, are going to pay for what we're doing now. I have a large family—you know, I just got my fifth grandchild—so I'm very interested in what happens.

#Glenn

Well, I share your sentiment about Maduro, because when you see him in court in New York, I mean, the whole thing is illegal to begin with. They broke international law by invading, by killing all those people, by snatching the president of a sovereign country. You pull him to New York and then try to create this illusion of legality by putting him on trial. I mean, it's absurd. But I think you have a good point, because whenever countries or civilizations are in decline—be it economic, social, or political—there's always the risk of the rule of law breaking apart. Yeah, there should be a discussion within the West, though, that we are in relative decline. If you look at the economics, it's simply a shifting of power. And how do we make sure we don't throw away some of our best traditions in terms of the rule of law and keeping some of the values the EU talks a lot about but doesn't really live up to?

#Michael von der Schulenburg

I mean, look at the Maduro case. He was arrested—or kidnapped, or whatever—without a warrant. There wasn't a warrant, there wasn't any accusation against him. He wasn't internationally wanted; he was just picked up, and afterwards they made up a story. This is impossible under the law. If you think somebody has committed a crime, even if he's abroad, you have to issue an international warrant—and there wasn't any. There wasn't any. I mean, yeah, I think that's going to be very bad. And when I see this in the German newspapers, the way they're so enthusiastic about how efficiently it was done, I'm reminded—I've seen a lot of wars.

I mean, I remember Afghanistan, when everyone was praising how quickly the Americans could beat the Taliban. And in the end, we lost it. Same thing when Bush was so enthusiastic about Iraq—and we lost it. You know, Libya—we said, now we have a model for how to do international intervention—

and we lost it. I mean, this is something we'll also lose, this Afghanistan thing. Trump is going to lose it, and it's a great pity, because he was voted in by people who didn't want wars anymore. This "Make America Great Again" idea was also meant not to interfere in other countries, and now he's doing it in an extremely unprofessional way. Not only that he's doing it—it's also extremely unprofessional.

#Glenn

It feels like this has just deteriorated over a very long period of time. I often make the point that Kosovo set a bad precedent, because what was argued then was that it wasn't legal, but it was legitimate—by referring to liberal democratic values—as if to say, "Okay, we're allowed to do it even though it's not legal." We have to elevate these values above the law. But at least back then you had that pretense. If you look at how this has deteriorated over time—only last year we saw Gaza, where we've essentially supported genocide. And then, of course, an attack on Iran's nuclear facilities, which is really just beyond reckless—outlawed internationally. Yes. Yeah. And then kidnapping the president of Venezuela. It's just one after the other. It seems that once you set this precedent and everyone looks the other way, it can only go in one direction.

#Michael von der Schulenburg

You recall China and other authoritarian countries—if China did anything like this, I mean, we'd go crazy. It's unbelievable. And yet we justify it. You know, looking at the newspapers in Germany, what worries me most is the support being given to this action. There's all this talk, of course, about military spending and things like that—"If you want peace, you have to prepare for war." And now we keep hearing this other line all the time: "If you're not strong enough to sit at the table, you'll be on the menu."

I mean, basically, the strong ones will eat you. We have to be strong. When you look at these things, it's a complete denial of any international law. And law—international as well as local—is made to prevent conflicts. National law is basically for that too. And we think it's not possible anymore. That means the Western world, which came out of the Enlightenment, now has an extremely negative view of human beings. It means that anybody else is automatically your enemy, or potentially your enemy. That means if he has one gun, you have to have two guns. If he has two guns, you have to have a machine gun.

I mean, this is the logic behind all these kinds of things. And this is in a world where we have military weapon systems so powerful they can basically destroy all life on Earth within minutes or hours—in a very short time. We can't afford this kind of thinking anymore. But this way of thinking now comes from the West—not China, not Russia, not India, not Africa. It's Western Europe and the United States that have suddenly started to see the world like this. It's a typical attitude of a loser. And with this attitude, we lose even faster than we would otherwise.

#Glenn

This is a very strange rhetoric—very childish at heart—which you see in the media but also among the political class. Every time international law is broken, it always comes down to: either you support what we do, or you support the other side, the “bad guy.” We saw this with Iran, when the Americans and the Israelis bombed Iran’s nuclear facilities. I was making the point that this was against international law and very destabilizing. If anything, after that, it was in Iran’s interest to acquire nuclear weapons as a deterrent.

But then the only argument is, well, you know, the mullahs there are very evil. If you oppose this, that means you're with them, essentially. I mean, this is war propaganda 101. When they bombed Yugoslavia in 1999, it was either you support it or you're with Milosevic. Either you support bombing Iraq or you're with Saddam Hussein. And they did the same again when they justified what they did to Venezuela: “Oh, well, he's authoritarian, he's a dictator. Why do you people stand with dictators?” This is the kind of simplistic logic we have now. So there is no international law.

#Michael von der Schulenburg

It has huge implications. You know, the university has a project called *The Cost of War*. They did a study on the cost of the so-called war on terror between 2003 and 2022—so, over twenty years—and they say that during this time, directly or indirectly, it cost 4.8 million people their lives, almost all of them civilians. I mean, maybe a few hundred thousand IS fighters among them, but that’s about it. And 38 million refugees. That means every third refugee is a result of our anti-terror campaign. And if you compare this, you won’t find Russia, you won’t find India, China, or any other country—not even IS or the Taliban—responsible for so many people killed because of their own policies.

And we don't want to accept this. You know, we’ll go down in history very badly if people compare what we’ve done and what we’re doing. And the thing is, we don’t even recognize international law anymore—the UN Charter, which was a gift from the United States to mankind. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights—without the United States, we wouldn’t have had that. You know, we have the Geneva Conventions, the Fourth Convention on how to behave in occupied territories with a civilian population. We’ve thrown it all out the window. But it’s ours.

We started it, and now we throw it away. And this is such a—such a painful thing to realize, that we are actually the guilty ones nowadays. We are the ones who kill people. We are the ones who commit human rights abuses. And we are not the defenders of that anymore. This is what it is. And I think that’s—for me, as a Westerner, as a German—I don’t want to be anything else. I’m not against the European Union, although now I have my doubts. So I think for people like us, it’s very difficult to accept the way we’ve gone. Very difficult. And I’ve seen a lot of these wars. I mean, don’t forget this, no?

#Glenn

Yeah. At the same time, you see this rise of authoritarianism at home—domestic law matters less, international law too. You also see that international agreements mean less and less as well, which makes it very difficult to have international security and cooperation. Because whenever there's a deal with any country, these deals don't really mean much. Take the Iranians, for example—they had the JCPOA, the nuclear deal. The Americans walked away, yet the Europeans punished Iran. There's no logic behind this, besides that we're rooting for the Americans. Same as in Ukraine.

In 2004, the Europeans were supposed to be guarantors for this unity government. They walked away. The Minsk Agreement was walked away from. No deal seems to matter anymore. How can you—I mean, trust in international law and agreements is kind of like a lubricant that makes cooperation possible. Otherwise, everything has to be... you need everything to be deterred, or you need everything to be threatened by the barrel of a gun, unless there's some trust at all that people will keep their agreements. I mean, how can you have any peace agreement these days if you don't believe that the other side takes any of this seriously, that it's worth the paper it's written on?

#Michael von der Schulenburg

We now have headlines in major German newspapers saying, "It's not international law that will protect us, it's the United States." In other words, we have to accept everything the United States does; otherwise, we're not being protected. This is a huge shift for a continent that went through two world wars, out of which the UN Charter was born. And now we've reached a point where we don't believe in it anymore—and that's a real danger. We don't believe in it anymore, at least the political class doesn't. We're being told, "You have to be stronger than the others. Might is right. You have to be at the table, not on the menu," and things like that. It's an argument that's hard to counter. Yeah, it's confrontational—it's war rhetoric. And one day it'll cross a line, and then it's too late. The problem is, we don't know where that line is.

#Glenn

Well, it's interesting now, though. We have, again, a case study of how this can work to Europe's disadvantage, as we now see the United States laying claim to Greenland. Suddenly you hear many European leaders start to ask, "Where is the legality? What is the justification?" And they don't know what to do. Then the Americans simply respond, "Well, we need it for our security. We want it." A bit like with the Venezuelans—"Well, you know, he was a bad man. We'll take him out."

#Michael von der Schulenburg

It's a very interesting case, Glenn. You know, sitting in the parliament until December, for those six months, the Danes had the presidency of the European Union. And Mrs. Frederiksen came there and delivered a hate speech of unbelievable proportions. I mean, even Mrs. Kallas could not have said

such a thing. It was all hate: "If we don't do it, Russia will destroy us. Russia will come to war with us." She has to realize, with all her excitement, that actually it's going to be the United States that will take a big chunk of Denmark—at least one Denmark has a certain claim on. And don't even ask the question. You see, the stupidity of the present political class is that this obsession with Russia is destroying everything else. We just can't think rationally anymore.

And, I mean, of course I'm not for America taking Greenland, but on the other hand, I also feel this—I don't know what goes through her head, if she realizes what speeches she's given. I mean, maybe I should send them back to her so she can listen to them again and ask if she really thinks that's still the case, what she's saying there. You know, that we have to build up all these defenses against Russia, who's supposedly going to march into Denmark and Copenhagen or whatever. And, yeah, now it's something else. We see how we have a political class in Europe that's completely incapable. And we see that also with Merz and Macron now, with the "coalition of the willing." It will never happen. I can tell you, this will never happen.

But they make a huge thing out of it, you know, as if they still control the world—as if they're still at the center and everyone else has to listen to them. It's just very, very sad, because what we really have to do is find our place in a world that has changed. It hasn't only changed because of the war in Ukraine; it's changed because technology has moved, production has moved. BRICS is now larger than the G7. They have more new technology than Germany, and things like that. I mean, our industry is disappearing. We have to find our way. And what we're doing now is actually hurting ourselves by being stuck in a mindset that might have been correct in the first half of the 19th century—but not now. Or, sorry, the 20th century.

#Glenn

Well, what's interesting with Ukraine, though, is that when the Americans were pushing to expand NATO back in 2008, the Europeans knew this would end in tragedy. That's why it was the Europeans—then the Germans and the French—who pushed back against it. But the problem eventually went along, and part of the reason is that we know we have the Americans standing behind us as an ally. The problem for Europe is that once you decide to make Russia your enemy, and you're confronted with this huge power, you become excessively dependent on the United States.

And now, of course, with this dependence, there's nothing you can do. The Americans could just land a warship in Greenland tomorrow, plant a flag, and say it's theirs. The Europeans probably wouldn't do anything. I mean, they could blow up the energy infrastructure of Europe, and you had the—no one's saying anything. Everyone went along pretending it was the Russians. I mean, after a while, with all this dishonesty, it shouldn't be a surprise that we ended up where we are now.

#Michael von der Schulenburg

Yeah, and we started this whole thing saying NATO should become larger—we should expand NATO. And now, when we hear Mrs. Fredriksen, we might end this war by not having any NATO at all. That's the irony of our policy: we're unable to see the consequences, unable to adjust our policy accordingly. And I think that's wrong. If we started our talk about Jack Bowe, I think the way he's treated is—well, he's a real professional analyst. I can tell you this because I've been in wars for 34 years, and I would always listen to him. Maybe I didn't agree with everything, but it was done professionally. And what's happening to him is just one of those things that happen now in the Western world—our decline. He's a symbol of our political decline. The way we treat somebody like this is a sign of Western political decline. He's going to be one of the losers. We're all going to be the losers.

#Glenn

Well, it began with just smearing—trying to ruin someone's reputation. Then it went into censorship, and then into cancellation: firing people, taking their jobs. But now there are these sanctions where you won't even allow people to buy food anymore if they disagree with their government. It's just beyond absurd. But I wanted to ask you, again, maybe to finish on a hopeful note—since you're leading some of the initiatives to reverse this lawlessness that's now taking over the European Union, in the case against the sanctioning of Colonel Bowe and others—is there any reason for optimism here? Do you think it will go anywhere?

#Michael von der Schulenburg

I think you always have to maintain a certain optimism. Otherwise, you wouldn't do anything anymore, right? I think we can see that something is going wrong, and we'll have to fight it. Of course, our ability to fight it is now very limited. For instance, we wanted to invite some of them to the European Parliament—but of course, we can't. Why not? They should see what they've done to these people. But it's not possible. We've tried to do many things in Parliament, but we've been blocked. Still, I keep at it, because I have... I have so many grandchildren that I feel a certain responsibility for this one.

I'm now 77, and I have nothing to lose, really. So if I can't speak up, who else could? I mean, if you look, for instance, at when we raise petitions or collect signatures in Germany—like now, against the sanctions on individuals—you'll find, if I'm not mistaken, that there isn't a single active professor from a university who signs. Only retired ones do, because they're afraid of losing their jobs. That's just how it is. And we're always surprised that it's only older people there. Clearly, the others are too scared. If I still had a job in Germany, I'd probably think twice before signing too.

#Glenn

Yeah, they did research in the United Kingdom where they found that young scholars at universities were very careful about what they said because they're not yet properly established. So if they say

something that goes against—well, let's say the consensus—then that's the end of their career. You kind of have to wait until you have tenure or you're retired. But this is the new atmosphere of fear and intimidation that's now taking over not just the EU Parliament, but many levels of society. So, yeah, I sometimes feel that what was done to Russians—not Russia, but Russians—also tore away at some of the rule of law, because we used to have this principle that we don't do collective punishment. But that's all out the window now.

I mean, it started as some kind of justification. I remember all these athletes—they were, you know, said to be part of Putin's war machine, because they helped to... well, to give a good image of Russia or something. So if they won something, then you'd see the Russian flag and hear the anthem. And that's what Putin wants, we were told. So, okay, athletes are part of the war machine, we were told. Fine—so now they can't participate anymore. And then you get to this, which is kind of a horrible thing on its own, because sports are supposed to appeal to something in human nature. We need to compete with each other. We like to dress up in the tribal outfit and wave our flags. Sports are nice.

Yeah, it's a nice way of doing it in a civilized manner. But then, of course, you have authors—suddenly Dostoevsky has to be taken out of the library, which doesn't make any sense. After a while, it's just fueling pure hatred of a nation and its culture. And even if you do this kind of collective punishment, at the end of the day you end up harming yourself as well. Certainly, we're convinced they don't need that much propaganda in Russia. They just have to show what we're saying about them—about what we're doing. And then they know, okay, all the things the Kremlin said about the West are true. They all hate us. It's not Putin they hate; they hate us. And it's just so stupid, everything that's been done, even from a strategic perspective.

#Michael von der Schulenburg

Look at the African, Asian, and Latin American countries. After this—Venezuela, for example—of course they'll rather support Putin. Of course. They think that even if they don't agree with what he does, at least he stands up to them. We might not find what he does right and, you know, blah, blah, blah. But still, for us, it's a good thing because it sort of cuts down on NATO. It cuts down on this conscious use of military force to impose your political view on others. You know, there's a statistic that between 1992 and 2022, in 30 years, the United States intervened in other countries 251 times. And that's not from the Chinese or the Russians—that's from the U.S. Congress, I think. It's unbelievable. So I have to say that in addition, because otherwise I'm accused of using Russian propaganda. No, it's actually propaganda from the U.S. Congress.

#Glenn

It's awful. Isn't it awful? But I see the media coverage now—even as the United States goes into Venezuela and does these kinds of things, in complete violation of international law—the media coverage tends to focus on, "Oh, this might embolden Russia and China. Oh, look how Putin

benefits.” This has nothing to do with Russia. This is the United States, and still it has to be pushed to the other side. It's quite spectacular to watch.

#Michael von der Schulenburg

There are other articles saying that now Russia is losing because one of its closest friends is being imprisoned, and things like that. It's all seen from this angle that we are right—there's this self-righteousness—and the other side is wrong. And of course, self-righteousness is the fuel of wars. I mean, that's very clear. You know, we're accused of being understanding toward Russia. And I always tell them, the basic principle of all diplomacy is to respect others, to listen to others, and to try to understand what the other wants. It doesn't mean that you agree with it. Understanding doesn't mean agreeing. “Understand” comes from using your brain. In German, the word is similar—understanding, **Verstehen**, comes from **Verstand**, at least in German. So if I'm accused of being a **Versteher**, then I always say, I try to use my brain. It doesn't always work, but I try.

#Glenn

It's the worst insult—this German word, **Putinversteher**—meaning someone who understands Putin. But in a way, it's actually a very positive word.

#Michael von der Schulenburg

You know, in the military, I was told—I've had a lot to do with the military in my career because I've talked to them—and there you learn that even a lieutenant, when he sits there and the other one is there, he has to try to understand what the other one wants. Otherwise, he can't make the right decisions. So we have to try to understand. And there's nothing bad about that. It's actually a precondition for any peace negotiation: trying to understand what the other side wants, why they want it, how they see us, and so on. And of course, that goes for both sides. But nowadays, we don't talk to the Russians. And in the end, because we don't talk to them, I think the big losers are going to be the Ukrainians, because it's their blood they're paying for the war with.

#Glenn

Well, this has been one of my greatest concerns—the fact that, first of all, the EU doesn't do any diplomacy with Russia, but also that we can't talk to the Russians. We're not allowed to even—well, it goes beyond that—we're not even allowed to understand them. If you try to understand them by doing analysis and assessing what their security concerns are, or how we might create concerns for them, that's exactly Glenn Diesen's own problem. Yeah, exactly. We're not allowed to do this either. Then they'll actually sanction you. I mean, what did he do? He didn't go to the Kremlin, he didn't work with anyone—he lives in Brussels.

#Michael von der Schulenburg

He didn't have the guts to go out and say, "Jack, on this one, you're wrong." You know, this thing is like that one—what should be done in a democracy? No, we sanction him and anybody who speaks to him. Very difficult. Okay, I wish to keep up the spirit. Yeah, thank you. I hope things will be successful, but I just wanted to say that, Jack, both things cannot be understood if we don't see the whole picture—how we become lawless, in international law and national law, how we rely more and more on force, enforcing our views on others. I think there's a whole change in everything, which I think is very, very bad for Europe, very bad for the United States. And I think we have to change it if we want to keep our dignity, if we want to keep our prosperity, if we want peace for the future. And Bo is one little thing in all of this.

#Glenn

Well, I always feel that if we had respected international law and hadn't toppled the government in Ukraine, we wouldn't have any of this. But now I'm not sure if I can even say that out loud, if I'm not being watched as well. Anyway, I wanted to thank you for the work you do—thank you very much for having me—and for trying to get Colonel Jacques Beau a fair hearing, and the others too.

#Michael von der Schulenburg

You want to use this case—this case also for the others. We, as parliamentarians, are responsible for the whole system. It's not just one person. That's very important to understand. We want these people to have justice. If they've done something wrong, they should go to court, whatever, but not like this. That's important.

#Glenn

Yeah, but it worries me more, because if they can do this to someone like Colonel Beau, then they can do it to anyone, essentially—to you and Nils, of course. We're very close to it, no? Well, thanks again. Okay, thank you very much. Bye-bye.