

Scott Ritter: Trump Set Up Putin & Escalates War With Russia

Scott Ritter is a former Major, Intelligence Officer, US Marine, and UN Weapons Inspector. Ritter argues that Trump set up Putin and has escalated the war with Russia. Follow Prof. Glenn Diesen: Substack: <https://glenndiesen.substack.com/> X/Twitter: https://x.com/Glenn_Diesen Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/glenndiesen> Support the research by Prof. Glenn Diesen: PayPal: <https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/glenndiesen> Buy me a Coffee: buymeacoffee.com/gdieseng Go Fund Me: <https://gofund.me/09ea012f> Books by Prof. Glenn Diesen: <https://www.amazon.com/stores/author/B09FPQ4MDL>

#Glenn

Welcome back. We're here with Scott Ritter, a former U.S. Marine intelligence officer and U.N. weapons inspector. Thanks for coming back on. We see now that the British Ministry of Defense has announced they're developing a new deep-strike ballistic missile for Ukraine—called Nightfall—with the objective of carrying a 200-kilo warhead and a 500-kilometer range, so it could strike Moscow. It seems almost foolish now to keep pretending this isn't a proxy war. I mean, Russia obviously hasn't escalated with NATO because it wants to avoid World War III, but restraint seems, time and again, to be interpreted as weakness. How long do you think this can go on? I mean, can the British bomb Moscow with 200-kilo warheads and still pretend this is just a Russia-Ukraine war?

#Scott Ritter

They can do it once, and then the reality of their error will be made clear when Russia strikes Britain. I mean, if the British think the Russians won't attack Great Britain decisively—and when I say decisively, I mean up to and including nuclear weapons—they're mistaken. There's no love lost between Russia and Great Britain. In fact, within the Russian political elite, there's a great deal of hatred toward Britain. The British have never treated the Russians well, ever. And, you know, the Russians are sort of fed up with this failing economy.

Power—failing power, approaching failed power—continuing to insert itself in a manner that's not just disrespectful but, you know, represents a threat. Not an existential one, but a threat to Russia's national security. There's only one piece of good news in all of this: Nightfall is a joke. It's an absolute joke. I mean, just look at the numbers. OK, we're told that—first of all—it's in development. It's not developed; it's developing. The amount of money that was allocated, I believe, was nine million dollars or nine million pounds—nine million whatever currency label you want to attach to it. That's not very much.

And when you look at the small print, they say the goal is to produce ten of these Skyfalls a month at a cost of 800,000 pounds each. Now, I'm just a simple Marine—I don't claim to be the greatest mathematician in the world—but ten times 800,000 gets you to about the eight-million-pound mark. And if the total budget for developing this missile is nine... Do you understand how much of a joke this is? They don't even have a production facility yet. They haven't built a prototype. They haven't tested a prototype. We don't even know if the concept works. It's the British letting their mouths get ahead of their brains once again. Yes, the Russians, of course, will be following this with great interest.

But the idea that Skyfall is a weapon about to make its debut on the battlefields of Ukraine is a joke. It's not a weapon; it's an idea that's been totally underfinanced. Nine million pounds. Do you know what the payroll of a missile production line is? It's more than nine million pounds. So they haven't even hired the people yet. They've got a bunch of scientists somewhere with chalk, drawing pictures on a board, taking snapshots of it with their iPhones, and sending them to the defense minister saying, "We have a plan." That's all they have. So I don't think anybody's losing sleep over this. It's just another, you know, stupid idea from a nation of stupid people.

#Glenn

Yeah, so another headline or article coming out of Britain by one of their generals, Richard Shirreff, who was warning against some of this more aggressive rhetoric coming out of London. He made the point that the idea of sending troops to Ukraine was basically out of the question because they don't have the manpower, they don't have the money, they don't have the military equipment, and they also don't have the political will—either from the political class or the public. So what's the point of all this escalatory rhetoric if they can't even back it up with anything real?

#Scott Ritter

Because we're in the theater of the absurd right now. This is pure theater. The British have a plan—a master plan—they've been trying to implement in Ukraine called "Keep Ukraine in the Fight." A key aspect of that is the psychological preparation of Ukraine to sustain a conflict that, by any measure, it's being decisively defeated in. At this point, any rational leadership, having assessed the total picture and understanding there's no pathway to victory, would be looking for a way to avoid an even more decisive defeat. But that's not what's happening in Ukraine. The Ukrainian government, in a way that just defies comprehension, continues to double down on stupidity and undermine whatever strategic resources and plans it had, throwing away reserves in fruitless attacks for propaganda purposes.

Because this is all for propaganda purposes. Everything being done in Ukraine today is for propaganda. They launched drone attacks against Lukoil drilling rigs in the Caspian Sea. They didn't destroy the rigs, but, you know, they got their video to put out there. And they have Zelensky meeting with the new head of the Ukrainian intelligence services, talking about how they've struck

deep into Russia. Do they not understand that the retaliation Russia will inflict on them is going to be extreme? You know... large parts of Kyiv don't have power, don't have water, and aren't going to get power and water restored. Much of Ukraine is in a similar situation.

The Russians just unleashed a second Oreshnik on the Ukrainians, which, you know, given Ukraine's silence about what happened, implies that the Russians hit what they were aiming for and accomplished what they intended. Yeah. So the British right now have to stage these actions. They meet in Paris—the so-called Coalition of the Willing. They may be willing, but they're unable. I don't want to get too crude here, but, you know, you put a 110-year-old man in bed with a 22-year-old starlet—he may be willing, but he's not going to be able. And this is Europe. This is the UK today. They can't perform. They're literally pathetic. Seventy-six thousand—that's the total size of the British military.

And now, you know, you break that down into how many of those are actual combat troops. When the British talk about deploying 7,600 troops—they can't. They don't have them. They literally don't have them. They can't deploy them. They're incapable of physically moving those troops out of the United Kingdom into Ukraine and then sustaining them. The logistics alone are beyond the capability of the British military. And when you talk about sending a force in, there are two things. One, where's your rapid reaction force? You're going to put 7,600 troops in harm's way—what happens when the proverbial bovine excrement hits the fan? Who's riding to the rescue of those 7,000? There's no one to ride to their rescue. They'll be dead.

All of them will die. But then also, let's just assume they don't. What's their rotation—six months? That means you need another 7,600 training up to replace them, getting equipped, brought up to speed—which they're unable to do. These British troops are not combat-deployable. They're not combat-deployable. They can barely get out of garrison. Okay, so now, if you scrape everything together and get 7,600 deployed, you need another 7,600 to replace them, and another 7,600 on top of that preparing—getting ready, doing the paperwork, finishing the final training, preparing. That's how a standard rotation works. The British can't do it. And they know it, and they've been called out on it by their leadership.

It's an absolute joke. Same thing with the rest of Europe. I mean, nobody in Europe can do this. And now we come to the Skyfall—it's a non-existent missile. I'd be surprised if it ever existed past the prototype. Let's just put it this way: if you have a missile that's 800,000 pounds, it's not a very sophisticated missile. And you think that missile is actually going to penetrate Russian air defenses if it's produced? No. All it's going to do is make England a target. And I don't know how many more times you have to listen to Dmitry Medvedev say, "Guys, it's going to happen," before it actually happens. You have members of the Russian Duma saying, "We need to strike now with nuclear weapons." I mean, this is where this conversation's gone.

The Russians now are taking a look at what the United States is doing with NATO, and they're firmly convinced—at least at certain levels—that they could strike Europe with nuclear weapons and the

United States would do nothing. That the United States will not commit suicide on behalf of Europe, especially if Europe is provoking the Russian bear, so to speak. It's a very dangerous way of thinking. I don't agree with it. I actually think we would do something. I think we'd end up with a general nuclear exchange, and all life on the planet would end. But Sergei Karaganov, who's a very influential political thinker, has famously—or infamously—said that the United States will not sacrifice Boston for Poznań, meaning that Russia could throw a nuclear weapon on Poland and the United States would do nothing.

So this is where we're at. Now we have the French pretending they have a strategic nuclear deterrent capable of holding Russia at bay. You have the British pretending that what's left of their strategic nuclear deterrent is relevant. And you have the Russians making the decision that Iskander is staying—not just staying, but becoming a permanent part of their strategic nuclear deterrence profile—which means intermediate nuclear forces are now here to stay in Europe. Thank you, Donald Trump. And thank you, Europe, for destabilizing your continent. It gives Russia the ability to do strategic escalation in a non-nuclear fashion, which means Russia is more likely to use this weapon in the future. So, you know, this is where we're at right now: total disconnect from reality in Great Britain and in Europe.

#Glenn

This project of keeping Ukraine in the fight—it's kind of strange that this is where we are now. There's no pretense that they can win. The goal now is just for them to lose more slowly and bleed out the rest of their manpower. It's so dark, because you know that if British troops were being slaughtered this way, they wouldn't have made it an objective to keep the war going at any cost. They would have made a deal or pulled out by now. But again, they're fighting with Ukrainians, so I don't think they're counting their losses. You mentioned Orestovich, and this came in response to the attack on Putin's residence. I was wondering what you make of that, because I listened to former adviser to Zelensky, Alexei Arestovich, who made the point that the real target was probably beneath the residence—a nuclear command center.

I thought it was interesting because, as we know, in June 2025 they also attacked Russia's nuclear bombers—that is, its nuclear deterrent. Again, the Russians see the British as being behind this. And of course, in May 2024, we know that Russia's early warning radars for nuclear attack were attacked as well. You can add all these attacks on the Engels nuclear airbase, and if you put them all together, there's a lot of attacks on Russia's nuclear deterrent. I mean, if any of these things had happened once during the Cold War, there would have been panic—red flags going up, possible nuclear exchange. But now this is becoming almost a common occurrence. What do you think is the thought process behind this—going after the nuclear deterrent of the largest nuclear power in the world?

#Scott Ritter

Well, first of all, when you put it that way, it kind of makes it look imbecilic. But let's back up for a second. MI6—the Secret Intelligence Service of the British—when it comes to Russia, they are extraordinarily incompetent. Extraordinarily, because... I mean, we only have to look at the case of Christopher Steele, the former SIS operative who worked in the Soviet Union. And, you know, the quality of his work there in the 1990s—they spent a whole lot of effort, though not much money, recruiting anybody they could. I mean, it was easy pickings. They just went out and recruited everybody: taxi drivers, hookers, politicians, former politicians, everybody. Then the Russians cracked down.

And if you remember, there were some famous scenes coming out of Russia—the spy rock incident. You know, the spy rock. The Russians, of course, uncovered the spy rock and exposed everything that was going on with it, unraveling those networks the British had running there. The British have some deep-sleep networks that they've activated. We saw them activate those in support of the Kerch Bridge attack, which was a British operation, and again with this operation—the drone strike on the airfield. But the British are very superficial here. Their Russia House is appended to their London station, and that London station is home to a bunch of anti-Putin émigrés.

Mikhail Khodorkovsky—I think, the former oil oligarch who was imprisoned for corruption and then released—he's now using his billions to work with MI6 to create this anti-Putin propaganda machine. They advise the British; they work hand in glove. All you have to do is listen to the stupidity that comes out of this former oligarch's mouth and the people around him, and you see how it's translated into action by MI6. The belief is that if you hit these targets, you'll undermine the credibility of Vladimir Putin. They believe that Vladimir Putin is an unpopular dictator who rules through fear and intimidation, and that if they can expose him as weak and frail, they'll create the opportunity for these disaffected, enraged aspects of Russian society to remove him from power.

So they're the ones behind this. This is a deliberate act—not to destroy Russia's capability, but to destroy Putin's reputation. That's the goal. That's the objective. And Donald Trump bought into it. This drone attack is an American attack. It's not a British attack; it's an American attack in support of a British plan: keep Ukraine in the fight, bring down Vladimir Putin. But, you know, they made a fatal mistake. They gave away the evidence. These ninety-one drones that came in—many of them used a specific computer chip that contains all the programming to guide the drone. And this drone doesn't operate on GPS, because GPS is, of course, jammed.

It's pre-programmed, and then it has AI. As it flies in, it occasionally takes a picture, compares that picture to the mapping data stored inside, and realigns or readjusts based on wind speed and other factors it's collecting—then flies to the target. To get that, the intelligence loaded into the chip has to be both extremely detailed and extremely timely, meaning you need the most recent updates for it to hit the target it's aiming for. This means that Palantir—the company running this operation on behalf of the CIA and the British to program these chips—claims they make use of commercially available information. But there's no commercially available data collector out there that can gather the kind of data that went into this.

When the Russians reverse-engineered the information in this chip, the timing of the data changed. It's now linked to assets capable of collecting during that specific window of opportunity. The specificity of the data, again, limits it to certain sources—the bottom line is, the Russians know exactly which intelligence resource collected the information. The way this data is packaged, too, is to consolidate it, because you're taking different sources of information and bringing them together into a single digital information packet. There's literally only one place in Europe that can do this, and that's a Department of Defense organization or entity in Europe that supports the targeting of the Tomahawk missile, because the same targeting principles are applied here.

So the Russians know which intelligence assets collected the data—who processed it, packaged it, and put it into this chip. So when the Russians turned this over to the United States, at a time when Donald Trump was saying, "No, there was no attack. If they did, they attacked this thing here," the Russians said, "Here." And by doing so, they said, "We know everything." I mean, the Defense Intelligence Agency, the CIA—they're going to reverse-engineer the chip and go, "They know everything," which means Trump will have been exposed as a liar, an absolute liar, a fraud, a man who literally used negotiations to try and target the president of Russia. Not in a way to kill him—I mean, look, drones have a long time of flight. They've been detected.

This was a demonstration of vulnerability, designed to create the impression that Putin is weak and subordinated to Trump—that Trump is "daddy" to him, that Trump gets to dictate and Putin's the misbehaving little boy. And the other signal it sends to Russians, especially those who've been excited by Kirill Dmitriev's economic outreach, is that, hey, everything could be better if we just got these sanctions lifted. But now we can't, because of Vladimir Putin. And he's sort of losing it—I mean, he's attacked, he's doing nothing, and all that. You know, this is the impression you get from British psychological operations, mental warfare, information operations. They do this for a living.

I've actually done it with them in the past, targeting Iraq. I know the office. I could take you into the headquarters, walk you up, and take you to the office. I don't know if I know the people anymore, because I'm at an age where my contemporaries may not be in service anymore. But I know who they are and what they do. And, you know, the Russians know this as well. But they're so wrong, because Vladimir Putin isn't weak. And what the Russians just did—you know, that first Ereshnik they used was a test missile. The Russians said it was an operational test. Now they've gone into serial production, and they've deployed a brigade in Belarus. They're in the process of deploying other brigades, and these brigades are using production-quality missiles.

But at the time, Vladimir Putin said, we have a number of other aeronautics available to us—test missiles. These are test missiles. The missile that was launched against Ukraine was a test of Ereshnik out of Kapustin Yar, where they continue to do operational testing. Because remember, this is a weapon system that was brought in fairly quickly, so there are still some tests being done, or that have been done recently. But they have a stockpile of these missiles now that aren't operational quality—meaning they're not serial production. They don't have the certificates, they don't have

what they call the “passports” that come out of the production facility. I believe Russia launched another one of these test missiles. But in doing so, they preserve their stockpile.

We don't know what the production rate of the Ereshnik is. We can guess that if it went into serial production in August and by December they were able to deploy a minimum of ten missiles to this Belarusian-Russian unit—because you need nine for the three battalions, with three launchers of three missiles each, and you need a tenth for training purposes—then we have an idea of what their production rate is. It may be greater than that, because Russia is talking about simultaneously preparing other units for fielding. But they didn't launch from a combat position; they launched from Kapustin Yar, which tells me it's another training missile. But the important thing is, they launched. And if you look at the rhetoric that came out of Russia afterward, the Ereshnik is now a permanent part of Russia's strategic nuclear deterrent posture.

Any hope we had of reviving arms control—for instance, New START, which will expire next month—is gone. It will not be extended. It's over. It's dead. Vladimir Putin talked about extending the caps associated with that, but to do that, you needed the United States to concur. Right now, there's no movement in that direction. You also needed the political environment to be conducive to it. And the key element of that environment was that there be no escalation in the INF. Meaning, if the United States deploys Dark Eagle to Europe, that's the end of it. Or there can be no deployment of Golden Dome. Well, Trump just turned the defense budget he promised to cut in half—he's now increasing it by 50%, to \$1.5 trillion, much of that going to Golden Dome.

So the Russians have basically said, we're done with arms control. I was supposed to go to Russia in March and April, to St. Petersburg, where we were going to have a really cool exercise. Graduate-level students would play the roles of American and Russian negotiating teams. We'd have a team of American arms control experts advising the group playing the Americans, and a team of Russian arms control experts advising the group playing the Russians. Then we'd go through the exercise, capture the data, and produce a deliverable that we were going to give to both the Ministry of Foreign Affairs—which was supporting the project at the time—and the Department of State, as an effort to kind of kick-start things and say, “Here are some ideas.” There was a lot of excitement about it.

That's dead. They just canceled it. The Russians are like, no, we're not doing arms control anymore. It's just not going to happen. There's no reason to even go through the motions. So this is a big deal—a huge deal. We're about to enter an arms race where Russia already holds all the advantages. They've deployed intermediate forces that are unmatched. They have the best, most modern strategic nuclear forces in the world. The United States is facing the reality that our bombers don't work, our missiles are old, and our submarines are aging out quickly. And it's going to cost us trillions of dollars to fix this problem—money we don't have. At the same time, the president is diverting precious resources to build a missile defense system that will never work.

Ever. None of the technology in the Golden Dome is proven. We can't afford it, and it won't work. From the Russian perspective, the American actions—combined with the fact that the president of the United States attempted to assassinate the president of Russia—mean that the Russians will never do anything to give away the advantages they have. That advantage is what ensures they will never be defeated. Nobody can defeat Russia because it has this unmatched nuclear capability. The Russians will never negotiate that away, ever. They have overmatch in every aspect, except perhaps submarine-launched ballistic missiles. But with the Poseidon now, I'd say Russia's submarine-delivered nuclear arsenal is better than the triad.

So, you know, that's where we are. It's over for arms control. It's a very sad reality. I don't know if we're going to survive this. I mean, this is a very dangerous time. I'm becoming somewhat despondent. I try to remain optimistic, and I'll continue to move forward and see what can be done to educate people. But, you know, the United States is ruled by a dictator who doesn't care about international law, doesn't care about constitutional law, doesn't care about anything but his own ego-driven narcissism. And this is a very dangerous thing. Arms control is about international law, and the United States doesn't believe in international law anymore—which means there can be no arms control.

So we're in an arms race that America can't afford—an arms race that underpins the notion of peace through strength. But when the reality of your strength is that you have no strength, and yet you want to keep posturing, that creates the potential for bluffing or biting off more than you can chew. How long the Russians are willing to play the patient game, I don't know. I mean, the good news is that Russia loves itself. They believe in their civilization and in the glory of that civilization. Having resurrected themselves, I don't see the Russians turning into a bunch of lemmings overnight, rushing to the nearest cliff to jump off. So hopefully we can pray for continued patience and pragmatism on the part of the Russian leadership.

But they tried to kill their president. I mean, my God, can you imagine what the American response would be if Donald Trump were at Camp David and ninety-one Russian drones, launched by Venezuela, were sent against Camp David—at a time when President Putin was saying, "Hey, just hold on for another hour. I'll be right back. I'll call you back. Just stay right there at Camp David. I'll call you right back." And then they tried to attack him. We'd be blowing everything up in the world. I mean, the fact that Russia limited its response to what it did is, again, proof positive that Russia is not looking to escalate. But how much longer we can count on responsible Russian behavior is not known. People are losing their patience in Russia—there's no doubt about that.

#Glenn

Well, it is interesting, though—I noticed that when Trump got elected for the second time, there was some cautious optimism in Moscow. I guess the assumption, or the hope, was that a century of conflict between the U.S. and Russia could come to an end. A lot of this, of course, was about

communism. And then, after the Cold War, it was the effort to preserve what was essentially the Cold War security architecture, which then revived the Cold War logic with Russia. But the idea that, in a multipolar world, the Russians and Americans could actually be friends, if not allies, was appealing. It could, I guess, take out the root of the conflict. But the belief in Trump, though, has diminished.

He keeps talking about sanctions against Russia, the need to harm its economy. There are still U.S. weapons being used against Russia. It's the CIA that operates and handles the intelligence. We saw that New York Times article saying Trump had given the green light to attack Russian refineries and ships. I mean, we already crossed the line long ago from what was a proxy war. This is very direct. And now, of course, boarding Russian ships—that's very serious. You can't let this go, because if it's accepted, it becomes the new norm. Suddenly, all Russian ships at sea could be intercepted. You even hear more aggressive rhetoric from the Europeans now, saying, "Oh, we can also board their ships. We can make it seem legal." I mean, are we heading toward a major war here?

#Scott Ritter

Yeah, I mean, we are. This is a very dangerous period of time. Look, I was one of those people who shared, you know, a sort of cautious optimism that Trump was serious about peace. I really did. I knew he had to fight the deep state, but I thought it was Donald Trump versus the deep state. And I think the Russians believed that as well. But what we're finding out is that Donald Trump didn't just surround himself with Russophobic people—personalities who not only don't believe in good relations but actively seek to destroy Russia.

Scott Ritter, the Secretary of the Treasury, believes he can bring Russia to its knees—that he can physically destroy the Russian economy. And he wants to do that. He's supported by members of Congress; Lindsey Graham is one of them. I just thought that was Trump saying, "OK, speak loudly, and we'll keep the pressure on the Russians until we get this deal, and then I'll come in and fix everything." But it appears that no—President Trump has been behind this economic strangulation plan all along, that everything he was doing with Russia was a lie, a setup. That realization—yeah, it blows my mind sometimes.

Julia Gagarina was the former National Intelligence Officer for Russia-Eurasia back in 2016, and she oversaw the 2017 Intelligence Community Assessment that claimed Donald Trump was colluding with the Russians to steal the 2016 election. She knew it was a lie. She doctored the intelligence. And then, when it looked like she was going to get called out, they put her into a sort of semi-retirement. She was still a CIA officer, but they placed her in one of the think tanks in Washington, D. C. Well, she was pulled out of that think tank. Shortly before that happened, John Ratcliffe, the CIA director, carried out an emergency whitewashing.

He, I guess, had found out that Tulsi Gabbard was getting ready to release the Gates report and other reports that would expose the deception and criminality of the intelligence community in

manufacturing a case against Trump regarding Russia. So he published a five-page declassified memorandum that basically gave Julia Gagarina a clean bill of health. This is a woman who's on record saying, "I hate Donald Trump, and I want to bring Donald Trump down." But he whitewashes her, and she's on the airplane briefing Donald Trump on his way to meet Putin. I used to think that was just a big mistake. I now believe that Donald Trump knew this was a lady who hates Russia and that he, Donald Trump, had won the CIA over by telling them, "No, no, no, I'm not a Russian asset."

I'm Russia's worst enemy. I'm Russia's worst nightmare. Tell me what I need to do to set Putin up. I believe Trump went to Alaska to set Vladimir Putin up. And how do you set him up? You use Kirill Dmitriev. You create this artificial notion that sanctions can be lifted, and when they are lifted, it's going to be a glorious economic renaissance for Russia and the United States. Then what happens is Putin buys into that, comes back, and they start holding meetings. You know, "We want to revitalize oil production in the north." "Oh, well, let's call the mayor and the governor. You guys get a committee together and tell us what we need to do. What are our number one priorities?"

And people start planning for the better times they think are coming. They start spending that money before they even have it. What you've done there is carry out mental warfare—you've created a fifth column inside Russia, people who are now anticipating the lifting of sanctions, which are never going to be lifted, by the way. But then Trump says they're not going to be lifted because of Vladimir Putin. "He's the one. I'm not happy with Putin. I think Putin's the problem. I think Putin's this." The idea is to create a wedge between Putin and the political and economic elites who are now enthralled by the potential lifting of sanctions.

That's what Donald Trump did. Radcliffe didn't carry out these operations. The New York Times article came out at an interesting time because it was literally timed with the assassination attempt against Putin. I believe the article may have originally had a different headline and some paragraphs that were later removed, because I think the article was basically saying, "Hey, look what we did. We're the CIA. We've been doing this all along." And then, when it failed and the Russians found out, they changed it. But they didn't change the article itself. The CIA had to openly collaborate with the New York Times for that piece. This is highly classified information.

The idea that the CIA is enabling Ukraine to strike Russian oil refining capacity—specific components, the precision required—is incredible. And the CIA is doing this at a time when the president is talking about the "Spirit of Alaska." It's a setup. It's a lie. There was never a Spirit of Alaska. The CIA is at war with Russia today—at war with Russia. The CIA is killing Russians. Scott Ritter, Secretary of the Department of the Treasury, is at war with Russia, trying to destroy the Russian economy. Marco Rubio is at war with Russia, seeking isolation. Remember, Rubio is dual-hatted, and this is where the ultimate nefariousness comes in, because he can be the Secretary of State and say, "Hey, we're all for diplomacy."

Remember his little snide comment? "Hey, Sergei, how you doing?" Like he's friends with Sergei Lavrov. He's not. He hates Sergei Lavrov. We know he hates Sergei Lavrov because he said he hates

Sergei Lavrov. He hates every Russian. But he's pretending to be diplomatic. Then he goes and puts on his National Security Advisor hat, where he's not accountable to anybody but the president, and he's the one who greenlights the CIA attacks. It goes through the National Security Advisor. The CIA goes through him. The Treasury Department goes through him. Rubio is running this anti-Russian campaign as the National Security Advisor.

So Donald Trump's been a liar from day one. Day one. And I think the Russians are waking up to that reality. Of course, the Russians are pragmatic, and as Lavrov said, they won't end negotiations or discussions with the Americans. The Russians never fully walk away, but they're going nowhere. They can't trust these people at all. I mean, if they do trust them, then you have to question—are the Russians really as capable as everybody says they are, including myself? You can't trust the United States. You can't trust Donald Trump. And now you layer this with people who—well, the whole book thing, just to show you how stupid people are.

You know, the reflagging of this boat, this tanker—I think it was a Ghanaian ship, or no, no, maybe a Ghanaian ship—you know, it reflagged in process. Not illegal, not normal, but not illegal. But the Russians used a process that only has legitimacy in Russian territorial waters. It's sort of a domestic law kind of thing; it doesn't really apply to ships on the open sea. In fact, under the law of the sea, you can't have a dual-flag ship. The flag that the ship set out under is the flag it has to keep. If it changes flag, then it has no flag. So the Russians set themselves up on this one.

It wasn't a good move, and the Russians themselves have sort of admitted that. That's why Russia's been quiet. Everybody's like, "Why is Russia quiet?" Because they're weak? No, they messed up. They reflagged the vessel in a way that's unenforceable. But the problem is that Europe and the United States are reading Russia's lack of reaction as a sign of weakness. And now they're talking about going after actual Russian-flagged ships. That would be a fatal mistake, because the Russian Navy will intervene. The Russians are very legalistic. The Russian Navy had no legal authority to intervene on behalf of this so-called Russian reflagged ship, because there was no legitimacy to that ship.

The ship actually didn't have a flag anymore because of what had happened. But that doesn't mean the Russian Navy won't intervene if you go after a Russian ship. And now you've got the British saying, "Well, we're going to change our laws so we can board ships." You've got the Danes saying, "We're going to prove to the Americans that we're really important members of NATO, and we're going to board ships." And you've got the Norwegians wanting to board ships. Everybody wants to board Russian ships now. The Russians are going to kill you. Kill you. How stupid can you be? Well, it's a rhetorical question, because we know the answer—very stupid.

#Glenn

Yeah, I think the past 30 years—or more than that—of wars being fought far away from home, where only the adversary takes major losses, is coming to an end. I think that mindset has led to

their carelessness in provoking a major war with Russia now. But it does seem that's where we're heading. So, the negotiations—you mentioned that only fools would now believe in the Alaska spirit—those negotiations were fake, though. Do you see any pathways to peace anymore? Because I keep thinking about it. Even if you had a peace agreement, how could you possibly dislodge the CIA from Ukraine, or MI6? By definition, they wouldn't be... well, deceptive, I guess. It's just hard to see how any deal could possibly cover what the Russians are demanding.

#Scott Ritter

Well, first of all, the idea that Russia is going to make compromises, I think, is moot. I can't speak on behalf of Russia—nobody can except the Russians. They can do whatever they want to do. But I do study Russia, and I study past patterns of behavior, and I recognize that when the Russian president commits to something publicly, that's generally what Russia is committed to. And, you know, the Russian president has committed to terms and conditions that must be met for this conflict to end, and I don't see him making any compromises on that. The other thing about a compromise is that it requires trust. Russia can't trust anybody. None of the actors on the other side of the table are trustworthy.

None. So I would say that as long as Donald Trump is president of the United States, there are no prospects for peace whatsoever through negotiation. The Russians will continue to go through the motions just to keep lines of communication open. Remember, the Russians didn't have lines of communication open with the Biden administration. And I think one important element of conflict avoidance is talking. So I think the Russians are keen on keeping those lines open only insofar as it helps prevent avoidable conflict. But you have—and the other good news, well, it's not really good news, but I mean, in the big picture, I guess it is.

NATO's about to die—I mean, a rapid death. The United States is going to make a move very soon on Greenland. Hopefully it won't be violent. But if the Danes and many Europeans who want to be deployed there think they're going to, they don't understand the people who are getting ready to come to Greenland. Trump is tasking the Joint Special Operations Command to go to Greenland. They just kill. Look what happened to Maduro's security force—no effort to take any prisoners. They just rolled in and killed everybody. They're not going to be sitting there crying tears of sorrow over the end of NATO. They have a mission.

They've been given a mission. They're going to plan the mission, and when they come rolling in, any Dane stupid enough to lift his weapon against them will be killed on the spot, along with everybody else. Yeah. But we are close to having the United States militarily occupy Greenland—a NATO ally—and that'll be the end of NATO. And that's the other good news, because this complicates things greatly. You just saw the European—uh, I forget his name, sort of a fat old man, the head of defense for the European Union, kind of their defense advisor. It was sort of sorrowful to watch him. The United States, he said, is withdrawing from NATO—the security of Europe.

Who will secure Europe? I thought that was Europe's job. But Europe can't defend itself. So, the good news is, to have theater like the British have been doing, you have to have a stage—there has to be a setting. The setting is collapsing. NATO is going to die a very, hopefully not violent, but very sudden death. And Europe has no plan B—none whatsoever, zero capacity. We're going to see the collapse of Europe, because what Donald Trump does better than anybody else is divide and conquer. As NATO dissolves, as Europe collapses, there are going to be countries desperate.

And Trump is going to reach out and say, "We'll have a bilateral relationship. We'll do a bilateral relationship with you." And next thing you know, the United States will build a European security architecture that Europe has no vote in. It's all going to be based on a bilateral relationship between, you know, baby boy and daddy. And that's the direction we're heading. So... old Chinese curse: may you live in interesting times. We've been cursed very heavily, because these are extraordinarily interesting times—interesting not in a good way, interesting in a deeply disturbing way, but interesting nonetheless.

#Glenn

I'd always hoped that NATO would be able to reform into some inclusive, pan-European security architecture—one where we sought security with other members instead of against non-members as an alliance. But I think it's just way too late. I think, yeah, well, I agree with you—it should probably just die. This is beyond reform now. Just as a last question, though—and I do think we're heading in that direction with NATO, by the way—but yeah, last question: how do you make sense of this transformation of Trump? The new Trump—the one that bombs Venezuela, backs genocide in Gaza, bombs Iran, talks about conquering Greenland, and, of course, is determined to defeat Russia. All of this is so contrary to the Donald Trump that runs for president.

Now everything is about war. Again, he was going to scale back the forever wars. Now he needs a \$1.5 trillion military budget. He was worried about going bankrupt—now he can't spend money fast enough. "America First" has been turned on its head. Now it essentially means America will fight wars to gain its greatness back. I mean, none of this was what he was talking about during the campaign. He was mocking Biden for bombing Yemen, I think—and now, what's the difference? So how do you make sense of this? Because he fueled a lot of optimism among many people around the world that he kind of recognized that, okay, now it's either the American Republic or the Empire—let's save the Republic. That was at least the logic I was left with. But now he's... no, not anymore.

#Scott Ritter

The Republic's dead—and he just killed it. And he said he killed it. Look, he said he doesn't believe in international law. I have to remind the president—although it's a stupid reminder, because he's ignorant of these things—that international law, what he calls "international law," is the United Nations Charter. And the United Nations Charter is a treaty obligation incurred by the United States when the President of the United States signed it, and it was ratified by two-thirds of the United

States Senate. Constitutionally, it becomes the supreme law of the land. So you can't just disregard international law. You can't disregard the Charter, because to do so is to disregard the Constitution.

But the President doesn't care about the Constitution. The Constitutional Republic is dead. The Constitutional Republic mandates three separate but equal branches of government—and the President is running roughshod over Congress, and the judiciary has been tamed. You know, maybe there's some fight left. We saw Congress just pass a war powers resolution, but I don't think Trump is going to pay much attention to that, because he doesn't care if Congress impeaches him. He does, you know. The resolution didn't pass with sufficient votes to guarantee conviction at trial. And so this President is a caricature. And, you know, he said the things he said to get elected.

There's no doubt about that. This is what was very attractive. This is what brought in the RFK Jr. and Tulsi Gabbard independents—about that 12 to 20 percent of the vote that pushed him to victory. Now there's talk that he's basically trying to manipulate how America votes, that he's going to cook the books. He's going to steal an election, steal a midterm election, to guarantee that he remains in power. Our country is physically occupied by stormtroopers who operate above the law, who aren't afraid to murder American citizens in broad daylight. This whole ICE invasion and occupation of major American cities is, again, fundamentally unconstitutional.

And it doesn't meet anybody's vision of what a constitutional republic looks like. The president today is a de facto dictator—a dictator with no law. He says he doesn't need international law; he relies on his own morality. Well, given the Epstein files, I think we need to question his moral character. I mean, given the fact that this man has lied openly to the American people and to the world, and today he is the most war-hungry president ever. Maybe Andrew Jackson, back when he was taking on the Cherokee Nation, was as warmongering. But this president, you know, he is Orwellian in everything he does.

What he says—the exact opposite is the truth. He wants the Nobel Peace Prize because he's the world's greatest warmonger. And that's where we are today. The American people may find out that by ceding so much trust, confidence, and power to this man, they've taken away their ability to rectify the errors of their ways. It was always a possibility in American democracy that we could vote the guys out. But if Trump takes over, continues to use ICE as a vehicle of intimidation and occupation, and starts gaming the system to guarantee an outcome in the midterm election, we don't function as a constitutional republic anymore.

#Glenn

It seems like he disappointed a lot of people. And again, this is the tragedy, because he seemed to have his finger on the pulse. He realized where the country was going wrong, where the world was going wrong. He recognized the weaknesses, but also the opportunities—like saying, you know, it would be a good idea to get along with Russia, something simple. And of course, I mean, this is one of the problems we have in NATO, where I hear European leaders say, "Well, we can't do that; that'

s something Putin would want." But, you know, at some point you want the opponent to have some security as well if you want security for yourself. He seemed to be just spot on with a lot of these things. But yeah, this new Trump—well, I don't think it's a new Trump, though.

#Scott Ritter

I think what we're seeing is that he's been a liar the entire time. You know, he treated the American people like a love interest. He said all the right things. He sent us flowers, gave us nice perfume on our birthday, never missed a holiday or event. He was there for every important moment in our lives. My God, we fell in love with this guy. We thought, look at the attention he's giving us—he has to be sincere about wanting a long and fruitful relationship. And then, as soon as we got married, it turned out he had a mistress the entire time. That mistress was war, power, and narcissism. This has all been a plan he's been operating on. This isn't a new Trump. This is Trump. This is what Trump did. And the American people have every right to feel deceived.

But now we're trapped in a relationship we can't get out of. I mean, I hope the American people come out and vote in the midterms and do what needs to be done to limit the power of this madman. But if he's going to start cooking the books, if he's going to start manipulating the system— you know, Stalin, I think, said it doesn't matter who votes; it matters who counts the votes. And I think Trump's going to be the guy counting the votes, and the vote count's going to be— you know, here's the irony again: this man is such a liar that he's going to do to the American people the exact thing he accused Joe Biden of doing in 2020. He's going to steal an election. And the 25th Amendment couldn't come quick enough, in my mind.

#Glenn

Yeah, just watch him give us—well, twice now—this speech about how Maduro killed millions of people, which doesn't make much sense. But, yeah, we seem to be in a very post-truth moment at this point. Anyway, we've run out of time, but I wanted to thank you so much for taking the time, as always. I know you must be incredibly busy. So, yeah, thanks again.

#Scott Ritter

Well, thank you for having me. I think it was a good conversation.