

Douglas Macgregor: Why NATO is Finished & the Ukraine War Was Lost

Douglas Macgregor is a retired Colonel, combat veteran and former senior advisor to the U.S. Secretary of Defense. Col. Macgregor explains why the West is fragmenting and why the Ukraine War was lost. Please like and subscribe! 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 joined today by Colonel Douglas Macgregor, a combat veteran, author, and former advisor to the U.S. Secretary of Defense. Thank you again for coming back on.

#Douglas Macgregor

Sure, sure. Happy to be here.

#Glenn

So we do see that transatlantic relations are fragmenting. And this, I guess, comes from the dispute over Greenland, but also from the pending defeat of Ukraine—or NATO's defeat in Ukraine. But four years ago, when the Russians went into Ukraine, there seemed to be a consensus in the media and among politicians that NATO would now be stronger than ever, given the Russian threat. With the exception of you, though, within the first weeks, I think you said something along the lines of this ending with NATO's possible collapse. I was wondering, how did you see this coming? Because no one's denying the fragmentation anymore.

#Douglas Macgregor

Actually, I told—I think it was Dimitri Simes or George Beebe, I can't remember which one—in an interview with *The National Interest* in January 2022, before the Russians went in, two things: first, that the Russians would very definitely intervene militarily. A lot of people in Washington and in Europe said, "Oh no, the Russians will never do this. It would destroy their economy, and the regime can't withstand that. No, the Russians will never go into Ukraine. They won't do this." So I said,

"Yes, they will." And then I said that if they do, NATO will not survive the crisis. Now, why did I say that? I think because a substantial portion of my career involved service in the U.S. military inside the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

And I think that's important to understand. I was there for the first time—I came in March of '77—and my assignment for most of the time I was there, from '77 until 1980, was service on the border with Czechoslovakia and East Germany. So I had a lot of interaction with many people, and I had a chance to see the Warsaw Pact forces. I concluded three things. First, that the Warsaw Pact was not going to attack, that the Soviets were not going to risk a war, and that they were effectively defending what they had gained as a result of the collapse of German military power at the end of the Second World War.

Secondly, that the NATO alliance was a conglomeration of different national military establishments, and this is not conducive to success on the battlefield. In most cases, the smaller nations—the Dutch, the Belgians, and I saw both of them in the field—as well as the Canadians, excuse me, the British, and ultimately the French, everyone was sort of a limited-liability partner, as we say. They were there because they saw it as being in their interest to be there, but they really weren't prepared to fight anybody, and their focus was extraterritorial. This was particularly true for the French and the British, the Belgians and the Dutch, because they were former colonial powers and all had interests overseas.

Now, that was my first tour, and I worked closely with German military units. I concluded that the Germans were the only ones adequately equipped and trained to fight effectively against the Soviets if anything happened. After that, I spent time in graduate school in Munich and Vienna in 1983 and '84. That was when I was writing my master's, and I went to those places to talk to members of the Mutual and Balanced Force Reduction Talks—both Soviet and non-Soviet, as well as the U.S. side. Again, I reached very similar conclusions about what I thought was realistic. Then, in 1986, I was assigned briefly, for about six weeks, to an office in the Pentagon that used to be called Net Assessment.

It was a very useful assignment because I was able to read translated works from the Soviet General Staff Journal, which were extremely highly classified at the time. These were very informative in terms of the Soviet understanding of us and our understanding of them. They pointed out that we had performed very poorly during the Second World War—the Anglo-American alliance—because we managed the forces as though they were separate countries. There were limited authorities exercised by Eisenhower and others whenever they commanded Canadian, French, or other non-American forces. So it basically said, you can't run a war this way.

And if you fight somebody as competent as the Germans, you have no chance of success at all. So the bottom line is, I went back then as a major. I served again on the border briefly, and then I went to Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe. I was there from November 1997 until January 2000. What I saw was evidence of the same problem: everyone had their own agenda. They only

temporarily or briefly cooperated, and there had to be an incentive for them to cooperate—some kind of payoff to get people to join together to do much of anything. The exercises we conducted were not very realistic. So the point is, when this happened, a couple of things were very obvious to me.

Russia was now a Russian state, which meant they had unity of command and unity of effort. Everybody spoke the same language. There were no disputes about who was going to command what. NATO, meanwhile, remained exactly what it had been—a chorus of competing voices that couldn't agree on much of anything. I didn't see much evidence that, regardless of what Ukraine did, it could outlast the Russians. Ukraine wasn't large enough, didn't have the scientific or industrial base, and didn't have the manpower. We knew almost from the outset that the Ukrainian population was shrinking, not just because of low birth rates, but because many Ukrainians didn't want to fight in the war.

So large numbers of people left. And then, of course, you have the corruption issue. I don't think it was—well, I know a lot of people say, "Oh, how could you possibly have figured that out?" But if anybody looked at any of the things I've described objectively, it was hard not to reach that conclusion. The one thing I didn't anticipate was that the Russians would move as cautiously and slowly at the beginning as they did. And I didn't understand the true state of affairs with the Russian army. The Russian army was designed for territorial defense, nothing else. That's why all these claims about Putin's determination to rebuild the Soviet empire are nonsense—always were.

Today, they have an army that is, in my judgment, second to none in many respects. But at the time, it wasn't up to the task it was assigned. It took a year, maybe a year and a half, to really build up that force to what you see today. So I guess that's the easiest explanation. And everyone else—and this is true in Washington as well as in the capitals of Europe—Glenn, everyone suffers from a terminal case of wishful thinking. You know that. I mean, they fully believe in all the nonsense that's now crashing and burning so badly over in Davos and across Europe's capitals, about this thing we call NATO and the European Union.

#Glenn

You know, the wishful thinking is definitely what's bringing down Europe. But what I think is interesting is that in the 1990s, there were a lot of people who knew NATO expansion would create these problems. You had people opposed to it—George Kennan, for example, or the U.S. Secretary of Defense, William Perry. But you also had people like Madeleine Albright, who recognized that Russia would feel encircled and that this could alienate the Russians.

But she still supported it, with the logic that, well, if we end up in a conflict with Russia, at least NATO will be there—a huge, much larger, more powerful NATO. So now that we've ended up in this war—proxy war, direct war, however one wants to define it—with Russia, the Europeans seem to think, well, we can just retreat into a new Cold War. That is, Europeans and America essentially go

back to the past and do the same thing all over again. And the political leadership, as well as the political commentators, can't seem to understand why America's not joining in on this. Why aren't you joining us for another Cold War?

#Douglas Macgregor

Well, a couple of things we need to admit up front. If you look at Stoltenberg or his successor, Rutte, there is no reward in Europe right now for, I would say, men and women of character and intelligence. You're rewarded for mouthing the same stupidities over and over again—repeating aphorisms that make no sense, maintaining the fiction that things are better than they are, or that there are capabilities on hand that don't exist. You're not going to be rewarded for standing up and saying, "Well, this is ridiculous nonsense." You know, the argument I made from the beginning—and there were a few other people who said this—is that we have an interest in ending this war in Ukraine as soon as possible.

This is going to be a terrible tragedy for Eastern Europe, and ultimately for Europe in general, if we're not careful. The longer this lasts, the greater the probability that something really bad could happen. Of course, at that point, I didn't appreciate the extent to which Putin would exercise restraint—which he has, remarkably. And that's not something that's made him popular with certain people in Russia. There are a lot of Russians, and I'm sure you're aware of this, who would like to see NATO taught a very valuable lesson on a permanent basis. So you're asking now, well, what happened with the United States?

Well, President Trump is not someone who's steeped in research or deep understanding of anything. But President Trump, if he sticks with his instincts, has pretty good ones. And his instincts told him—this was back during his first term—what are we doing in Europe? It's been 70, 75 years. What are we doing there? And he's right. What are we still doing in Korea 70 years later? This is crazy. This ought to end. In that sense, he shared President Eisenhower's view that what we should want is a Europe without us. Remember, Eisenhower said if we're still in Europe because of this NATO alliance in 10 years, then we've failed.

Because the goal should be to get out. And that was a traditional American view—and a very healthy one, I would add. But it was also a view that permanent hostility with the Soviet Union at that point was not an answer to the problem. We had to come up with a way of interacting with the Soviets, whether we liked the way they governed or not. And he felt that way. I think that President Trump, early on, his view was: why are we in this sort of position of permanent hostility toward Russia? So that was always there. Unfortunately, once he got in, he was surrounded by the usual permanent residents of the ring around Washington we call the Beltway.

And there was, "Oh, you can't do that. You can't just leave. You can't go here. You can't exchange this." Pretty soon, if you listen to everybody in Washington, the one message that comes through over and over again is: you can't change anything. Because if you change something, you disrupt

the money flow. All the think tanks inside the Beltway are essentially resting on a foundation of permanent hostility to Russia, permanent hostility to China, permanent hostility to Iran, and absolute, unconditional support for whatever Israel wants. That's the standard. You have to look at who their donors are—who provides them with money.

And suddenly it's pretty obvious that the people pouring hundreds of millions of dollars into these places are absolutely, adamantly opposed to any change that would end our position in all of these regions—change our position globally. But President Trump has never completely given up on it; he just doesn't know how to do it. And he's surrounded himself with people who, frankly, aren't much more knowledgeable than he is about the world. But they all know that they, too, have an interest in making sure the money flow doesn't stop—something from which they also benefit. That's the problem when you surround yourself with billionaires.

#Glenn

Well, I think in Europe they still subscribe to the idea from the early 1990s of hegemonic peace, which would be delivered primarily by the NATO alliance—and again, that's built into their security strategy. But I don't think they appreciate that there's a new political force growing in America in response to the fact that this position has exhausted the U.S. to a large extent. It's introduced a lot of unhelpful globalist or cosmopolitan ideas, and it alienates other great powers. I keep thinking that the only reason the United States doesn't want to keep doing what we've done over the past 30 or 40 years is that Trump doesn't really appreciate the broader democratic context. I just think the wider development—the change in the distribution of power—doesn't seem to factor in, though.

#Douglas Macgregor

Well, keep in mind that if you're President Trump, you see yourself as the contemporary equivalent of a Roman emperor, say, around the year 2000. And you're talking about a group of states in Europe that are analogous to the Greek city-states. Now, what were the Greek city-states within the broader framework of the Roman Empire? Well, they were a source of admiration. The Romans admired and respected Hellenic culture. They thought the Greeks had created, effectively, the foundations for their civilization. The whole Eastern Roman Empire spoke Greek, and everybody who sat down to write anything, all the way up to and including Marcus Aurelius in the second century, was writing in Greek, not Latin.

In fact, Caesar was criticized for writing his treatise on Gaul in Latin, because they said, you know, if you were an educated man, you'd have written it in Greek. So stop and think about that. I think that's the way we view Europe—or at least I was brought up to think in those terms. I thought of Europe as the wellspring of our civilization. You know, if water is purest at its source, then Europe is the, uh, the fountainhead of our civilization. But at the same time, we're Romans. We're multitudes—quantity, you know, what's the right word—magnitudes larger and more powerful than the European states.

And so there's been a tendency to see them as a group that needs to be dragged along in the directions we want to go. This is what's really harmed NATO. We weaponized it. We used the Europeans—we instrumentalized it—so that we could drag them into places like Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria, and Libya. In other words, it's all about what they're going to do for us. And the European states, which ensured that they would become increasingly weaker over time by dismantling their military power, said, well, it's in our interest to make the Americans happy and be their friends and supporters—and that's what they did.

But they forgot that, in the meantime, the United States was growing ever more powerful, with broader interests—interests that reach far beyond Europe. All of that results in what you've got today. President Trump goes over there and says, "This is what I want. Well, if you don't want that, then frankly, I don't need you. I'll do whatever I want anyway." But NATO is also one of the components of that strategic structure I mentioned earlier inside the Beltway. You have the Atlantic Council—everybody worships NATO at the Atlantic Council. "Oh, this is the totem, this is the—you know—we sacrifice to it, we love it."

We pray to it, it's ours, and it brings us lots of money. They're all over Washington, D.C. And, you know, change is very frightening to these people. If we don't have NATO, if we're not doing what we've always done, then what have we got? The problem with Donald Trump, though, is that he has no strategy. There is no national anything strategy. There's no national military strategy. They call it a national security strategy, but when you read through that thing, it's just an expression of hopes and wishes. "Well, you know, we'd really like to get along with China. We don't really want to fight Russia," and on and on—but there is no framework for execution, no guideposts into the future.

There are no systematic means of changing the way we do business because nobody really wants change. And if you say you're actually going to change something, ten thousand people will stand up in Congress or some other corner of Washington, D.C., and stage a demonstration against you. What I'm trying to say is that when you have no strategy, any road will take you to your destination. And so we've had two destinations—Venezuela and Greenland—neither of which directly impinge on our interests in other areas, although you could argue Greenland belongs to Denmark. Yes, that's an issue. But, you know, who are the Danes? How many people live in Denmark?

You know, you're back to this age-old problem in Europe. When Napoleon was approached and told, "The Pope won't like what you're doing," he turned around and said, "How many battalions does the Pope have?" You know—shut up, get out of my way. It's that kind of arrogance right now. It's quite real. It's unattractive, but it's real because it's truthful. You know, this is something—I don't know if we discussed this before—but I've told people repeatedly, the great tragedy in Europe over many centuries is that you didn't coalesce many of these tribal communities into a larger entity. You know, we're talking about Denmark.

Very few people realize that after 1866, the King of Denmark actually approached Bismarck and asked whether Denmark could join the North German Confederation. Today, Danes would say, "Oh, that's impossible. That would never happen." But it did happen. Bismarck sat down with the King of Prussia, and the King of Prussia said, "Well, look, we've got two million Poles right now, or almost that number. We don't want anybody else inside the country who's going to raise hell with us, because we're ultimately Germans. We speak German." And he said, "Everybody likes the Danes. I like the Danes." Moltke, the great chief of the Prussian General Staff, was a Dane by origin.

Everybody likes the Danes, but, you know, the Danes—they'll want to have their own holidays, their own little traditions. They'll insist on speaking Old Norse, that kind of thing. And so they turned the Danes down. Well, if history had progressed along the lines it has elsewhere, all of Scandinavia would have been united with Germany at some point, just as Austria was brought in. We have all these little tribal groupings—the Czech tribe, the Slovak tribe. You know, how do you run a continent that way, where you're treating little tribes of larger family groups as sovereign individual entities?

And I think in Washington, Trump may not understand this, but that's a source of frustration for him. So he says, "What the hell am I bothering with these people for?" Now, I'm not saying that's right or wrong, but what I'm trying to point to are some realities. You know, there was someone in the Danish parliament when I was at SHAPE—I think this was 1998—who actually put forward a recommendation that the Danes should start speaking English as their first language. Of course, that was voted down, but his argument was, "Who's going to speak what we speak? We might as well come to terms with English. English is modern Germanic. Okay, we dropped the vowel problem, we eliminated the endings, we don't have any more definite articles."

We don't have to go through all the grammatical mess. But the point is, again, Europe is a very strange place. Almost everywhere else in the world, these small pockets have been subsumed into larger entities. I think that will eventually happen, whether the people in Europe like it or not. There was a solution—we did have a solution before 1914. It wasn't perfect, but it worked. You had the Habsburgs, the Romanovs, the Hohenzollerns. Well, we Americans intervened, and we saw to it that that was dismantled. So what do you have now? You have the legacy of multiple world wars, a great deal of confusion, no coherence.

All of this combines to create frustration at high levels in the American political elite, to the point where they say, "Well, you know, why bother?" That's the problem. So I think Donald Trump has settled right now for some sort of compromise with Greenland. Yeah, it's meaningless in large part, and I wouldn't have bothered with it anyway. But I think it was a doctor who suggested, "Why don't the Danes take the money and run? Seven hundred million euros or something—that would go a long way for Denmark." I'm not saying that's the right answer. What I'm saying is that there are different ways to look at this problem.

But I don't think people understand that when Trump looks at it, he doesn't really see what the problem is. He just sees a piece of real estate close to the United States, within the framework of his security zone—like it or not. And then, of course, you have this other group. You've heard these people all the time. They say, I know you've heard this, Glenn, "We don't want any more balance-of-power politics. It's wrong. There are no spheres of influence." Okay, great, fine. Thanks very much. Completely out of touch with reality. We know certain states live within the sphere of influence of larger states. It's a fact. So, on the one hand, you have Europe wanting things in a way that just isn't sustainable.

And you have the United States, led by Trump, who goes off on a tangent about Greenland. I think we've already learned our lesson in Venezuela. We tried to buy everybody off, poured millions of dollars in, and then realized—gosh, it's a big country. We can't occupy the place. If we try to supplant the government, it'll never work. So we said, "Well, I guess we'll live with this government. We just want to cut a deal with them that's beneficial to us." Now, I don't know how long that will last. But again, there's no strategy. None. "Well, what do you want to do this week, boss?" I mean, it's almost that bad.

#Glenn

But in terms of Greenland—because, of course, NATO is already fragmenting a bit—I think people unfairly put it all on Trump's shoulders. But again, people forget that it was Obama, back in 2016, who said we have to pivot to Asia. Well, if you're going to pivot to Asia, you have to pivot away from somewhere. So this new distribution of power and the priorities of the U.S. were already shifting. Except there's been no pivot to Asia.

#Douglas Macgregor

No, that's true. That's very important, Glenn. Exactly. Because Obama's argument—everybody said, "Oh yeah, that's right, that's a great idea." Then the bill was presented: hundreds of billions of dollars that would have to be invested all over Asia in foreign bases and installations, not just for protection but for dramatic modernization and expansion—assuming that you wanted to wage war against China. That was the underlying point. People began saying, "Well, we're going to end up at war with China." It's sort of the Mearsheimer argument—Mearsheimer saying, "Oh, it's a big place; we're going to have to go to war with it at some point." I disagree with that completely, and I think increasingly it's obvious to everyone that it makes no sense.

But having said that, you know, I think President Trump, more than Obama ever did, knows that. He's not going to start a war with China now. That doesn't mean people under him won't try. There are plenty of people in his administration, and over in the Department of Defense and the CIA, who—given the opportunity—would create hostility with China unnecessarily. I mean, the biggest joke you can tell anybody is that we have to have the U.S. Navy go through the Strait of Malacca, or the Strait

of Hormuz, or the Suez Canal. These are choke points. If we don't keep them open, the Chinese could stop that. There's no evidence for that. In fact, the evidence is the opposite.

The Chinese have never stopped a commercial vessel. They have every interest in keeping those waterways free and open. Who has stopped, boarded, and seized a commercial vessel? We have. So I'm one of those people who thinks President Trump understands very clearly that there's no benefit to us in going to war with China at all. So where is he focused? He's back to Europe. He keeps hammering Russia with sanctions and doubling down, foolishly, by sending money to Ukraine. So I guess he's essentially surrendered to the Russia war hawks who want to maintain that permanent hostility. And, of course, he's surrendered to Israel, which wants the destruction of Iran. There we are.

#Glenn

What do you expect, though, coming from this meeting now? Because Witkow—well, I think they've already touched down there in Moscow. I might be mistaken, but I think so. The mood in Moscow has shifted a bit, from what I understand. Nobody really believes in any of these diplomatic efforts anymore. There might be something as the situation gets worse in Ukraine, but there's also this concern about the incremental worsening of the situation between the U.S. and Russia. If you look back—was it in May, I think, of 2024—when Ukraine carried out those attacks on Russia's early nuclear warning radars...

And then last year in June, there was that attack on Russia's nuclear deterrent. And now they're arguing that this assassination attempt on Putin—well, some have said there's also a nuclear command center nearby. Anyway, there seems to be this idea that the U.S. is contributing to the escalation in a big way. So the mood has really soured in Moscow. Again, I was wondering, how do you see what might come out of these talks?

#Douglas Macgregor

I think President Putin and Foreign Minister Lavrov will, as always, be polite. They'll listen, and nothing will happen. Now, why will nothing happen? I think they understand that Messrs. Witkoff and Kushner represent international financial interests in New York City and London, and they're not going to—let's put it this way—they're not going to overlook that truth when they deal with them. They also long ago concluded that while President Trump may mean well and have good intentions, there's not a whole hell of a lot of evidence that he can follow through on anything.

So I don't think they're prepared to sign on to any of the proposals that the two gentlemen will undoubtedly bring with them. I think, again, that Putin will say, you know, first of all, where's the evidence that you've recognized our legitimate national security interests? Now, it may be that, in private, President Trump has done that, but he certainly has never done it publicly. And that's something very important to the Russians. They want their legitimate national security interests

recognized and respected. The second thing is, they're going to wonder once again about his ability to follow through on anything he signs up for.

And then lastly, they've now concluded that he really doesn't command NATO. See, their assumption from the beginning was that the President of the United States was really in charge of NATO—the de facto leader. I think they were expecting an Eisenhower or a Kennedy who would step forward and say, "No, stop. You know, I'm in charge. Get back to where you belong. We are not going to war with Russia over Ukraine." I think that's what they really thought would probably happen. They got an education. And now they would be very grateful if Trump did that, but there's not much evidence that Trump can deliver on NATO. I mean, really, they sit there and say, "Well, is he going to restrain Berlin, Paris, and London, who are the principal culprits?"

He's also got problems in Warsaw, but those are the big culprits. Are you going to be able to restrain them? Are you going to be able to deliver on anything there? And the Russians are so angry over that, they're talking about the potential use of nuclear weapons if they're challenged by the British in particular. Then you have—more recently, you have Zelensky, within the last 24 hours, saying that his goal as president of Ukraine, his Ukrainian national goal, is to kill 50,000 Russians a week or something. I mean, that's insane. How do you make peace with a government that makes a statement like that?

Well, you can make peace with them when they're on their knees and about to be executed for war crimes. That's all you can do. So I don't think anything of substance will emerge from this meeting. And once again, let me circle back to President Trump. That doesn't mean President Trump isn't sincere. It doesn't mean his intentions aren't genuine—they are. Listen, I was around him, and I know he doesn't want a war with Russia. I know he doesn't want a war with China. I know he's not very excited about a war with Iran. That's not him. But he's a prisoner of forces and circumstances, to be frank. I don't know if that answers your question, but I think that's the best I can do.

#Glenn

This is an interesting issue, though. I mean, what are the forces then, or where does the power actually reside? Because I get the same impression. Even though he sits on the throne, it's obvious he's not able to carry through everything he wants. I mean, is it weakness, or is it that a lot of power resides in structures outside his control?

#Douglas Macgregor

Well, I don't really want to go into too much detail in answering that question. That would offend a lot of people, and it would just make life for me that much more miserable in the public eye than it already is in the mainstream media. The truth is not popular here. But let's just say that most of the same people and forces that want war with Iran are also absolutely committed to continuous war with Russia. There isn't much difference. You can go to the Hill and listen to these people—whether

it's Ron Johnson, who a lot of people like to think of as a somewhat reasonable man. Where does he stand? Well, he's in the warhawk category. So is Lindsey Graham. So is Ted Cruz. Follow the money. So is Chuck Schumer. Who funds them? Who supports them?

Who elects them? Who enriches them? I think we have to understand, in the current environment, that that's the way you evaluate Congress. If you trace that money back to its sources, you'll find out what the truth is. You can also look at the people who surround and advise the president. Who are they? Who do they represent? It certainly isn't the America First administration that I and millions of others voted for. We voted for an administration that would say, "Look, we're primarily interested in what happens here, not what goes on over there." To recognize that whatever happens overseas shrinks to insignificance next to what happens inside the United States. That's why we voted for it. We want him to succeed. I want him to succeed.

I'm much more concerned about the enforcement of federal law inside the United States, which is vital to our survival as a nation, than I am about what happens on the ground in Syria, Iraq, Iran, Israel, Jordan, or anywhere else in the Middle East. I could care less about that, because we're in a position right now where, if we're not careful, we could lose everything here at home. And if it gets much worse than it already is, the potential for civil unrest—because it's very well organized, it's very well funded, against our government and against the American people—if that succeeds to a large extent and we end up in a very serious armed conflict, at least a low-intensity armed conflict, it won't make any difference to anybody here in the United States what happens overseas. We just won't care. I wish President Trump would focus there and understand that.

#Glenn

I guess I should be more focused on domestic issues. I also worry about an economic crisis now looming, which would create a lot more unpredictability. But as I think about Witkoff heading to Moscow—or maybe already there—I'd be critical, or at least pessimistic, about the willingness to present a deal that would be acceptable to Russia. On the other hand, it seems we're moving toward a perfect storm. The front lines are cracking, the Russians appear to be semi-blockading Odessa by striking ships, ports, bridges, and supporting infrastructure. The lights are going off.

I think Klitschko, the mayor of Kyiv, said that about 600,000 people had left the city just in January, which is a huge percentage of the total population. So I think I'm right on those numbers, at least. And overall, yeah, with the political situation and the oligarchs turning on each other as well, there seems to be a perfect storm brewing here. Do you think—the Russians are also escalating in a big way with the missiles they're using and the drones—so do you see this possibly going on much longer? Because if I were Zelensky, I'd think, you know, this can't play out well. Let's strike any deal today.

#Douglas Macgregor

Well, you're familiar with the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk, and you know that in 1917 there was first the Kerensky Revolution, followed by the Bolshevik Revolution. It was very clear that Russia had lost its position in the First World War, and they lost territory as well. Now, the Germans didn't actually occupy that much—they held the Baltic littoral, most of Poland, and parts of Ukraine. To the south, the Austrians had taken some territory, but really, that was it. People then dug in on the defensive, and the Russians exhausted themselves and lost terribly as a result.

Now, during the discussions at Brest-Litovsk with the likes of Radek and other Bolsheviks, it became very clear that they were stalling and trying to negotiate. The German in charge of the talks was Major General Hoffmann. He called back to Berlin and spoke to Ludendorff, saying, "These people have lost the war. They have nothing to stop us. They're wasting our time. We're going to have to do something." And Ludendorff said, "Tell them that we will march on Moscow." He gave orders to assemble a force of 400,000 German troops and start them on the road to Moscow. The word got back immediately to Lenin, and Lenin sent Trotsky to Brest-Litovsk, saying, "We'll sign whatever you want."

That was the end of the war, and they surrendered huge tracts of territory. Most of what you see today as Ukraine—certainly west of the Dnieper River—half of White Russia, and all the Baltic littoral were signed over to the Germans. End of discussion. War ended. So, what's the lesson? I don't want to lecture Mr. Putin—he's a bright, thoughtful man. I don't want to give advice to the foreign secretary; he has to sort through what is in Russia's interest. But I would say that until you are standing on the Dnieper River across from Kyiv, until you move forces across the river at Zaporizhzhia on the bridge there and start moving toward Odessa, it's not going to stop.

You know, we had a similar experience in 1991. We called a halt to our advance. I was very upset at the time—I couldn't see any reason why we would stop. I said, "What's changed? Is the government in Baghdad still there?" That was my question. And, of course, we didn't really know. Then suddenly we got word: it's all over, a hundred-hour war, we're going to have a treaty, blah, blah, blah. I couldn't believe it. And, by the way, the other person who was equally puzzled by the outcome was Saddam Hussein. He asked the individual who had come back from the talks, "Are the Americans moving over the Euphrates River?" He said, "No, sir, they've stopped."

He jumped up and danced around the table. He said, "I've won! I've won!" He was right—he won. And that's one of the reasons we were back there again in 2003. We lost the war strategically because we didn't move decisively. And we didn't need very many troops to do that. That was the other myth—that we were facing some sort of Soviet-like Third Guards Army, you know, outside of Berlin. It was a lot of nonsense. We could have moved on Baghdad with a few thousand men, then said, "Give us Saddam Hussein and that crowd, get rid of them, and we'll get out of here. We'll be done with this. You can govern as long as you agree to govern within certain limits."

We're not going to tolerate attacks on Israel, Saudi Arabia, or any other states in the region. We blew it—we threw it all away. That could happen to the Russians if they're not careful, because this

corrupt regime is a kleptocracy like almost none we've ever seen. This man, Zelensky, has over a billion dollars in cash sitting in various bank accounts. This is not a secret. The CIA knows this. I'm sure other intelligence agencies, like Mossad and MI6, are aware of it. This is a façade of a government sitting in Kiev whose main job, aside from enriching itself and keeping that graft going, is to continue inflicting damage on the Russians.

That's the mission. How do you inflict damage on the Russians at this point? By staying alive. The fact that they're there presents a threat—it's damage. MI6 and the CIA will do everything in their power to sustain this status quo. And the Russians need to come to terms with that reality. By the way, we've had German journalists come back from western Ukraine, and they say that in unofficial polling, people are actually telling them, "We'll never have peace here until the Russians are convinced there's no threat. You might as well let them in—at least then there's no more war." Now, that's pretty bad. But the people living in western Ukraine have had it.

They're tired of it, and I agree with them. But we refuse to exercise the power and authority that we've got—and that includes removing Zelensky from power and the criminals around him. You could put someone in there as an interim government who isn't part of the problem, who doesn't have a neo-Nazi background, who isn't part of the Zelensky cabal, and say, "Your job is to put an end to this, and we'll back you up." But we're not doing that. We refuse to do that. So under those circumstances, just as the Germans had to deal harshly with Lenin in January 1918, we should deal harshly with this man Zelensky for the same reason. Otherwise, this will not end.

#Glenn

So for the Russians, to deal harshly means taking territory, right?

#Douglas Macgregor

Move forward. Move forward. What you decide to keep and what you decide to discard—that's a decision for later. Your problem right now is in Kiev, and you have to cut off Odessa. Most of the big equipment, large numbers of mercenaries, and large amounts of explosives have poured through that port of Odessa into Ukraine. That has to stop. Period. Whatever agreements you reach on the other side of this war, Odessa cannot be an instrument of destruction for Russia. Now, what's the solution? Do you go in there and take it? That's one solution. The Russians are going to say, "Hey, it's a Russian city. Always has been. The hell with this—we'll take it." Or you can say, "We'll administer it, but it'll be neutral, and it'll be a free port that everyone can use. But we're going to make sure it's used for peaceful commercial reasons, not for military ones." That's another alternative.

These things can be hammered out, but no one from the West—and no one from Washington—is going to sit down and go through them with the Russians in the current setting. They're going to keep talking about a stupid ceasefire. The Russians have always been interested. You've got to go back to December 2021, look at the proposals there, and understand what the Russian interests

always were. They want a security architecture that makes a future war impossible—certainly one launched from Ukraine—and that provides them with security and protection for their population. I mean, if you're Putin, you have to listen to people living in southern Russia, living in northern Russia, various places that are suddenly under attack from Storm Shadow missiles or long-range drones. I mean, he has to listen to that, and he has to respond to them. And believe me, you've been over there.

You know this better than I do. There are a lot of Russians saying, "You need to go over there and crush these people once and for all." He's resisted all of that, for good reason. He's an intelligent man. He wants the situation to end in a way that leaves some hope of reconciliation. And I understand that, and I support that. But I don't think he's going to get around this basic requirement I've just described, because I see no evidence that we're going to intervene and remove this man, Zelensky. For me, it's incomprehensible that President Trump sits in the same room with that man. I mean, I'd have had him dragged out by his throat the last time he was in the Oval Office and spoke to the President of the United States the way he did.

I'm just shocked that President Trump went along with it. Incredible. But that's what's happened. So here we sit—basically in a state of semi-paralysis when it comes to Ukraine. The Europeans think they can do whatever they want, and I guess they're right, because no one at the top of NATO has said no. They've got the entire military structure—American and otherwise—over there cheering on this war. You know, these are the same people who have sacrificed 1.5 to 1.8 million Ukrainians in uniform in a series of stupid offensives and operations for which they were not prepared and could not win. So draconian measures have to be taken by President Trump if he's going to end this on his side.

I don't see that happening, do you? So if he's not going to do that, who else is out there to take the measures that are required? I think that's Moscow. They're going to have to do it. And for all the bluster and nonsense coming out of Western European capitals—come on. These people have nothing to throw into the fight. And if they're dumb enough to even suggest the use of a nuclear warhead anywhere... it wouldn't take very much for the Russians to put Britain out of business, that's for damn sure. A great tragedy for the British people. But then again, they've failed to get rid of this horrible government, so it's their fault.

#Glenn

Well, Colonel, thank you so much for your time. I think we went a bit over, so thanks again.

#Douglas Macgregor

I'm sorry for ranting and raving, I apologize. No, no—thank you.