

Alex Christoforou: Zelensky–Trump Conflict Transforms the War

Alex Christoforou discusses the conflict between Zelensky and Trump. The Duran: <https://www.youtube.com/@TheDuran> Alex Christoforou: <https://www.youtube.com/@AlexChristoforou> 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> Buy merchandise: <https://diesen-shop.fourthwall.com/en-nok> Books by Prof. Glenn Diesen: <https://www.amazon.com/stores/author/B09FPQ4MDL>

#Glenn

Welcome back, everyone. Today is October 15th, 2026, and we have the pleasure of being joined by Alex Christoforou, a political analyst and a very popular host of The Duran podcast, as well as hosting his own podcast. And I will leave a link in the description to both of them. So thank you for coming back on the program. Thank you. Thank you for having me. My first question is about this whole, I guess, the big elephant in the room, this whole new spat now between Trump and Zelensky. Again, it began with this diesel deal between the U.S. and Russia, but it doesn't appear to be that big of an agreement, that much diesel, I mean. But the consequences are kind of huge by breaking with the sanctions regime, but also sparking this conflict between Kyiv and Washington. How do you interpret this?

#Alex Christoforou

I think the diesel deal was more, at least from Trump's side of things, for the midterm elections. I think he was looking at some sort of a narrative or a talking point where he can go out on the campaign trail and show that he's doing something. And so I think this was kind of low-hanging fruit, I guess. He has a phone call with Putin. Russia agrees to send a certain amount of diesel to the United States. And then Trump can show that he's trying to get the price of diesel down. And it also serves another purpose for Trump in that it further moves the increase in the price of fuel away from Iran and confirms his narrative that this is about Ukraine and Russia, which is something that's very important to Trump.

He does not want the war in Iran to be blamed for the increase in prices, because what's his talking point? His talking point is this is all about Ukraine and Russia. That's why the price of diesel is going up. It has nothing to do with Iran. So that's what he's been saying. And so this diesel deal helps him out. Putin kind of helps him out. He can go out on the campaign trail and say, "You see, the price of

diesel is all about Ukraine and Russia. It has nothing to do with Iran." He does not want the American people, the voters, to blame the increase in prices on the war with Iran because that's his war. That's the war that he started.

So he wants to put some distance there. So for him, I think this was a political move, and there's political benefits for the Republicans. But yeah, apparently it's causing a lot of trouble between Trump and the Europeans, between Trump and Zelenskyy. We'll see exactly how all of this unfolds. You now have the whole Starlink issue, which has kind of come up. You have the cutting off of intel as well now. Allegedly, there's some sort of intel cutoff. I don't quite believe that either. But we'll see where this all goes. I think a lot of this is just theater. And actually, Glenn, I think a lot of this is to cover up for Russia's advances.

#Glenn

Well, that's a great point. I mean, yes, there's a lot of focus now, a lot of complaints from the Europeans, Zelenskyy, and so forth. But the more noise this creates, I guess, the more headlines it takes, the more it distracts from Iran. Now, if we want to talk about fuel problems, what we're talking about is Zelenskyy, not Iran. I guess that in itself is a victory.

#Alex Christoforou

For Trump, definitely. Yeah, for Trump, it's a victory.

#Glenn

Yeah, but for Zelenskyy, though, I'm a bit perplexed by some of his reactions. When first the diesel deal was announced, he went out, you know, very heavily criticized Trump, which is kind of a strange thing to do, given that Trump's entire presidency is revolved around, you know, making America great through strength. You can't allow your own proxy to lecture you like this. So it seemed that it was a bit reckless, but he has only taken it further now. I mean, he's touring Europe. He's going all out against Trump. It seems like a gamble to me. That is, he's trying to mobilize American opposition, the Europeans, against Trump. But, you know, Trump, if this fails and Trump doesn't give in, you know, he's going to take this personal. He's going to see Zelenskyy as essentially a key adversary. I'm not sure if maybe I'm reading too much into this, but how do you understand Zelenskyy's calculations here? Because if I was advising Zelenskyy, I would probably have told him to go a bit cautious here.

#Alex Christoforou

Yeah, I would agree with you. I think maybe nine months ago, a year ago, I think Zelenskyy and the Europeans would have been more cautious. I think now there's an understanding between the Europeans, Zelenskyy, Ratcliffe, the CIA, the neocons, that come November, Trump is going to be

weakened, and he's not going to be that much more of an issue. He'll probably be occupied with who knows what's going to happen with the Democrats if they take over. He'll be occupied with all kinds of maybe even impeachment issues, stuff going on, and all kinds of things that are just going to take up his time.

And Project Ukraine is now firmly in the hands and in control of the neocons and Ratcliffe and the CIA. I mean, Ratcliffe was in Moscow a month ago, right? So I think that all of this group of people now understand that Trump is a non-issue. And as time goes by, he's going to be a non-factor when it comes to Ukraine. And this is a neocon CIA project. And underneath the neocons and the CIA are the Europeans. And so I think that's why you see a lot of the European leaders and Zelenskyy openly criticize Trump. They have no problem.

They have no more fear of crossing Trump because he's not really calling any shots anymore when it comes to Ukraine. Even Meloni gave a speech, and she said that the increase in fuel prices has everything to do with Iran completely going against Trump. So without a doubt, the fear of Trump that we had maybe a year ago from the Europeans, from Zelenskyy, that's kind of going away. And I imagine after the midterms, if we get a result that many people expect, which is Democratic control of definitely the House, maybe even the Senate, then I think that the Europeans and Zelenskyy will be even more emboldened to just completely ignore Trump and even go against whatever Trump says when it comes to Ukraine.

#Glenn

But even though Trump, his significance is diminishing, him essentially opening up the door again for lashing out at Zelenskyy, it does, again, open the door for others to come through as well. And people like Elon Musk, he seems to genuinely be concerned about the proxy war in Ukraine taking us towards a possible nuclear conflict. And there's these reports now, of course, that he has begun to shut down some of the access on Starlink. I'm not sure how credible it is. I've heard some conflicting reports. But how do you assess this? Well, what is happening with Starlink? Because without U.S. intelligence, without the U.S. satellites, you know, Zelenskyy wouldn't be able to fight very long. I mean, as you said, this is largely a U.S.-led war, fighting with Ukrainians. But the intelligence, the weapons, the logistics, the targeting, the wider strategy, all of this is coming out of the United States.

#Alex Christoforou

Yeah, there's two things going on here. And the first part is the intelligence cutoff. And the second part is this issue with Starlink. I think the Starlink one is a little harder to figure out. The intelligence cutoff, I never believed it. Alexander didn't believe it. It just didn't seem plausible that the United States and Trump would cut off the intelligence. Even if Trump wanted to cut off the intelligence, the Pentagon, the CIA, the deep state, the neocons would never allow him to cut it off. And I don't even believe that Trump would want to cut off the intelligence because everyone understands that if the intelligence is cut off, then Ukraine basically folds in 24 hours. And the last thing that Trump

wants to see happen is a type of Afghanistan collapse, not under his watch. And we know that Trump is absolutely scared.

He freaks out about a Biden-type of Afghanistan collapse. He doesn't want to see that happen. So there's nothing that would motivate the Trump administration to cut off the intelligence. So I wasn't buying it. I think the intelligence cutoff is a cover-up for Russian hypersonic missiles. That's what I think is going on. And we have to remember how this intelligence narrative story started. There were six hypersonic missiles a couple of days ago that hit Kyiv, and there were no air raid warnings there. I think that they're unable to detect these missiles. And Alexander, in his video update yesterday, he made a very interesting point. He said perhaps the Russians have moved the launchers closer to the front line because they have more control of the front line and of the airspace over Ukraine. The launchers got closer.

The hypersonics are more effective. They're hitting Kyiv faster. And it's very simple: the United States' warning systems are just unable to detect these weapons anymore. And they don't want to say it because if they were to admit such a thing, it would be even worse than an intelligence cutoff. It's better to say that there was some sort of weather issue. That's what they said. There was some weather issue. We couldn't pass the data to Ukraine. Ukraine is saying Trump is upset because we called him weak, so he's cutting off the intel. I think they're making up excuses. But the reality may be much more simple. These are fast weapons. They're closer to the front line. They're hitting Ukraine. The United States is unable to detect them. And that would be a catastrophe if they were to admit such a thing.

#Glenn

Yeah, no, that's a good point. I think if it's suggested that they do this as a power play against Zelensky, at least that's a display of power. If you can't intercept them, that's weakness. That's so much worse. You know, I made a point about Trump's speech at the UN as well. I mean, when he says, you know, we might make a deal with the Iranians where they can thrive, or we'll annihilate the whole nation. I mean, when he says this kind of thing, the rest of the world can't understand why. Like, oh, well, he sounds gruesome and brutal, but it's also, I mean, it's all a display of power. It doesn't—I don't think he cares whether or not you think he's a good moral person, as long as you see him as all-powerful, determining the fate of entire nations.

I think that in itself is a good goal, uh, or good, uh, from, from—with that objective in mind. But if all of this is to weaken all of this, you know, Zelensky going after Trump, trying to mobilize the opposition, and of course the Europeans, which is largely a Trump opposition. Well, you know, Trump is also seeking now to weaken Zelensky, it seems. I mean, he might genuinely see Zelensky as an opposition to peace. That would make sense. But all this talk about replacing Zelensky, because when he calls for elections in Ukraine, that's essentially what he's saying. And he also

blames Zelensky for, you know, he said he should have taken a deal two years ago. It will only get worse and worse. Again, quite predictable. But how do you see the efforts of replacing Zelensky? I mean, who would take over Zelensky?

#Alex Christoforou

There's some candidates, there's some people that the media talks about. I think we know the names of these people. You have Zaluzhny, you have Fedorov and Budanov and Klitschko and all these names that get thrown around. I think a lot of the replacing Zelensky is about putting pressure on Zelensky to play along, more so even the Europeans and maybe even the CIA, to kind of put pressure so that they can play along with the Witkoff-Kushner diplomacy or the ceasefire that they're trying to put together. And so I think they throw out the "let's replace Zelensky," which is something that the Europeans absolutely do not want, or at least the majority of the Europeans do not want.

And I believe it's something that Ratcliffe and the CIA do not want. I think they support Zelensky fully. And so I think that's kind of a pressure tactic. And of course, you're dealing with Trump, and even though he doesn't have as much control of Project Ukraine, or he's losing control of Project Ukraine, he is Trump, and he does use his social to get out his frustrations every now and then. And he doesn't like Zelensky. I don't think that's a secret. They never got along. Trump doesn't like Zelensky. Vance doesn't like Zelensky. I imagine a lot of Europeans don't like Zelensky. But Trump is the type of person that'll just kind of throw it out there on a Truth Social post. I wouldn't take the messaging from Trump too seriously, in my opinion.

I think the neocons, the Europeans, the CIA, they still back Zelensky. And we do know that there is some sort of negotiation that is taking place—not with Russia—a negotiation between the CIA, the neocons, the Europeans, Witkoff and Kushner, and they're trying to put some sort of a plan together. We know this because David Ignatius at The Washington Post has reported on this. David Ignatius is thought to be the mouthpiece of the CIA. Whenever he comes out with information about stuff that's going on in the intel agencies, he's fairly reliable. He's very reliable. And so there seems to be some sort of negotiation that is taking place. Once again, they're not negotiating with Russia.

They're negotiating between themselves, which is something that the publication Naked Capitalism always talks about, how they're always negotiating between themselves. They're never taking into consideration Russia's interests or what Russia is looking for. But there is something that they're trying to put together. It's a four-step plan, a five-step plan, which is going to be taken to Russia. It's going to be a unified proposal between Witkoff, Kushner, the Europeans, the U.S., Ukraine. And it's going to call for a ceasefire. It's going to talk about some sort of big energy deal, security guarantees for Ukraine, which are NATO-like security guarantees and stuff like that. Something that Russia is going to, without a doubt, reject. But this is what they're now putting together.

#Glenn

Well, it reminds me of a key problem with the setup earlier, this NATO-Russia Council to manage relations. But it's always suspended whenever you have any conflicts, like with Georgia or Ukraine. So it's kind of a pointless thing. But whenever they would meet, it would always run into the same problem, because first, all the NATO countries had to come together. They all had to come to a common consensus. And finally, once all the details are worked out, then they can go meet the Russians. But of course, at that point, there's no room for negotiations, because if the Russians have any demands, that common position has to be shifted. And then they have to open up all internal talks, you know, as you said, negotiating with themselves.

So it makes the whole formula very unattractive or dysfunctional in order to actually make a deal with the Russians. I think the whole formula is set up with the assumption of having asymmetrical power and dependence. That is, NATO puts forward a condition and Russia will adjust. And, of course, that whole formula collapses when Russia doesn't fall in line, for example, when it faces an existential threat. So it's, yeah, I'm not sure how they're going to fix this. But if, let's say, Trump would actually cut off Zelensky of intelligence to get this kind of leverage, you know, extract some concessions, how significant would it be? I mean, what are the collective capabilities now of the Ukrainian armed forces and the Europeans?

#Alex Christoforou

I think Ukraine would be done. I mean, I think we all understand now that Ukraine would be done. I mean, they're pretty much saying that without the United States, they can't continue this conflict. I mean, Zelensky is doing now a tour of the UK and Europe, and he's saying that without the intel, without the Starlink, we would be finished. So I think that's not any surprise there. I mean, we've been saying it for a while now, that without the U.S. intel, without the U.S. satellites and the Starlink, Ukraine would not be able to fight this war. But I don't think anything like that is even close to happening.

I don't think that even Trump wants that to happen. I still believe that the United States, they want Russia to just agree to a ceasefire. I think that still remains their goal. And when you go over the Washington Post article, it's very clear that whatever proposal, this unified negotiation proposal that they're going to present to Russia, the goal is to get a ceasefire, to get a pause, to get a Minsk Three, call it whatever you want. And they haven't abandoned Ukraine's NATO ambitions. They're just kind of covering it up with security guarantees, which are similar to NATO. But Ukraine's not going to be in NATO, but it is going to be in NATO, right?

They always come up with these types of clever, clever wording. But it's all about a ceasefire at this point in time because the war is not going well. And I think they understand that they want to—they know they're losing the war, but they want to believe that they're winning, and they want to believe that they can somehow trick Russia into agreeing to a ceasefire, or pressure Russia into agreeing to

a ceasefire, or escalate so that Russia capitulates and agrees to a ceasefire. There's no plan to actually negotiate a long-term settlement along the lines of what Russia is looking for when it comes to Ukraine.

#Glenn

That's my impression as well. What they want is stable front lines so you can gradually drain the adversary of its blood and treasury. Indeed, you have obviously read the RAND paper from 2019 about overextending Russia. It is interesting when you talk about how should we pull Russia deeper into this conflict by threatening NATO expansion, sending more weapons, etc., and kind of they have a pro and con. The pro would be, well, it's great. We get to drain the Russians of resources. The negative is, well, what if there's an outright war and Russian, well, strategic territories fall to Russia? This will make it a bad war. So I think that's why it's been a good war for four and a half years, because they've been bleeding the Russians the way they see it. But now that the territory is falling to Russia, that would make it a bad war.

So what you do, you don't end the war. You convert it into a forever war by stabilizing the fronts. But then you need some breathing space. And for me, this is how, at least, I interpret the whole ceasefire: that is setting the conditions for a forever war. I find it strange as well that they won't even discuss—that is, the Europeans—discuss a political settlement before there's a ceasefire. Why couldn't you sit down now and at least put together the skeleton structure? It just doesn't make any sense. But I do want to ask you, in this article by Ignatius, what are the main themes? Because, again, much like the RAND reports, these are like the think tanks of the intelligence services. What are his arguments, though, in terms of how they should end this war or prolong it, if that's the purpose?

#Alex Christoforou

Well, yeah, I mean, I agree with you. The main theme is exactly what you said. It's to try and get a freeze, try and get a ceasefire, to buy the time and space—the time and space to overextend Russia, to continue to extend Russia, to continue to put losses towards Russia. And it's all about a ceasefire and a freeze. And, of course, we're dealing with the CIA now. You always have to take into consideration that there's going to be some sort of a dirty war component, some sort of a covert dirty war that they're looking to put together, which will absolutely extend the conflict way beyond just Ukraine.

If the CIA continues to push for some sort of a covert type of war with Russia, a hybrid war, which is why I always get nervous when the Europeans talk about a hybrid attack. When they're talking about Russia's hybrid attack, I always think of it as, well, it's the West that is projecting and signaling that what comes next is going to be some sort of hybrid attack towards Russia. That's exactly what they're telling the citizens: prepare for a hybrid war, which is going to come when this one battle concludes. It's not going to end, that Ukraine is going to continue.

And so the Ignatius article is really focused on a ceasefire. And they have some carrots and sticks in there, right? And the one—you could say the one stick is, well, Ukraine security guarantees, NATO-like security guarantees. But the article talks about an energy deal, this big energy deal that will bring Russia back into the European market. So they talk about that. They give the carrot of sanctions relief. Well, you know, is Russia really going to buy that? I mean, it's sanctions relief. You guys just put the 22nd sanctions package, and we got the Lindsey Graham 500% bone-crushing tariff bill as well.

But they're talking about some sanctions relief. So it's your typical carrot-and-stick approach. But what it's really trying to get to is to push Russia to agree to a conflict freeze, a conflict ceasefire. That's what it's all about. And they're in a panic to get it done because of winter. And they're very, very afraid of what Russia is doing, especially to Kyiv as winter approaches. I would even say that the whole Starlink issue is hinting at a big escalation that's coming, which is going to try to pressure Russia to agree to a ceasefire. And I'll go back to Alexander's video update yesterday, where he comes up with the theory, with the speculation, that perhaps this limit on the speed of the Starlink terminals to 100, I think it's 100 miles an hour, that they put this limit... Maybe this is not really about drones.

Maybe what this is about is this FP-9, this new ballistic missile that Ukraine is going to launch. They said by the end of October, early November, that they're going to start putting into operation, which is meant to hit deep into Russia, even into Moscow, even deeper into Russian territory, which does use Starlink, travels at very high speeds, according to Zelensky's statements, and it is guided by Starlink. Maybe in the Trump-Putin phone call, this new weapon that Ukraine is developing or that is going to be given to Ukraine, this long-range ballistic missile, maybe this was discussed during the phone call, and perhaps Trump is saying, you know what?

Maybe this is not a good idea after we're seeing what Russia is doing to Kyiv. Maybe we need to find a way to limit this. But then you have the CIA and the neocons who are saying, no, we're going to push forward with these strikes. We're going to cross this Russian red line, and we're going to send these ballistic missiles with the guidance of Starlink into Russia. We're going to call Russia's bluff. Perhaps this is what's going on, but the Starlink issue worries me because I do think this is actually signaling some sort of big escalation that's going to happen.

#Glenn

Yes. Well, I can't imagine the Russians taking this deal, though, because for more than 30 years now, they've been warning, do not go back to bloc politics. Don't expand NATO towards our borders. Especially Ukraine is an existential threat. We've had these talks now for 30 years, and now it results in an all-out war. And the Russians are now at the cusp of victory. And at that point in time, the NATO countries are like, "We will suggest temporary sanctions relief," roll back if the Russians essentially capitulate by not going for the victory. I just, I mean, I saw Lavrov in Moscow two weeks

ago, and he was—he used the same phrase again. He said, "Washington's agreement is incapable," he said. So they don't trust any of the deals because they've been listening for more than 12 years now about the deals that have been promised over Ukraine. Every time it's broken.

And then, of course, they look towards Iran and they see the same. All deals are just deception to strengthen your position, reshape the battlefield, and then strike again. So it looks like fantasy, but... But you mentioned the hybrid war, and yeah, I feel the same way. It's a lot of projection. Whenever we talk about hybrid war, then probably we are the ones doing something. But the big thing in the media now is the EU intelligence claims that the Russians are preparing to target the CEOs of these weapon companies, essentially assassinations, which seems a bit... off script of what the Russians have been doing. I mean, killing civilian leaders, even if they're running factories. I can see them sabotaging weapons factories, but starting to kill off the CEOs, that's a bit over the top, it seems. Again, maybe I'm wrong, but how do you read this whole case, this whole news story?

#Alex Christoforou

Yeah, I think the thing about going after the CEOs is also a projection. I mean, who has been attacking Russians? Who's been killing, assassinating Russian generals, Russian journalists, bloggers inside of Russia over the past four years? You know, what happened to Crocus three years ago? I mean, Ukraine. Ukraine, without a doubt, with help from some intel agencies in the West. They've been the ones that have been going after civilians, journalists, as well as military officials inside of Russia, in Moscow, in St. Petersburg. This is admitted by Budanov and by the SBU and by Ukraine. They haven't denied this.

They've admitted that they've been doing this. We even had an attack in Monaco about a month or two ago. So, I mean, I just think this is more signaling to Russia and to European citizens that we are going to enter a next phase, which is going to be a very nasty hybrid war, covert war. I think that's what this is all about. And as far as these hybrid attacks that are happening in Europe, maybe they are. But show us the evidence. You have surveillance at an airport, which is full of Ukrainian planes with weapons. You must have 24 hours a day, seven days a week, video surveillance. Show us the video of the drone that hit this plane.

It still doesn't prove anything, but at least we see that there was a drone that hit a plane. Was it Russia? Who knows? But at least show us that part of the story. They haven't. They haven't shown anything there. The whole cybercrime, hybrid attack is, well, okay, we just have to take your word for it, European leaders. Russia is committing cybercrimes, cyberattacks. Okay. What exactly? No one even really knows. Even Rutte, as he was meeting with the Estonian prime minister the other day, he didn't even know what these hybrid attacks are about. He even said, "These hybrid attacks, or whatever they're about, no one really knows." It's kind of like a catch-all.

It's everything and nothing. And so they'll blame it on Russia. Election meddling, they'll blame it on Russia. Cybercrimes, they'll blame it on Russia. Balloons crossing over from Belarus, carrying

contraband cigarettes—Russia. Migration, illegal migration through Belarus, they blame it on Russia, right? You know, it's nonsense. It's meant to scare people in Europe. Maybe it's meant to scare them so that eventually they could be sent to the front line. Definitely it's meant to scare European citizens so that Brussels can obtain more control. More control flows into the center. Without a doubt, that's a benefit to all of this.

#Glenn

But it's also a projection as well.

#Alex Christoforou

And it's signaling a very nasty, very destructive hybrid war that will be fought mostly between Russia and the Europeans because the United States is far away.

#Glenn

You would think there would be at least some pushback in the media, because over the past years now, there's just been so much fake news with no accountability. We had Russiagate. We had the Biden laptop. We had the Russians putting bounties on American troops in Afghanistan. We had Nord Stream being the pipeline that Putin attacked. And, of course, now we have another Russiagate attempt in Britain, with the Prime Minister Bernham making the point that, well, maybe we should reverse Brexit because, you know, it was Russian interference, and then, you know, immediately get crushed. And I thought, oh, if the British can't even, you know, use their undying hatred of Russia to overturn the democratic process, what was the hope here? But at least this one got pushed back.

But, of course, that's not because there was any love for Russia. It's because they wanted to protect Brexit. But nonetheless, to the point, I understand the strategy, though. It's a good strategy because if you say Russia did this or that, no one can possibly push against it because then you're pro-Russian. You're running errands for President Putin. So, you know, it's a good strategy. But it also allows, I guess, especially the Europeans to run completely mad because you can say anything you want about Russia. And again, no pushback. And then, you know, of course, this Leipzig drone, I mean, for me, this looks like a ridiculous story, even if it was Russians, which I have a hard time believing, this little hobby drone flying at an airport.

I mean, what was this? I mean, this doesn't seem very serious. I've seen the Russian drones. But, yeah, my question was about Rutte, though, because he's been the NATO Secretary General, he's been warning us about this imminent Russian threat, you know, every day, you know, beating the war drums. And then suddenly now he made this, you know, statement or speech where he made, well, there's no imminent threat from Russia. If something happens, we'll address it. I mean, is this related to the Trump-Zelensky spat? Did the daddy call his proxies and tell them to calm it down? I mean, how do you make sense of this?

#Alex Christoforou

Yeah, I thought that was an interesting statement from Rutte as well. He said it before in the past. He kind of goes between Russia's going to attack us and we need to prepare for war, and then he'll change the narrative in a speech and he'll say, well, we haven't really seen any evidence. I do think there are some leaders in Europe who are getting freaked out as far as the escalation is concerned. I mean, I can tell you, in Greece and Cyprus and much of Southern Europe, definitely people are not hip to the idea of some sort of Europe-Russia war. They don't want it. No one wants it. And I think a lot of the population, even in central and northern Europe, does not want a hot war between Russia and Europe.

So I think you see that in the election results in Germany, right? That's one of the big issues. That's one of the reasons that Merz and the CDU is losing. And so I think Rutte is playing kind of both sides, in that he'll say, well, Russia is going to attack us, and so we need more military spending, which is his job. He's the CEO of NATO. He needs to look at the revenue of NATO, and that comes from the military spending. And every now and again, he has to come out and say, okay, well, look, nothing. We don't see any evidence whatsoever, right? So if Russia does attack, we'll be ready. So he comes out with those statements because there are leaders. Maybe even Alexander Stubb, I could say, is one of them in Finland.

He's very hawkish with Russia, but he has come out many times and said, well, we don't see any evidence of a Russian invasion. Finland is on the front line. If there were to be a war, Finland would be right there. And this is a concern for the people of Finland. I don't think anyone in Finland wants a hot war with Russia because they know that they would be one of the first countries that would be hit. So I think that Rutte is kind of trying to balance, as best he can, some of the concerns of European leaders and then what the military companies want, what the CIA, the intel agencies, the deep state, the neocons want. And of course, the bottom line, which is always money for NATO. So that's, I think, a position.

But definitely the whole narrative of the hybrid wars, yeah, the statement from Burnham with Brexit and Russia, that was even rejected by Boris Johnson. You can't get more hawkish towards Russia than Boris Johnson, right? And he even came out with a statement saying it's not true. We have the misinformation of the other day of the Russian bots with the Yandex hitting the Yandex. And you had a bunch of journalists and even EU Parliament officials coming out and saying, well, look, now that the Yandex data center has been hit, Russian bot activity has decreased. And then everyone on the internet pointed out that had nothing to do with Russian bots.

That was Yandex website crawlers, which is something that all search engines do. It decreased with the destruction of Yandex. So that was completely debunked, to the point where you even had some of the journalists that ran with that claim having to apologize for the misinformation. And so, I mean, you're exactly right. All of this hybrid war stuff does allow the Europeans to come out with just outrageous claims. You know, they overturned elections in Romania with outrageous claims,

completely debunked. Russia, TikTok—no one talks about that anymore. Completely debunked, that whole thing. But they overturned the elections, and they imprisoned Georgescu again for another 30 days.

So, I mean, this is where we are in Europe. It's leaders that are in panic, that have lost their minds. If they could fight Russia, they would. If NATO could fight Russia, they absolutely would. But they know that if they went into Russia, they would get smashed. And they know that without the United States, it would never happen. They would never be able to go up against Russia. But can the United States handle a conflict with Russia? The neocons probably believe they can. But the United States is already involved in two other wars. It's involved in Iran, and it's about to get involved in a conflict in Yemen. So we talk about Russia, extended, overextended. Looks like the United States is overextended.

#Glenn

What was done to Romania? I mean, this should really be front and center in the news. This is what we should discuss. How did we let this—how did we go so far to crush their democracy, to protect our warmongering policies? I mean, the fact that it's not even a topic in the media kind of shows where we are as a society. I mean, it can't even be discussed what was done. But the Baltic states I find fascinating, though, because as long as it's about fueling the Ukraine war, fighting with Ukrainians, they are the most hawkish, loudest people calling for war. But as soon as it seems like there could be a direct NATO-Russia war, they suddenly toned it down a lot.

I saw the Lithuanian leaders, for example, suddenly, hey, there's no real Russia threat. We have no intelligence for war. I mean, what the hell? This just happened overnight. The narrative—I mean, they protect the narratives by tooth and nail. But these contradictions, the way they swing back and forth, it makes some of the credibility not very strong. Yeah. But I also ask, why don't they explain why would Russia attack Europe? What would be the purpose? I mean, the only purpose I can see is deterrence. We are attacking them. They might attack us to restore their deterrence. But we can't say that because we claim we don't participate in attacks on Russia.

So we have to make up these stories about restoring the Soviet Union. But we can't explain exactly what the hell that means either. Are they going to take over Poland, hold 40 million people? What's in Poland? What is the purpose? Who would support this in Russia? Who would support any of their allies? How are you going to hold a country where nobody wants you? I mean, it doesn't make any sense. And how would you fight the war? What's the victory over Russia? They never discuss these things. And I always make the point: if we do fight the Russians, we should pray that we don't win because, you know, after they run out of Oreshniks on our cities, the nuclear weapons will come out.

So you don't want to defeat the world's largest nuclear power fighting for its existence. You know, this is not a war you want to win either. So the whole thing is so foolish. Well, just my last question, though, is how do you read the battlefield these days? I mean, how desperate is the situation in

Kiev? And I guess more specifically, this whole operation we've all watched—the Ukrainians, you know, expanding in on the, I guess, east of Slavyansk into the territories held by Russia. They were, you know, around Liman. How has—because they seem to have some success, not measured in the war of attrition, but in terms of capturing territory—how do you see the front lines developing now?

#Alex Christoforou

I think the front lines across the entire front are really bad for Ukraine. I think this is, at the end of the day, this is what drives everything, right, is the fact that Russia is advancing and the war of attrition is working. And Russia is getting closer to Kramatorsk and Slavyansk. And Kiev is now a frontline city. Odessa is now a frontline city. They always talk about the tide is turning. That's what Ursula was saying just three weeks ago. The tide is turning. That was the narrative. Ukraine is going to win this thing, said Alexander Stubb. No, actually, he said Ukraine has already won. This is what they were telling us a month ago. Or the front line is a stalemate.

What are they talking about? Russia has got Dobropilya completely encircled, completely encircled. They're getting very close to Kramatorsk. They're moving closer to Slavyansk. Kiev has become a frontline city. Odessa port completely blocked. Steel industry destroyed. Data centers are coming under attack. The epicenter, the Amazon of Ukraine—my understanding is that yesterday their last data center had been completely wiped out. So the whole attack on Ozon and on Wildberries, what did it result in? They're still operating in Russia. Those businesses are still delivering their products and their services, their goods, to Russians.

But Ukraine now has had all of their online retail, their big online retailer, their final warehouse in Kiev, completely destroyed. And that warehouse was holding 85% of all the products and goods that they deliver. So, I mean, none of this has benefited Ukraine. The drone strikes, this whole 40-day drone attacks into Russia, a complete disaster. The cost of all of this has been, Zelensky's words, astronomical, he said. Europe has run out of money. The \$90 billion that they were supposed to deliver to Ukraine, they now need \$150 billion. That's because of the drone strikes. So the front line is a disaster. The Lyman, the Vovchansk thing. My take on all of that is it's all about Biletsky.

This is a media and PR campaign for Azov and Biletsky. He's trying to position himself as a viable, powerful force for when the day arrives and Zelensky finally exits—Biletsky, so that they can remain a powerful force in Ukraine, a powerful political broker in Ukraine. That's what I think it's about. I think it's more about the image of Biletsky than anything else. It looks like whatever territory they've captured was territory that was not really being contested. When they have run up against Russian forces, the advance has stalled. And in about a week's time, we're going to be entering the muddy, rainy winter season, and that's it for this Vovchansk advance.

And the fact that you don't get any information about what's happening, especially from the Ukraine side of things when it comes to Lyman, shows that it's not really going too well. If Lyman was really going well and they were really moving and pushing the Russians back and advancing, Zelensky

would be talking about it nonstop, 24 hours a day. But they don't even talk about it because I don't think this is about any type of military strategic operation to benefit Ukraine. I think this is about Biletsky, an entirely man operation. And I think even Zelensky doesn't want to promote Biletsky too much. So that's why even Zelensky is quiet about this operation. Honestly, Ukraine, what Ukraine has right now when it comes to the conflict is the drones. That's it.

#Alex Christoforou

And the drones are a disaster.

#Alex Christoforou

They're costing a lot of money, and they do hit Russia. They do hit refineries. They do manage to get through. But you're talking about one or two drones out of 500. And it's costing the West a lot of money. And a lot of corruption there too. That's one thing we didn't mention, Glenn, is a lot of everything that's going on is also driven by a lot of the corruption. You know, the Baltic states—for them, keeping this project going is good business. It keeps them in the center of things.

#Glenn

Yeah, well, the deep strikes by Russia, though, I think it added a third component because usually we measure developments in the war. I mean, in the West, they tend to focus on territory to show that, oh, it doesn't move that much. It's stagnant, while the Russians tend to focus on this as a war of attrition because, well, that's what it is. You know, what are the attrition rates? How many forces is the other side losing? I mean, when you hear Putin go through this, he essentially provides a mathematical formula, like, this is how many people they're losing. You know, they can't hold on forever.

But the third component is, of course, the destruction of the energy system, the logistics, the entire economic structure, functioning of the Ukrainian state, even not just economic, the social as well, the ability to live there. The fact that the Ukrainians are now leaving the capital city, man, this is kind of—this is going to destroy the country. I don't account for the life. We understand why they still don't want to do any negotiations. By that I mean talk about a political settlement, not an unconditional ceasefire. But here we are. Do you have any final thoughts before we finish off the video?

#Alex Christoforou

No, just to go off of what you said, because whatever happens in Kyiv, or at least for Zelensky and all of these guys, you know, they'll just move on to the next city, and most likely there'll be a government in exile somewhere in Poland or in Latvia or France or whatever. And the money will keep on flowing to this government in exile. So for them, it's okay. Kyiv? Well, we'll just move to

Lviv, and then we'll move outside of Ukraine. But we'll remain the force that is fighting Russia forever and ever. And the money will continue to go to these guys.

#Glenn

Well, thank you for sharing your insights. And for our listeners, please check out the podcast of Alex Christoforou. That is The Duran and his own podcast. So thank you very much for taking the time.

#Alex Christoforou

Thank you. Thank you for having me. Pleasure.