

# Krainer: Iran War Goes Global - Economic, Energy, Food Crisis

Alex Krainer is a market analyst, author & former hedge fund manager. Krainer discusses the unpredictable energy, food and economic shockwaves from the Iran War. Alex Krainer's substack: <https://alexkrainer.substack.com/> Alex Krainer podcast: <https://www.youtube.com/@kraineralex> Follow Prof. Glenn Diesen: Substack: <https://glennDiesen.substack.com/> X/Twitter: [https://x.com/Glenn\\_Diesen](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](http://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 are joined today by Alex Cranor, a market analyst, author, and former hedge fund manager. Also, we can add that he's the host of the Alex Cranor Podcast, and I'll leave a link in the description. I saw you just had a new video come out—thank you for coming on. We keep seeing this uncontrolled war unraveling in Iran. It seems to be spiraling out of control. There are no efforts to de-escalate or to find an off-ramp. I was wondering, what do you see as the economic consequences of this war around the world? You know, they can be minor things—for example, if there's less oil, fewer fishing boats go out, food prices go up, people can't pay their bills, and you get socioeconomic instability. What's fascinating here is that the entire world is impacted by this war. So what do you expect to see in terms of the integrated global economy being affected by taking all this energy off the market?

## #Alex Krainer

Glenn, thank you for having me. It's always a pleasure to join you. Unfortunately, here we are discussing some pretty bad developments in the world. I'd say it's impossible to predict the fallout from the current war in West Asia. The reason is that we've just had an absolutely massive disruption—not only in the oil market but also in natural gas markets. That, in turn, affects many other industries because natural gas is the main feedstock for the production of fertilizers, nitrogen fertilizers. So if one-third of the feedstock is stuck in the Gulf and half of all the LNG tankers are stuck there, we could be in a lot of trouble.

I think the fallout won't happen overnight. There's going to be a lot of talk—oh, this is going to happen, that's going to happen—but we're already starting from a very bad point, because many Western nations have been destroying their agricultural production for years now, you know, over net-zero policies and whatnot. You can already see that reduced food production in the West is

becoming noticeable. I live in France, and I'm one of those people who likes to buy fresh ingredients and cook at home, so I tend to be pretty discerning about what I buy.

And France has always had, of all the countries where I've lived, the best food merchandising and distribution. You always had a very wide variety of high-quality produce available at all times—it was pretty much taken for granted. But even before this war started, I began noticing—well, it probably started during the pandemic—that both the variety and the quality of produce offered in the market have been declining. And I mean a drastic decline. This year, in the last maybe six to twelve months, for the first time ever, many supermarkets have signs saying, "We're out of eggs," for example.

The meat section is visibly reduced. I think there's less than half of what used to be available, and there are far fewer cuts. At the same time, the processed foods don't seem to be affected—you know, the junk and the low-quality stuff. So now add the largest disruption ever to hit the oil and natural gas markets. We can't tell how this will unfold, because it's a situation that will snowball. We're aware—rationally aware—that something's not right and that it's going to have consequences. But what those consequences will be is nearly impossible to predict.

I used to be an oil market analyst, and I remember that in 2012 I read reports drafted by American military intelligence, British military intelligence—actually, the Ministry of Defence—and by the German Ministry of Defence. They were all predicting that we were heading into a period of oil shortages and that this would have extreme consequences. The British Ministry of Defence predicted that by 2040 the price of oil would reach \$500 a barrel. Now, I know that might sound exaggerated, but even as recently as 2022, we had an analysis report from JP Morgan saying the price could go to \$380 per barrel.

## **#Alex Krainer**

Today we're trading just over \$100 a barrel, and the war has been going on for, what, just over two weeks. These kinds of large-scale price jumps never happen overnight. We had a jolt, because two or three months ago a barrel of oil was trading at about \$60. So we're now...

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Sixty-seven, seventy percent higher than two months ago. But this could just be the first jolt. Large-scale price events tend to span months and years, so we can't exclude the possibility that the price of a barrel really does go to \$380, or to \$500 a barrel—or who knows where. Right.

## **#Alex Krainer**

And what the consequences of that will be—I think it's impossible to predict. You know, we've been talking about gold prices for many, many years, and gold prices had done more or less nothing until 2023. Until then, they were kind of languishing between \$1,600 and \$2,000, just bouncing in a horizontal range. But then, once the price went decisively above \$2,000 an ounce...

## **#Alex Krainer**

Then it kept going. Over the next two years—so between the end of 2023 and now—we've seen gold reach \$5,000 an ounce. And there's no telling where it might go. It could go to \$10,000 or even \$20,000. Nobody can predict these things.

## **#Alex Krainer**

And then another troubling factor is that, over the decades, we've removed redundancy from the system. In the sense that, let's say, you have large agricultural concerns producing massive quantities of corn, wheat, soybeans—these strategic crops—but you keep putting smallhold farmers at a disadvantage, slowly destroying them. Once these large concerns that produce food in great bulk start going bankrupt because they can't pay for the oil, the gas, the fertilizer, and so forth, we don't have family-owned farms to fall back on. Because, you know, in the past, if all those mountains of corn and wheat didn't materialize, there were still family farms producing food.

It'll be expensive, but at least it's there. We've destroyed this to a large extent. So I think we're in serious trouble, because this can't come back overnight. You know, it takes time, skill, know-how, commitment, and dedication. And once you uproot it, it'll take years for smallhold farming to come back—if they even allow it—because the bureaucracy is still destroying family farming. And in a way, there's no reverse gear. Nobody's saying, "Oh, this was a bad idea, let's quickly reverse these policies." All the incentives and directives that came from the EU, from central governments to their bureaucracies, are still there. The incentives are still there. So the big train wreck is still happening.

I'm afraid we might be heading toward a situation that nobody's prepared for, because it hasn't happened since maybe the last World War. And people who lived through World War II, they remember famine. So we might be going into a period of famine. Unfortunately, our policymakers and governments are not taking this seriously. I don't know if they're even discussing it. I don't see it being discussed anywhere. It's an urgent matter. But they're still obsessed with Russia, with Ukraine, with net-zero policies, and so on. So, unfortunately, I'm afraid ordinary people will have to take things into their own hands—see if they can grow food for themselves, plant potatoes, leeks, tomatoes, and stock up on non-perishable items.

## **#Glenn**

Well, that was part of the problem in the past few years with the Ukraine war alone—these limitations on artificial fertilizers and all these things because of the sanctions. This, of course, will add further to it. But there seems to be a much wider challenge. Over the past few decades, under this neoliberal economics, we've kind of let the market dictate everything—outsourcing what others might produce more efficiently, assuming that markets will always be open. We also saw the U.S. outsourcing its development of critical medicines to China. Critical minerals, of course, depend on China. And again, not just nations, but businesses are organizing around this just-in-time logistics, so there's no need for storage.

We've also seen people becoming more dependent on living paycheck to paycheck. It's across society. It doesn't seem like we're capable of absorbing a shock, unlike during the Second World War. At least then there was some strategic autonomy and an ability to handle those kinds of shocks. Even in the military sphere, I see that the Iranians have blown up a lot of American radars worth hundreds of millions of dollars—I think they're the TPY-2 radars. And if we want to rebuild those, as well as the interceptors and all these weapons stockpiles the U.S. has been burning through, it needs access to materials like gallium and other rare earths, which, as it happens, China controls—about 98% of the total, I think.

So it's just an unmitigated disaster. It's not clear what we're going to do. We're not going to make peace and restore trust in the supply chains. And yet, if we want to have complete strategic autonomy, we need many years, if not decades, to reorganize the entire economy. But we seem to be heading straight into massive conflicts and wars, dismantling supply chains without any ability to absorb these shocks. I mean, how... Again, if we could predict what will happen, it would be one thing. But I think there are too many unknown variables, which is why it's so difficult to assess.

## **#Alex Krainer**

Yes, correct. I'm afraid there's a very significant conflict between the ruling establishments in the Western world and the people. Unfortunately, this is one of those things that keeps happening throughout history. The people who hold the levers of power, who enjoy all the privileges of the system as it's set up today, don't want to change it. And what happens is that with money lending, usury, and this fraudulent money we have, over time this mechanism acts as a wealth-extraction conveyor belt. It creates a polarization of wealth, meaning the people at the levers of power become more and more wealthy.

A greater and greater amount of capital, of collateral, is in their hands, while ordinary people are increasingly disenfranchised, poor, struggling to pay their bills, having difficulty making a living, living paycheck to paycheck, and so forth. And so, the first reflex of the ruling establishment has always been to get rid of the people. They usually did this by crying "barbarians at the gate." If

there were no barbarians at the gates, they would invent them. They would orchestrate wars, and then they would sacrifice, especially military-age men, in very large numbers in these wars—because military-age men are exactly the greatest threat to them.

Well, I think that the war against Russia was intended to serve this purpose, but it hasn't quite worked out, and people are not convinced. People in France, Germany, Poland, Great Britain—none of them think that Russia is the greatest existential threat. So none of them are willing to send their sons to fight and die in that war. I think other approaches are being used, and this goes into the conspiracy theory realm—where, you know, we're told there are no conspiracies, everything's just a coincidence—but it does appear that a lot of what they do now is used as plan B, plan C, and so forth, to keep getting rid of the people. And, you know, in Canada we now see that one of their leading medical treatments is called "medical assistance in dying."

And they're so excited about it that, since the law passed, they've already killed 100,000 people. For a population the size of Canada, that's very significant. I think it's now become the third leading cause of death in Canada. Well, it's being passed in France, and European countries are enthusiastically adopting it. It's one of those things where, if you say the wrong word, you can't even opt out anymore. If you say today, "Well, maybe I'll consider it," you're already done. They don't give you an out—you have to fight to save your life. Then our supplies are increasingly toxic, which often turns out to be strange, because it's like, "Oh yeah, well, sorry, we got some lead in the water."

That was a mistake. Oh, we have all these cancer-causing agents in our toothpaste. Well, that's a mistake, obviously. But there have been a lot of mistakes, all going in the same direction. So the rates of chronic diseases, the rates of cancers, and so forth are exploding. And I have to wonder if that's not on purpose. In fact, it's almost certain that it is on purpose, because we have very detailed data from, let's say, the vaccine industry, where the statistics from systems like VAERS in the United States show that over the last 30 years, the safety of these shots has been on the decline and the side effects have been increasingly severe.

And fewer and fewer people are ever recovering from these side effects. And, you know, that's a trend that's been going on for more than 30 years now. So if you have this trillion-dollar industry with all the research money can buy—all these specialists, all the production facilities—and the trend of safety has been steadily declining for 30 years, you have to suspect it's deliberate. Otherwise, somebody would say, "Oh, you know, we made these mistakes, we'll correct them." With all the know-how, all the research, all the investment, we should be seeing an increase in safety and effectiveness, but we're seeing the opposite.

Anyhow, you know, what I've been saying since the pandemic is that we're fighting a thousand battles right now. And it's not just that—it's the CBDCs, the digital IDs, the 15-minute cities, the net zero agenda, the assault on farmers, the destruction of food production, the steady toxification of the environment. It's wars breaking out everywhere, and more and more of them, almost as though

it's being done deliberately. So, in the end, I think we won't solve it. I don't see that we're going to be able to vote our way out of it.

I think it's going to take people simply taking things into their own hands—making sure they know how to take care of their families and their health, making sure they know how to procure food, making sure they have good relations with their neighbors, that they network in their community, that they know, you know, who can fix your car, who can fix your leaky roof, who knows how to treat wounds and set broken bones, and so forth. And in the end, you know, when the CBDCs get unrolled—and that's almost 100% going to be a train wreck—I think they're going to fail because it's an extremely, extremely ambitious, complex problem they're trying to tackle.

We're not going to survive without gray and black markets. People are generally very, very good at creating them because they simply have urgent needs—you need to eat, you need water, you need a roof over your head. And then these black markets self-organize. But that means the political establishment loses control. And then, you know, I think ultimately the solution will be for the Western world to integrate with the Eastern solutions—the SCO, the BRICS organization, the Belt and Road, multipolar integrations, and so forth.

And maybe this war in Iran now is a great catalyst, right? One that will accelerate all of these changes. But one thing everybody has to keep in mind is that we will not get solutions from our governments. That's just the way things are today. We cannot expect our governments to deliver for us. And we shouldn't expect it, even if we vote the current governments out of power and replace them with new ones. Just look at how things are going in the United States. Voting Trump into office was practically a revolution, and now it seems that the Trump revolution is very, very much jeopardized—pretty much by Trump's own goal in Iran.

## **#Glenn**

Yeah. Well, a lot of the problems we have today—we had different solutions for them in the past. Uh, this is not advocacy, but in the past, colonization tended to act as a kind of safety valve to release some pressure. That is, economic pressure could be released by colonizing; political dissent could be sent abroad. You know, if you opened up and sent them abroad, it would release some of this—this sense of purpose, built-up nationalism, prestige—all of that could be channeled outward. But the same kind of dynamics, the same problems, are building up now, and we don't really have that outlet today. But yeah, it's a good point with Trump, because he was seen as the revolutionary, though he was definitely not part of the establishment.

He would do something very different. The fact that the entire political class and the entire media went after him was kind of worn as a badge of honor—to show that, well, they don't own me. And people, you know, they didn't vote before because of it; they voted because of it. This was important. But... yeah, here it is. I'm not even sure how to explain what happened to Trump, because, you know, one can say, yes, the U.S. is to a large extent controlled or influenced by Israeli

foreign policy. But that can't be the only reason. I don't doubt that influence, but one also has to look at the threats against Panama, the kidnapping of the president of Venezuela, and now the war on Iran. Of course, that can be explained—but he's already saying Cuba is next in line.

He might go for Nicaragua. He already attacked Cuba—why not threaten Canada? And it's just... he threatened Colombia as well, and Greenland, of course. I mean, it's quite impressive, really. It would be quicker to list the countries he didn't threaten. No, I know, which is why it's hard to understand what happened, because he was the "peace president." That's what he was running on. And he prided himself, in the first administration, on not starting new wars—all of these things. So I'm not sure what happened to Trump. When he says, you know, "We want peace, but peace through strength," well, that's like the NATO model. That means, essentially, hegemonic peace: we'll be so powerful no one can challenge us. We had hegemonic peace.

That's why people voted for Trump—because they thought this was exhausting the U.S., that it was creating collective balancing. But here we are, back to the same thing. That being said, this list of countries he wants to invade—Venezuela, for example—he said, "Oh, we've got their oil." In Iran, you know, Lindsey Graham made the point, "Oh, we're going to make a ton of money if we can control their oil." Greenland has all these resources. Are we seeing the beginning of some kind of energy war here? Because if there's competition over controlling international resources, you could say, yes, it's just the United States playing this game now. But if they're trying to essentially corner the market with military force, other countries will have to respond in some way.

## **#Alex Krainer**

Yes, but I think it's a lot more complicated than it has been for the past century, because, let's say, the scramble for the Middle East started—let's call it about 120 years ago. So it was 1902 or 1903 when the British...

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They realized they needed oil, that the Middle East was very rich in it, and they had already started colonizing the region to secure access. This has been almost a constant in the foreign policy of Western powers. But, you know, today we have an energy transformation process based on advances in nuclear power, electricity generation, battery technology, and so forth. It's coming largely from China, but other countries are also participating. So, at the moment, when you have battery technology that can charge a car battery in...

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Five or ten minutes, and it can run 3,000 kilometers on one charge—that's a massive game changer that impacts the automotive industry. And then, with respect to the need for heavy oil for ships, diesel engines, and generators—well, you know, the Middle East isn't the only game in town

anymore. Maybe that's why Trump was keen on controlling Venezuela's oil supply, and maybe that's why he's interested in securing Canadian resources. But, you know, Russia has massive energy and oil supplies. It's one of the world's largest producers, and it's completely unrealistic for Trump to think he can control Russia.

And clearly, they're losing their grip on the Middle East. I think it's been—well, let's say it's been almost obvious that if he pulled the trigger on a war against Iran, the United States would end up being evicted from the region. And that's probably going to happen now. I don't see how they can avoid it. Even Trump, in the last 24 or 48 hours, has been saying, "Well, we don't really even have to be there," because it's very clear this is an unwinnable war, and the longer it goes on, the more it plays to the advantage of Russia, China, and Iran—and the less it plays to the advantage of Western powers, which are growing weaker and weaker.

So I think, in the end, we're going back to—well, you know, I kind of predicted this before—that either we're going to see the fall of the Western Empire, or the West is going to close itself off into a bloc, like the former Soviet bloc, and we'll have a new iron curtain. Then they'll try to regroup and reorganize themselves for the next hurrah of imperial wars and colonialism. But, you know, only the political establishments in charge in the West want this. The people don't want it. And I think that today, unlike in the past, people are more aware than ever that their political establishments are basically Epstein classes.

And the way we're going to win a better future and real emancipation is by changing our political establishments, rather than going along with whatever agenda they put in front of us. And given that they no longer control the narratives as they once did, I think people now have a very good chance to actually prevail, and that we'll see a complete transformation of the global order. I think this is the discontinuity we've been talking about for a while—the collapse of the 500 years of Western-centric global order.

And now it's collapsing. The energy dimension will play a role, but maybe not in the same way it did in the 20th century, because oil is no longer the only game in town. When it comes to advanced technologies, we have a lot of catching up to do, because China is leading the way. In nuclear technology, China and Russia are leading the way. The United States has advanced nuclear technologies that could help it catch up, but it's still far behind, and they're too expensive. American nuclear power plants generate energy that's five times more expensive than what the Chinese can build, so we really are far behind.

But, you know, if we integrate—if we say, okay, we have to give up on colonialism, we have to give up on imperialism—well then, you know, we can trade as partners in good faith, constructively. And then, you know, we can sell them what we have, the things we do well, and buy from them the things we don't have, that we need. In that way, maybe the dream of peace and prosperity becomes

realistic, not a utopia. Because we also have to understand that the wars, the misery we've had to live with for so long, are the result of our money system and our political systems in the West—primarily in the West.

The West has been the driver of wars in the world. And so, once this system is overhauled and reorganized, then, you know, the need to go to war drops away. It's not necessary. So I'm very hopeful in that respect. And maybe, you know, sometimes in history, very, very bad things happen. But, you know, they blow open the path to very, very good things. So we have to be—how do you call it?—we have to keep alert. We have to keep alert and make sure we're not hypnotized to sleep by our political leaders. Yeah, yeah.

## **#Glenn**

A lot of this is about the adjustment of the United States away from the former model it had. After World War II, the United States was the factory of the world. It was the creditor of the world. It dominated in technology. It controlled the maritime corridors of the world. It controlled natural resources by allying with the Arab states. It controlled the main development banks. It had the sole reserve currency. I mean, across all the economic levers of power, the U.S. was dominant. And this is why hegemony could be established on the principle of a liberal hegemon—much like the Americans criticized the British for at the beginning of the 19th century. They called it a free trade empire, because if the British were more competitive, all they had to do was push free trade, and no one would be able to compete with them.

But now that this is gone, the Americans basically can't compete with the Chinese anymore. They're no longer the factory of the world. They can't produce that much. They're the debtor of the world now. And not just with China—you can see through, for example, BRICS and these other multipolar formats that a new world is being developed, one that's not organized around the U.S. Having everything open and liberal is no longer the recipe for American leadership, as it was intended to be after the '90s. But I heard some Americans talk about how they should reorganize the world, and it reminded me a bit of what you said—that we have to stand up for Western civilization, which means the West should, essentially, block itself off a little from the rest.

But this would mean Europe becoming an exclusive economic zone for the U.S., which might have worked after World War II—but for a declining empire, it's very different. The U.S. would be poorer and politically subordinated if it's not able to diversify and trade properly with other great powers such as China and Russia. So how do you keep such a system in place? When you compare it to the Soviet system, that seems about right: either you need some authoritarian model, or you have to demonize the outside world—say it's immoral to trade with the Chinese or the Russians. But anyway, this is not a model for prosperity. It's not a model for freedom. So I'm just wondering, how do you see Europe?

How sustainable is this? Because after a while, the political elites who advocate for this kind of economic isolationism and political subordination to, you know, what Rutte calls “daddy,” don’t seem to have much public support. So after a while, wouldn’t these governments just be washed away? And... I mean, in Europe, we just celebrated liberating ourselves from Russian energy and essentially liberated ourselves from having industries. But now we see this extra hit in the Middle East. I can see why the Americans would want to carve out zones of exclusive influence, given that they can’t compete properly with China and BRICS. But how would Europe look in this format?

## **#Alex Krainer**

Well, I think the European system is completely unsustainable, and we’re really in danger of falling into some kind of autarkic, Soviet-type setup. If you’re unable to compete on world markets, and you can’t, let’s say, destroy the regions and nations that are outcompeting you, then you erect an iron curtain and build a sort of spider’s web behind it—everything becomes very austere. You impose austerity, you impose a very rigid system of governance on the people. And this ties into all these things like the 15-minute cities they’ve been planning for us.

But, you know, here we’re talking about a very small political elite—or, you know, quote-unquote elite—trying to exert control over hundreds of millions of people. That never worked. That never, ever worked in the past. It can sustain itself for some time—you know, the Soviet Union was such a thing, and it sustained itself for about three generations—but then it still disintegrated, it still fell apart. So it’s not going to work anyway, and I suspect that in the West it’s not going to last as long as the Soviet Union did. So it’s going to fall apart anyhow, but something will inevitably have to take its place.

And I think that will largely depend on the people. You know, it’ll depend on a political awakening and people asserting themselves in the political process—rejecting war, rejecting an unaccountable system of democracy where you get to vote between candidates A, B, and C, but all three have invisible strings to some oligarchy you’re not even allowed to discuss. So I think all of this has to change. And I think that in Europe, particularly, that transition might end up being very, very painful.

And I hope it won’t involve revolutions or civil wars—but it might, because the people in power now aren’t going to give up their power voluntarily. So I think it’s going to be very, very complicated in Europe. History might be partly instructive in this sense, but not entirely. We shouldn’t fear the French Revolution, because back then there were no other sources—no other seats of power—that had any influence in the way they do today. For example, Russia and China are, in a way, leading the way toward a different model of governance.

And that will have a significant influence in Europe. And these are not fake models in the sense that, you know, a Soviet communist revolution was a fake system, because it didn’t emerge bottom-up from the Russian people seeking to overhaul their system. It was imported from the West, and it

was a kind of color revolution that happened. And then you had basically a government that you could, in some ways, compare to Volodymyr Zelensky's Ukrainian government now—the same thing, it was installed from outside. I think today we're not as vulnerable to these things, particularly since the narrative is not under control.

Well, I think the beginning will—let's say, the beginnings will take place through the democratic process, you know, because at some point Emmanuel Macron gets voted out, Friedrich Merz gets voted out, maybe the AfD takes power. We're already hearing voices from European politicians saying we have to re-establish good connections, good relations with Russia. A year ago, you couldn't even say that. Well, yesterday—or maybe even today—we saw the Belgian prime minister say we need to fix our relations with Russia. The Americans are dropping sanctions against Russia because of market conditions. I think the voices saying we have to fix our relations with Russia are going to grow stronger and stronger.

Now, we'll see how the other side reacts. If they respond with heavy-handed repression, then we're moving in the direction of a civil war or a revolution. But if they're forced to yield, then maybe we'll have a gradual transition, where Europe is compelled to open its markets not just to Russian energy, but gradually toward the BRICS, toward the multipolar markets. Integration and the Belt and Road will need investment, which might come from China and from the East. So I think there's a better chance in the near future that we'll have a more orderly transition than we've had in the past.

But it's—basically, you know, it's very, very hard to answer these questions, because even just us discussing this is already a step in the right direction, you know, in the sense that we are now aware the current system is unsustainable, that very radical changes are coming our way, and that we have to be alert and engaged if we want positive outcomes from this. And we have to reject these simplistic narratives that tell us we're the good guys, those are the bad guys, we have to fight, we have to never give up, never lift the sanctions, we just simply have to win—there's no compromise. I think those arguments are going to lose their hold. So I genuinely hope for good outcomes, but I think there's going to be a rough period for sure in the next one, two, or three years.

## **#Glenn**

You can see that the leadership of the United Kingdom, Germany, the Scandinavian countries, the Baltic states, and Poland seem not to care much about how the world is changing around them. They'll stick to their guns and insist there can't be any compromise—so, effectively, what you described. But yeah, this is our last question. I was wondering how you see this pulling the Europeans into not just the Iran war, but possibly something more direct with Russia. You've probably seen in the British media the reports that the Russians likely had Iran retaliate against British forces and provided intelligence in the Middle East as retaliation for the British attack on Bryansk. I don't have any difficulty imagining this. After four years of Britain taking the lead in trying to weaken Russia by essentially killing Russians, it seems... well, plausible.

But it does beg the question of whether this could again pull the Europeans into the Middle East. Because if they get pulled in, I'd assume the Russians would step up their support for Iran as well. So how do you see the possibility of this spreading? Because this goes back to the main point: everyone is affected by the Iran war. Usually, you try to contain a conflict—you don't want it to regionalize or globalize. But this one was always destined to become a global conflict. If Iran faces an existential threat, it will respond in ways that affect the global economy to retaliate against the Americans. And now everyone has a stake in it. So it's just... yeah, it's not the kind of war you want to fight. How do you see the possibility of the Europeans being pulled into this mess?

## **#Alex Krainer**

I think the Russians will make this extremely difficult for the Europeans. You know, the Russians have been very, very patient. They've been very careful not to make the mistake of providing any pretext for the Europeans to invoke Article 5—to unite, to cross the threshold into a collective war between Europe and the combined West. And I think they know not to do this, because that would be a fatal error for Russia. Not because they would lose that war, but because it would become orders of magnitude more destructive. Maybe the Europeans couldn't prevail over Russia, but together they could do a lot of damage. So it would be destructive for everybody.

You know, the Germans made a mistake in World War I when, at one point—Kaiser Wilhelm II—no, not Kaiser Wilhelm, I forget the name of the general. But, you know, they declared unrestricted submarine warfare. And then they started sinking American ships that they knew were carrying provisions for the Allied powers. So, in a way, from a military point of view, the Germans were justified in doing that. But it created the pretext for the Europeans to draw the Americans into the war. And I think that, of all people, the Russians have been very careful to study their history. So while militarily they might be justified in striking, say, British targets—like, I don't know, production facilities where Storm Shadow missiles are being built—

They still won't do this. But, you know, if I imagine I were in a Russian command and control hierarchy, I think if you wanted to retaliate, you could take advantage of the new situation in the Middle East. Trump has been pressuring the French and the British to send their navies to the region and to try to keep the Strait of Hormuz open. So if French and British naval ships come within range of Iranian missiles, then one clever way of retaliating would be to help the Iranians sink French and British naval ships. And I think we might see that, because that would do a few things.

It would destabilize the French and British governments. It would raise revolt against the war. It would weaken them militarily. And in a sense, you know, I have to wonder if that isn't part of Trump's agenda as well. Because he's already saying, "Well, you know, if you don't want to help us, I don't see what the point of NATO is." So we already see Trump taking advantage of this situation to say, "Okay, maybe we're done with NATO. Maybe NATO makes no sense." So it's the next step, you know—it's the next charge to blow up that alliance, which Trump has wanted to do for a long time but couldn't, because he has too much opposition at home.

But now, with this new situation, he can tell his audiences at home that our European allies are completely useless—they left us completely alone to fight Iran. So this alliance, there's no point in maintaining it anymore. I think the French and the British might get a black eye in the Arabian Sea, the Persian Gulf, or even, who knows, in the Eastern Mediterranean. That's going to be part of the unraveling of this whole situation. I think NATO goes down the toilet, the European Union probably with it, and in a very ugly, disruptive way—maybe as part of the transition from a Western-centric, colonialist system to a multipolar world architecture.

## **#Glenn**

Yeah, it could be. Well, all of this would have sounded like science fiction only four or five years ago, but now it almost seems like science fiction that the status quo could continue. So whatever happens after this, I don't think there's any going back to the way things were. Well, as always, thank you for taking the time. Thank you, Glenn.

## **#Alex Krainer**

Always a pleasure to join you. Greetings to your audience, and until next time.