

Stanislav Krapivnik: The Iran Lesson - Russia Will Retaliate & Deter

Stanislav Krapivnik discusses how the Russian offensive in Ukraine is intensifying and why the lessons from Iran is pressuring the Kremlin to retaliate against Europe. Krapivnik is a former US Army officer, supply chain exec and military-political expert, now based in Russia. He was born in Lugansk during the Soviet times, migrated to the US as a child and served in the US army. Follow Prof. Glenn Diesen: Substack: <https://glennndiesen.substack.com/> X/Twitter: https://x.com/Glenn_Diesen Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/glenndiesen> Support the research by Prof. Glenn Diesen: PayPal: <https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/glenndiesen> Buy me a Coffee: [buymeacoffee.com/gdieseng](https://www.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 by Stanislav Krapivnik, a former U.S. military officer born in Donbass who has since returned. Thank you for coming back on the program.

#Guest

Always a pleasure, Glenn.

#Glenn

So we see, just in the last two days, that the Russians have entered the strategic city of Orekhov in the Zaporizhia region, which may indicate that if this falls, the whole region could begin to collapse soon. And also in Slavyansk, the last major urban area of Donetsk, we're seeing some real advances being made. If they succeed in encircling this region, that would essentially mean the entirety of Donbass falling. So, do you think the Russian spring offensive has already begun?

#Guest

It's hard to say, partly because it's still mud season down in those areas. So you're still more or less in the south anyway. I'm going to talk about Heidegger and Sudomy because they're different—while there's still mud there, it's much firmer ground, more forested areas. So it's a different terrain. In the south, you've got that really rich black earth, and it doesn't have as many trees to hold it with the roots. So you get really, really bad mud around this time of year. If it melts as fast as what we're

having up here—and it started, to be honest, almost a month ago when the temperatures went above zero—I was checking. So they're still having nightly freezes, but during the day it's already well above zero.

So if the snow is freely melting off in these kinds of areas, you want to have a fast melt. Because if you have a fast melt, you'll get flooding and things like that. But the ground, you know, the ground is spongy—it only absorbs so much water. Any excess water just sloughs off, streaming down to the creeks and so on, and then draining out to the sea. If it's a slow melt, then the ground absorbs more water. It's mud. It starts to suck that down into the sublayers, and there's more coming, and it's just continuous mud. So it stays muddy a lot longer if it's a slow melt than if it's a really fast melt. Glenn Diesen—I think I'm butchering his name again. I'm always bad with names.

The brief given by the Russian command varies quite a bit from what many independent mappers have shown. So either there have been a lot of advances that haven't been marked, or there's confusion on the battlefield. And considering this is the Russian high command, you tend to err on their side, assuming they should have the right information. The area is still in question. We'll see what comes up in the next couple of days—videos, geolocations, things like that. But if it's to be believed, then yes, Russian forces from the south have already entered Orehov. There are two parallel roads that run up to Orikhiv, and there's a long urban sprawl to the south of the town.

So it may already be in Orikhiv. And you get that gray zone because, on one side, the Ukrainian sources aren't saying they're there, but the Russian side is saying they are. Normally there's only a small difference between the two, but right now there's a big one. Of course, the Ukrainians also have a tendency not to admit anything for a month, so sometimes a small difference becomes a really big one—like they did in Huliaipole, where a month and a half after Huliaipole was taken, they were still reporting it as the Russians besieging the city. The Russians were like 10 kilometers past the city—but actually, it was probably about six. And the Western press was just parroting what Kyiv was saying. So we'll see. Whether or not this is the actual Russian spring offensive, I don't know.

That's something that, again, hasn't developed yet—boldly enough to call it a big offensive. I mean, as far as a continuous offensive up and down those lines, yes, that's been going on for the last two years, steadily rolling forward. Whether this is a big push—you'd imagine a big push in this case would still need enough armored vehicles, artillery, and aviation to support it. I haven't seen that yet, but it may be coming. Now, we know the Ukrainians were doing a lot of desperate counterattacks in Zaporizhia—not so much because they could take those areas back; they just don't have the means to do it—but to disrupt Russian preparations, because apparently they thought that was the location of the big spring offensive.

Me, personally, if I were in command at this point, I would launch the big spring offensive—at least partially—toward Sumy. And why toward Sumy? Russian forces are about 14 kilometers from Sumy. It's not a big city, about 250,000 people in the north, but Sumy is a key logistics hub. Taking Sumy would cut off the Kharkiv area from the west. So you'd have a very deep encirclement of Kharkiv,

cutting off a lot of supply lines from Kyiv heading into Kharkiv. That would do a lot of damage to the Ukrainian defenses in and around Kharkiv and would accelerate the fall of the region—particularly since you can also cut Kharkiv off in the south, where the Osynia–Brianka line runs, if you blow the bridges. So you'd basically have Kharkiv in a technical... in a technical...

#Guest

I can't think of the word right now. Well, you'd surround it—you'd have the city surrounded, because you could blow the bridges heading into Kharkiv from the south. And if you have a deep encirclement through Sumy, you'd take it out in the west. And obviously, in the east, it's the Russian line moving steadily forward toward the city of Brianka and the big water reserve. Then from the north, they start moving—there's still Russian movement down there. It's been very heavily contested, as it has been, but it's still moving forward. So I think, for me, that would be the big spring offensive—drop Kyiv out of the map. I'm sorry, Kyiv—Kharkiv—out of the battle map. We'll see. Of course. Uh, Konstantinovka.

Yeah, that's a big fight. And that's another one of those areas. The Ukrainians are claiming about 15% of the city is in Russian hands. Uh, good. Someone else said it was around 60%. So that's a very big difference. And Konstantinovka is something they're heavily contesting. That's the new Bakhmut—the latest Bakhmut, let me rephrase that. They're throwing all the forces they can into it to try to hold it. Again, the Ukrainians have a bad tendency—and it's good for the Russian side, of course—of not knowing when the hell to leave the party and retreat. They tend to really like getting themselves surrounded and wiped out. Of course, Hitler gave those same orders.

The difference is that when Hitler was fighting, he had generals he kept sacking and reinstating, but they were sacked because they wouldn't follow his orders to stand and fight to the last man. They'd retreat—do tactical and strategic withdrawals as needed. But the Ukrainians seem to be doing the best Hitler impersonation they can, standing and fighting everywhere they should have been retreating if they had any sense. Thank God for that. Now, for the north—because that's the south, that's the southern push—and Konstantinovka, by the way, has been split in two. It has a river running down the middle, and all the bridges were blown about a month ago.

So with the water level up, the water is ice cold. You're not getting across—you're not going to swim across. It's very hard. It's very hard to coordinate between the two halves. So you've already split the city effectively, and then you can start splitting it into smaller portions too, right? They take it under siege or invest it. Now, in the north, where you've got Sloviansk—well, to close the gates of Sloviansk, first you've got to close the gates on Krasny Liman. And that's another, that's a third point where it's questionable how much of Liman is taken and how much isn't. Because again, Glenn Diesen said about 50%. The Ukrainians are claiming about 10% or 15%. So again, you get this big difference. But that's not the most important thing.

The important thing is the Russian push in the south of Liman, because Liman sits in this triangle where the Oskil flows into the Siverskyi Donets. So you end up with a triangle like this, and Liman is right there on the wide side. Then the Russian forces are all around it, and they've closed it off from the north as well. The danger for the Ukrainians in Krasny Liman is that the Russian forces have been pushing from the south, and there's only one bridge—one main road—left leading up to Krasny Liman. That's the main logistics route, and it's already under drone attack. The Russian drones can reach it, so it's already somewhat under Russian control. If they take that bridge—well, they need to take it, because the bridge is blown—either way, the garrison isn't completely cut off.

You're not going to get across those rivers, especially this time of year. So once that's taken—any pontoon bridges, or if they can take the main bridge intact—you're heading straight into Sloviansk from the north. And that's when you really start to close that big cauldron. So that seems to be what the developing situation is in that area. We'll see. I mean, Krasny Liman is going to fall, I have no doubt about that. It's just a matter of how long it takes. Do they surrender? Does it take another week? Well, it'll take longer than a week, I'm pretty sure. Unless there have been major movements we haven't seen geolocated yet, which is possible. There's a possibility it's 50% under Russian control. We'll find that out, I think, within the next day or two.

#Glenn

You mentioned the Ukrainians not withdrawing after they become encircled, and I guess the obsession with holding on to territory. And, you know, it seems irrational, but I think there's a rational explanation. What people often dismiss as PR wars are, more accurately, necessary PR wars—because if the U.S. and Europeans lose interest in Ukraine, then essentially the weapons and money dry up, and it's all over. So I think Zelensky has become a bit addicted to PR victories, which is why he kind of needs these things.

And I guess on that topic of Ukraine falling out of the headlines—which is something that obviously angers or worries Zelensky significantly—we see that whenever something else pops up and Ukraine disappears from the headlines, he comments on it, he argues the need to bring it back, essentially. And, you know, it looks as if the war now—the attack on Iran—will unavoidably affect the Ukrainian battlefield. Do you have any overview of how significant this is? Because, again, it seems like weapons, money, international focus, political support—everything has to come at an expense, doesn't it?

#Guest

Well, there's one other point that Western commentators aren't too keen to mention: the amount of pressure from the military and from certain layers of society that's now being put on the government. Look, you know, we don't want to move too fast or run into NATO because, oh my God, there might be a big war. Iran has shown everyone—including a lot of Russian generals—that,

by the way, you can smack the Americans around left and right, you can absorb whatever hits they throw at you, and they really can't do that much. And this is a nuclear power, so they're definitely not going to go nuclear, because that would mean there's no America left.

So, look, you know, the point is, if the Iranians can take out 23 American bases and just systematically destroy them—and American casualties, believe you me, are a hell of a lot higher than 14 guys killed—that'd probably multiply at least by ten to get something closer to reality. And it's growing, growing fast. If they do a ground war, it's going to be a mass casualty event. We'll see. But the point is, look, for 18 days now— is it 18 days? Yep, it's 18 days—for 18 days now, the four-day Trump war has been a disaster for the Americans. Their equipment, their bases that they've been building up for 30 years, are getting totally obliterated. Some already are.

You get videos constantly of big fires and drones flying all over these bases, taking out American equipment and infrastructure. And, you know, if you're not for them—the American military—right? The result is what? Not much from the other side. Yes, they've killed a lot of civilians in Tehran, but Tehran's still standing. And that's not something they could do in Russia, because U.S. aviation would have one hell of a field day trying to get in. So that's... And the pressure on the government is, why aren't we doing this? When Iran says, "We're going after Israeli generals and politicians," and maybe Ukrainian generals and politicians too.

The question is, why aren't we doing this? And that's where it always comes back to the Kremlin—why aren't we doing this? We can do it. We have more than enough capability. So why are we not doing it? That's something no Western pundit wants to talk about. But if Russia finally takes the gloves off, you're going to see NATO facing the same thing you saw with Iran. Because, quite easily, Russia could take out Rheinmetall, or the manufacturers of the Flamingo—it's basically the upgraded V1. That's something you could drop on a Russian economy, and there's nothing anybody can do about it except either run before it hits or die with it. That's the reality of it.

#Glenn

Russia can very easily take out those manufacturing facilities.

#Guest

And the next question is, do you really want to go further? Or are you going to back off—to the Germans, or to the British, and so on? I think that would be a shock moment that would cause a lot of these politicians to have to go change their underwear, to be frank about it, because they...

#Glenn

Sorry, you froze. It's okay—yeah, it was...

#Glenn

Oh, you're back. Sorry—yeah, you disappeared for about 30 seconds.

#Guest

Yeah, okay—so what was the last thing I said that actually got recorded?

#Glenn

Yeah, that's something they don't want to do. Ugh.

#Guest

Yeah, you know, there's massive pressure building on the government. Why aren't we doing what Iran can do? Like I said, Russia can easily take out Rheinmetall or the manufacturer of the Flamingo. And I think at that point, that would be a very shocking moment for European politicians. They might have to go change their underwear after that, because they've gotten very, very comfortable. They think they can do whatever they want to Russia—sponsor terrorism, do whatever—and the response will only come through Ukraine. Like, yeah, okay, the Ukrainians will pay for what we do, but we don't have to worry about it.

The moment this all comes home, and they suddenly see smoke piling up from some factory or key manufacturing point in their capital, that's got to be a wake-up call for a lot of them—that, you know, they've overplayed the game. Things have gotten very, very serious. And look, realistically speaking, America is never going to surrender—even the smallest cities like Oklahoma City or Arkansas City, with 200,000 people—in exchange for Berlin, or London, or Paris, Warsaw, or any other European city, regardless of size. It's not going to happen. That's the point. It's not going to happen. And Iran is also demonstrating that very clearly.

#Glenn

I think that's an excellent point, though, in terms of this also changing the calculation in Moscow. Because since the beginning, it always seems that Russia has faced a dilemma: does it let it go, or does it retaliate and essentially restore deterrence? Or does it hold back to avoid risking World War III, but then, of course, undermine its own deterrence if it doesn't respond? It just seems that now—not just because Iran has proved that if you hit back, that's the only way to get your opponents to respect your security—but it also suggests that now would be an opportune time for Russia, because all these weapons and all this money are tied up in the Middle East.

So again, I'm not advocating for anything, just to be clear. But it seems like that would be part of the calculation here—that this is a good time to restore deterrence and start pushing back. Do you

see any indication so far that Moscow is going down this line? Because I've heard there's a bit of pressure now, with people looking at Iran and asking, "Why aren't we doing this? Why do we keep getting punched in the face and not hitting back?"

#Guest

Well, there's some circumstantial evidence. For example, when the French envoys came in, demanding to be part of these negotiations, they were quite literally told to go fuck off—in those words. That was the ending of what they were told. So the diplomatic façade of trying to be civilized started to slip away. It's like, fine, these are the people we're dealing with; we know who they are and what they represent. So there's no point in being nice to them anymore. They're an enemy. Macron and his government are an enemy government. He tries to play this political ambiguity, which Trump is also trying. I think Trump is doing it mostly because he doesn't know what the hell to do—and Macron, to some degree, too.

But, you know, political ambiguity is not what you want in superpowers—especially countries with nuclear weapons. You want as much transparency and predictability as possible. Otherwise, the logic becomes, well, you know, since America has a first-strike doctrine, the logic for any other country capable of doing it is: the moment you can do a first strike on America, you do a first strike on America. That's the problem with having a first-strike doctrine—"We'll take you out whenever we feel like it." Well, everybody's now scared that you might actually be stupid enough to do that. So the moment they see an opportunity, it behooves them, in the logic of geopolitics, to exterminate you the moment they can, because you're a constant threat.

Tomorrow, maybe they're having internal problems, or economic problems, or whatever, and you're just going to go for a decapitation strike. As America has shown—especially under Trump—there's this fetish for decapitation strikes. Well, obviously, if you can do a decapitation strike on the U.S., it behooves you to do a decapitation strike on the U.S. and wipe out Washington or whatever, before they can wipe out you. That's the logic you create, because MAD goes away. MAD is no longer there—mutually assured destruction. It's now about who gets to push the button first, or whose missile can get there before the other guy can make a decision.

That's the problem with having a first-strike doctrine and then having a regime of idiots on one hand, and idiots with big grenades—apes with grenades—on the other, as we see in what they've created in the Middle East. They literally have no idea how to get out of this and save face. There's no way out while saving face, and I think they're going to double, triple, quadruple down. So, you know, I did a video where I talked about this, and tomorrow we'll be doing a video with RT. We're going to be talking about possible rounds of ground incursion. But I said, you know, this is a possible route, but you'd have to be a total cretin to go down that route, because it's suicide for whatever army you throw in there. And they're not going to do it.

#Glenn

Well, now I'm not so sure they're not going to do it. I think they may actually go down this route, as stupid and insane as it may sound.

#Guest

It'll be suicide for the guys they send in there.

#Glenn

But, you know, at this point...

#Guest

I mean, this is the president who yesterday said, you know, not only did they scratch—because they made it illegal for all American satellite companies to display maps of the Middle East over the last two weeks. Amazingly, it's not just American satellites up there. Who could have thought that? Not only do the Iranians have satellites, but so do the Russians, the Chinese, and a lot of other countries.

#Glenn

So the images keep coming.

#Guest

But, you know, when Trump goes out there and starts talking about, you know, "We're going to pull your broadcasting licenses because you're fake media, because you're showing those images of burning American tankers or burning American bases—it's all AI, it's not real, none of it's real, we don't have anything burning." Like, okay. And then the Tories arrive: "Well, please come help me, you know, open the Straits of Hormuz. It's a very small job, you can do it, it's a very small job." Which begs the next question: why aren't you doing it? Oh, because the U.S. Navy said, "Hell no, we're not going to send our ships in there to die." So, here—Frenchies, Deutschers—come over here.

And you Chinese, too—it's going to be very bad for you if you don't do this. It's like, well, what are you going to do? China's getting this oil, Pakistan's getting this oil. Iranian oil exports have actually gone up 10%, as hard as that may be to believe. So yeah, you've got a regime that has absolutely no plan. You've got a bunch of psychopathic, pseudo-heretic preachers in the Christian Zionist movement telling Trump that he's the anointed one, and that to go against Trump's word is like going against God's word. I've got a video of that one—was it Paula White? I think that's her name. Yeah, the chief preacher for Trump, the chief heretic preacher.

So, you know, these people are insane. They're all certifiably insane. They've got an old guy who's starting to suffer from dementia, who's got the big guns and who likes to be praised. And that's

what they're doing—they're playing to his ego. So this is as dysfunctional a government as you can imagine. And then you've got the Israelis—it's the biggest rogue state since World War II. And now what do you do with that? You've got these two combined, so it's a horrible situation we've found ourselves in. And I don't know how to get out of it, short of removing both regimes—however anyone wishes to do that.

#Glenn

Yeah, I saw Trump trying to sell the intervention to open up the Strait of Hormuz, like he was selling apartments or something. It was very strange to watch because, you know, countries do have intelligence services. It's not like, "Okay, then, if you promise us it will be easy." I mean, even—yeah, Starmer said he had to consult his team, and Trump had a comment like, "Well, you're the prime minister, you don't have to consult anyone." So it was like really trying to push an apartment on someone before they talk to their lawyer or whatever. It was very strange to watch. But, sorry, go ahead.

#Guest

You know, Trump's big breakthrough in intelligence and psyops over the last couple of days was Trump calling Starmer a weakling and a loser. And U.S. intelligence is now pushing that Khamenei—the younger Khamenei—is gay. End of push right now. Oh yeah, you guys are desperate. I mean, that's obvious enough. How do you tell someone you're desperate without telling them you're desperate? You know, just watch the American response: everything's great, everything's blowing up. But we can't open the Strait of Hormuz right now. Maybe later. Oh, we'll escort them after the shooting is done. They actually said that, you know—"Yes, we'll be escorting them after the shooting is done." So you're in one of those pieces again, and nobody's threatening you. Got it, got it. It's funny and hilarious from one side, but it's very dangerous and nerve-wracking from the other side, because you're literally dealing with deranged individuals up and down that chain of command.

#Glenn

Well, it was just weird because at some point, when the British said they might send some naval assets to the general region—not to the Strait of Hormuz—Trump said something along the lines of, "Oh, we don't need your help now. We already won. It's too late." And now, of course, he wants them to come out. They're just so mixed up all over the place. It's very strange to watch—the lack of narrative control, the management of allies. Yeah, shocking. But before, you mentioned Macron wanting to join this diplomatic effort. I think it's important to be specific: he wanted to join the trilateral Russia-U.S.-Ukraine format. And that's kind of problematic, because if he joins as a spoiler, it's just going to ruin the whole thing.

That is, the desire to prolong the war. I thought he might have had more success if he'd just suggested, you know, "Let's open bilateral diplomacy," because there wouldn't be anything to lose.

If France and Russia were able to improve relations, that would be good on its own. Worst case, it creates some divisions within the EU among those who don't want it, so there's no loss for Russia. But joining in on the disestablished format, when the Europeans have more or less expressed their desire to sabotage it, doesn't make any sense. However, you've seen a wider development. The Belgian prime minister said it's time to restore normal diplomatic relations with Russia. This is the same prime minister who didn't want to steal the Russian assets.

Even President Stubb of Finland, who's a real Russophobe to his core, argued that at some point we're going to have to start speaking with Russia again. Obviously, things aren't going well in the proxy war in Ukraine, but also the Iran war, I think, has really shaken them because of all the energy they're cut off from. So the economies will just go south from here on. And security-wise, the Americans are distracted. They have no weapons to send. They have no ability to escalate or bluff—to put any ultimatums to Russia, even if they wanted to. So it seems Russia is in a stronger position. Do you see any possibility of, or I guess what would be, the conditions for Russia to open up any negotiations or discussions with the Europeans? Or are there any?

#Guest

That's a very difficult question, because let's face reality—who do you trust in Europe? I mean, especially coming from the French or the Germans. Let's not forget Hollande, who was beaten to the press only by Merkel, laughing and jumping up and down, telling everyone how they fooled Vladimir Vladimirovich by the nose and just bought a bunch of time for Ukraine to build up for war with Russia, by the way. That's what they said—it wasn't just about the Donbass. So how do you trust anything coming out of those governments? They're basically continuations, in one form or another, with Merz and Macron. I doubt you can trust anybody. And the problem is, even these more outlier parties that are now populist parties getting power, like the Front National or Alternative für Deutschland, don't inspire much confidence either.

The problem is their leadership is being groomed into becoming just another party. I was talking to some Germans I know, and they said that at the grassroots or Bundesland level, the AfD is still what it used to be. But at the federal level, they've already been co-opted. The Front National has been co-opted for quite a long time. They were the ones saying, "Yeah, we don't mind sending weapons."

No soldiers. We don't mind sending weapons to Ukraine. So what's the difference here? And then you look at Farage—Farage is, for all intents and purposes, the rebirth of the Conservative Party 2.0, except he's saying, "We don't want immigration." Of course, the Conservatives said the same thing, and you saw what happened in England—it just kept getting flooded even worse under the Conservatives. Everything else coming out of Farage's mouth is straight from the neocon playbook. He's just reading right off the talking points for the neocons. So again, who do you trust in Europe? You can trust people like—well, the reason the Belgians, first and foremost, didn't want to take the Russian money is simply because they know what den of thieves they're a part of.

And once everybody takes their share and puts it in their pocket, when it gets to that point, there will be lawsuits against Euroclear, and Russia will take that money out of Euroclear offices all over the world. It'll bankrupt Euroclear completely. Then they'll go after the Belgian government in lawsuits. And the Belgian government's the only one that's going to be paying. Belgium can't afford 300 billion euros. It would bankrupt the entire country. You could sell off the king and queen, sell all the castles and museum pieces, and you still wouldn't cover the sum. That's the problem. They were smart enough to realize, yeah, when everybody says, "Hey, we're behind you,"—

You know, we're really all behind you—really far behind you—counting the money we just stole. So have fun. Good luck. We're morally behind you. Because the Belgians said, "Well, let's sign a document that will split the damages across the board." Nobody signed that document. Nobody was going to go for that. "No, no, no, you just go ahead, and we're morally with you there to the end." So it's the EU—what can you say? It's a den of thieves. Each one trying to get over on the other and climb up the ladder to be the head of the Guild of Thieves. But that's what you're looking at. I mean, you're not looking exactly at people who have any concept of honor or respect or loyalty. You're looking at cutthroat politics that are unified, but the moment you take away the Russian threat, what are they unified by? Just the lust for power and the machinations between each other.

I mean, you're not talking about something you can build the foundation of a society or a civilization on. There's no civilizational idea in modern Europe, in the modern EU. There's a civilizational idea in Eastern Europe called Russia, and those that are now being drawn to it. There's a civilizational idea in the former Austro-Hungarian Empire—for most of it, anyway. But the remainder of Europe, including the Germans and their Middle Europe concept that's been around since the 1880s—there's no civilizational idea anymore. What have they got to bring to anybody? So this is just managers. You don't have leaders in Europe; you have managers—and very poor managers, with possibly good, high-paying jobs in America after they leave. So, I don't know—Europe, who do you talk to in Europe? I mean, quite simply, if I were sitting in the Kremlin right now, I would ignore everything coming out of Europe except people like Orbán and Fico, who have proven themselves. Maybe Babiš, depending on how much he can prove himself. But who else do you trust?

#Glenn

I noticed that in Russia, some of the rhetoric about how Minsk was a ruse has some similarities to the Libyan issue. I remember after they fooled the Russians over Libya, Russia took a very different stance on Syria. Now you see, after Minsk—and of course you could put Istanbul into that same mix—the distrust toward any real diplomacy is quite astonishing, which makes it very difficult to find any settlement. It doesn't mean a settlement can't be done; it just means that the trust component, which is important to make any deal work, is completely absent. You mentioned before the idea of the Russians being prepared to take a stronger stance against the Europeans.

But how about the United States? Because we've seen some reports in the media and some politicians who are outraged, alleging that Russia has handed over intelligence to the Iranians about

American targets—which seems quite reasonable. I just assumed that would happen. But, you know, no self-reflection. They don't seem to recognize they've been doing the same thing for the past few years. Still, when Trump was asked about this, he was kind of dismissive—either saying, “I didn't do it,” or that it's just minor stuff, like what we've done in Ukraine, or what they think we've done in Ukraine, he said.

#Guest

Minor stuff in Ukraine, yeah. What's the major stuff? Are you trying to assassinate the president of Russia? I don't know—what could be more major than that?

#Glenn

Yeah. But are the Russians also willing to push back harder against the United States? Yes, they are.

#Guest

Definitely, I think so. The confidence is growing. Even the Chinese, who took a big step back from Iran at the beginning of all this, have changed their stance quite a bit too. It's true they had their radar systems there, but the Chinese were stepping back to see how it was going to go. And now they're looking at it and going, “Oh, that's how it's going to go.” You know, when Lend-Lease started coming to the Soviet Union, there's a concept called “success breeds success.” Well, in January 1942, when the British ambassador to the Soviet Union took a nice little drive up to Klin, northwest of Moscow—back then it was about 90 kilometers.

Moscow keeps growing. He went out and saw what was left of the smoking ruins of a German division that had been surrounded, cleared out, and wiped out. Then he went back and telegraphed Churchill and Roosevelt, saying, “I think they're going to win.” And they said, “Oh, okay, okay, we'll back them now.” It's the same thing here. They went back and looked at it, and the Iranians are saying, “They're going to win. They've got a damn good chance of winning because, oh, the big bully's coming—he's going to take everybody.” Well, you know, when you're the big bully, once you've established yourself as the big guy on the basketball court, you really don't want to fight anybody.

Because, you know, you can smack around the little guys, but some medium-sized or bigger guy—even if you beat him—he's going to take so much out of you that everybody starts to lose respect for you, or starts to lose fear of you. And this is what we're seeing. Yeah, you can kill as many Iranian civilians as you want, but the Iranians are clearing the Americans out of the Persian Gulf. And the Iranians aren't breaking their backs. In fact, they're doubling down and delivering blow after blow. No matter what Trump says—you know, Trump's different positions between breakfast, lunch, brunch, dinner, and midnight snack—you get the whole plethora of “what the hell is he talking about today?” But the Iranians are standing firm. In fact, the Iranians said, “We're not asking for peace.” They flat out said this: “We're not asking for peace. We don't see any reason for peace right now.”

So they're not looking for peace. They're looking to punish the Americans and make it as painful—maximally painful—as possible. They're trying to push the Americans out of the Persian Gulf, and they're doing a damn good job so far, at least in direct kinetic terms. But they're also pressuring the Arabs, saying, "Look, you're not getting any help from the Yanks. They're not here to protect you. You're just there to absorb our blows for them, but they're not going to protect you." And that's starting to weigh on a lot of these Arab states. From what I've been told by sources, the Saudis have told the American bases to, you know, go screw yourself—we're neutral.

We're not going to help you—survive the best you can. And if that's true, that's a pretty big blow. And as much as we've seen—Nancy Graham—I'm sorry, Lindsey Graham—screaming and hollering, I don't know what drugs he was on this time. In a couple of the videos lately, his eyes are rolling back in his head, and he looks like he's either very, very drunk or on something else. But, you know, Lindsey Graham, they're screaming up and down that "we defended you and you're not defending us, the Saudis. You have to come, you're sorry," blah, blah, blah. Well, that's another sign of that desperation. They've taken the mask off, and we're trying to strong-arm these countries.

And the countries are going, "No thanks, bye-bye, have a good life." What are the reactions going to be after this war is over? Well, things keep going. They've hedged their bets that the USA isn't going to be in any position to do anything to them in this recalibration. That's the position they're holding. Besides, Trump's got his new play toy—he's going to go invade Cuba. You know, he's already "invaded" Greenland, kind of. He's tried to—well, he's got a war he can't win, but he's thinking about invading Iran. But yeah, why worry? We're already going to invade Cuba. So, I mean, you've got his agenda. We've got to do so many things before the bucket list. I guess that's one more thing for the bucket list.

#Glenn

Since war is always the solution—if one is full of hubris after Venezuela, then of course we have to go to war. And if one is humiliated, as now with Iran, then, well, we have to change the focus and get a victory behind us. Then, okay, well, then it's also war. Either way, it seems to lead toward war. But in terms of the pressure tactics, it seems as if perception becomes reality. That is, if all these countries in the region thought the U.S. was winning and Iran was on its back foot, then of course they'd want to bet on the winning horse. As you said before, that's what countries do. But if you look at this—from Saudi Arabia to Azerbaijan—all these countries most likely had some false flag attacks against them as well.

Now they're saying, well, we don't really want to do this after all. Uh, that's a good indication of where things are going. And I can see why Russia and China would want to reduce the U.S. presence in the Middle East, or at least scale it back in places like Iraq. But there also seems to be a wider message. That is, if all the Gulf nations reach the conclusion that being frontline states for the U.S. won't give them security—it'll only ensure that bombs drop on their heads—then that message is spreading across the world. In East Asia, you have the South Koreans now saying, "Well, look

what happened. America had some rough times, and they took away all our air defense systems. What would they do for us?" And maybe that message...

#Guest

And they did it in the middle of the night.

#Glenn

Yeah, just in case they wouldn't notice. But now, you know, maybe this message reaches the Europeans too. If the Russians were to try to restore their deterrent and, you know, drop a bomb on some weapons manufacturers in Germany, what would the U.S. really do? It might even pull out its air defenses. So, I can see why they'd want that—why there's a lot to gain from, if not the defeat of the U.S., at least some kind of retreat. Just to say, I guess the last question is: what do we know so far about Russian support—or what do you think about it—as well as Chinese support? What are they actually doing for Iran? Well...

#Guest

Russia shipped in—let's remember one thing—back in 2004 and 2005, Russia wanted to sign an agreement with Iran on the same level as with Belarus and North Korea, a mutual defense agreement. The Iranian liberals who were in charge at that point refused. The defensive clause, if I remember correctly—section five, paragraph three—was reduced from an actual defensive clause like the ones with Belarus and North Korea, a solid defensive clause, to something like, "We will struggle together against mutual regional threats." Which means what? It means absolutely nothing. It's empty air, just word salad. When you boil away the extra fat, there's nothing there. So it's a pointless document. Russia signed and ratified it right off the bat.

Iran signed that document on the second day it was getting lots of love from the West—because they wanted to be loved by the West. Assad also wanted to be loved by the West. And when the West was giving them all that attention was when Iran finally signed that document. It's still not much of a document. But what followed afterward—the liberals in Iran losing power and prestige after that little 12-day war, and all the mass killings the Israelis carried out inside Iran—what came out of that was Russian aid. So, MiG-29s, Su-35s, S-400s that we see now—they're being held back. I think they're being saved for whenever the Americans actually get enough gumption to bring in their B-52s. If I were the Iranians, that's what I'd be doing: holding on to those S-400s and waiting for the B-52s to start coming in, then taking them out of the sky.

They're slow and they're big—it's a hard target to miss. So, additionally, Russia brought in a lot of technology upgrades for propulsion systems, avionics, and jamming. Never mind that Russia also brought in the jamming systems that block signals and allow them to identify the Iranians and locate where those terminals were. Let's not forget that—that's jamming equipment. A lot of this was for

the existing fleet of ballistic missiles and aviation and air assets, and for future ones as well. Additionally, targeting. I mean, that's what the Americans said—"Oh, they're helping with targeting." Well, why wouldn't they? You've been doing this for four years. What's good for the goose is good for the gander. Oh, but no, it's not. "How dare they do this to us? They're evil."

Okay, so what have you been doing for the last four years? Either they're that hypocritical or they're that lacking in self-awareness. I'm going with hypocrites. I'm pretty sure they know what they've been doing—and they've been bragging about it until it gets done to them. Then they're like, "Oh, you can't do that. We're the exceptional people. You can't play. It's a rules-based order. We make the rules. You can't do that. That's in the rules." Well, yes, we can. Additionally, Russia has been bringing in a lot of its experience with drones. Speaking of drones, there was a sound bite from Trump saying there's no such thing as underwater drones or seaboard drones, because we would have killed them by now. See, it's all artificial intelligence.

And the Iranians posted another one of those drive-through tunnel videos, where it's just going down a tunnel and there's a bunch of these waterborne drones. It just rolls like they're done with airborne drones—like, okay, it's all artificial intelligence. You know, if it doesn't fit Trump's agenda or Trump's momentary lapse of sanity. By the way, there's something else to consider here, too. The council—if I remember the name correctly—it's the Security Council of Iraq. It's basically a council of militias, the Shia militias. And what they've said to al-Jalani is, "You take a step into Lebanon, and we're going to turn Syria into a new battleground. We'll come across en masse and wipe you out." Plus, you know, he's still fighting the Alawites, what's left of the Kurds, and the Christians and the Shia. So Syria is not a done deal.

And I think once the Americans and the Israelis—either the Israelis are beaten back or they're stuck in a very wide war, as they've now started today, a full invasion of southern Lebanon—al-Jolani is going to find himself with a bit of a problem. Those Iraqi Shia militias are itching for a fight, and Iran is going to be empowered. I'm sure the Russian military isn't going to sit idly by either. Al-Jolani may very, very quickly find himself going from being a chopper to a playboy to an American refugee. His regime is going to be a very short-lived one. It all depends on how much of the American presence is left in the Persian Gulf. If they've been pushed out of the Persian Gulf, al-Jolani's head is going to be rolling—if he doesn't jump on a plane and take off fast enough. Syria may bounce back as an entity, at least to some degree.

#Glenn

I've been looking over all the journal articles and academic work from around 2012, that era when there was talk about going to war with Iran. And it's interesting—the main conclusion was always that this would be a crazy gamble, a recipe for a prolonged war. There were just too many unknown variables. If you go after Iran, it spills out into essentially every part of the region. I mean, it seems

like it was all very predictable. Of course, what wasn't predictable back then was that they'd end up fighting a proxy war against Russia. And that's also been greatly affected by this war. So, any last thoughts?

#Guest

Yes, the satellite imagery seems to suggest that the Chinese are getting ready to welcome back, with open arms, one of their provinces—the only one that isn't part of China yet, if you get my point. This is prime time to do it. The Americans are out of missiles. The Americans are jacked up. The Americans are looking like fools. Hey, it's a good time to, and they're pulling all their systems out of everywhere else. It's a good time to look at Taiwan and go, "Yeah, baby, it's time to come home." So whether the Taiwanese want to or not—and there's a very large fraction in Taiwan that wants full reunification with China—let's not forget that.

So yeah, the Chinese may finally see the green light to make their move. I mean, this is going to have—it's having, and it's going to continue to have—ramifications well outside the battlespace they're presently in. And that Trump's advisors were either psychotically, heretically religious in that Christian Zionism heresy—"we're going to bring the end of the world and Armageddon" and all that—or they were just so bought by the Israelis that they threw caution to the wind. You know, whichever it is, I think it's probably a combination of both. They're going to be reaping that whirlwind for a very long time.

#Glenn

Well, you know, Joe Kent was appointed by Trump to be the director of the National Counterterrorism Center. He's resigned now because he opposed the war against Iran. Not only did he say it made no sense because Iran posed no imminent threat to our nation—which contradicts Trump—but I also make the point that this only started because of pressure from Israel and the Israel lobby. I mean, this is Trump's own guy. So I think this is really going into the history books as one of the great blunders of the United States. And yes, interesting times. So thank you very much for taking the time.

#Guest

Absolutely. Always a pleasure. I wish it were a better title or happier topics—more joyous topics—but it is what it is.