

Gilbert Doctorow: Russia & China

Reconsider U.S. Relations Over Iran War

Dr. Gilbert Doctorow discusses why Russia and China must rethink relations with each other and with the US following the attack on Iran. Gilbert Doctorow's new book "War Diaries. Volume 1: The Russia-Ukraine War, 2022-2023" is now available on Amazon: <https://www.amazon.com/War-Diaries-Russia-Ukraine-2022-2023/dp/B0F9VK1WM2> Follow Prof. Glenn Diesen: Substack: <https://glennDiesen.substack.com/> X/Twitter: https://x.com/Glenn_Diesen Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/glennDiesen> Support the research by Prof. Glenn Diesen: PayPal: <https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/glennDiesen> Buy me a Coffee: buymeacoffee.com/gdieseng Go Fund Me: <https://gofund.me/09ea012f> Books by Prof. Glenn Diesen: <https://www.amazon.com/stores/author/B09FPQ4MDL>

#Glenn

Welcome back. We're joined today by Gilbert Doctorow, a historian and international affairs analyst, to discuss how the war in Iran is affecting the East, and primarily Russia. Thank you for coming back on.

#Gilbert Doctorow

Hi, very good to be with you.

#Glenn

So we see that this Iran war has many dimensions, which I assume the Russians would interpret in different ways. Everything from deceptive diplomacy to the lawlessness of it, the brutality of the war—the willingness to escalate, killing government leaders, attacks on critical infrastructure, even nuclear power plants. It could be aimed at weakening Russia and China, but we also see some U.S. miscalculation, Iranian resilience, and the possible destruction of the Gulf states if their desalination plants go down. We also see a split in the relationship between Americans and Europeans. So again, much of this indicates that the ramifications of this war will not merely be regional, but global. How do you see this whole disaster unfolding in the Middle East—how it's impacting and being interpreted by the East, and by Russia and China in particular?

#Gilbert Doctorow

Well, I think the first thing I'd like to do is pause a little here. Because when we speak about Russia, we're talking about President Putin and his administration, about his foreign minister—what they're

saying. And then there's what the chattering classes are saying, you know, what the Moscow establishment is saying, as shown on the talk shows.

#Glenn

And not only on the talk shows.

#Gilbert Doctorow

They are very, very different. If you look strictly at President Putin and his immediate assistants, like the Minister of Foreign Affairs, you see very little reaction—astonishingly little reaction—from the Kremlin to these dramatic, shocking developments, which bear upon the whole possible relationship with Donald Trump and with the world order in general. Trump's behavior is obscene, it's obnoxious. I don't want to search for other derogatory words. I think he's reserved for himself a secure place in hell. But that's my personal opinion; I'm not speaking as an analyst. Speaking as an analyst, what he has done is utterly shocking—it utterly disrupts anything resembling the world order, respect for the UN Charter, respect for international law.

He's spoken of being held in check only by his own moral limits—his own take on morality—and not by international or other law. And he's acting accordingly. The problem is that his morality is bestial. His behavior, by ordinary human standards, is the most awful thing we've seen in a very, very long time. Let me distinguish between what is said and what is done. American presidents and their assistants have done some horrible things, going back to Nixon and Kissinger, but they never spoke about it so openly, so in your face—"If we can do anything, you'll just have to live with it." This is utterly shocking. That distinction, of course, comes up in all the talk shows. They make a great deal of it.

We've never witnessed this kind of directness—this transparency—in America's might-makes-right policy. But at the level of the Kremlin, there's almost total silence. Of course, they don't dare say anything about Mr. Trump showing his true nature. They don't say they're going to continue negotiations. They don't say they're going to call them off. They only note that they are in suspense and that the Americans have requested that. As regards Iran, many of us in the alternative media had assumed that Iran was bracketed within the Shanghai Cooperation Organization and in BRICS by these two major powers, which provided it with stability, some sense of security, and good reason to behave in an orderly way and not to be a sponsor of terrorism. Now we see that these two brackets are virtually meaningless.

Both Russia and China, to our knowledge—I'm very cautious about this, because how valid our knowledge is, is difficult to say since all of these things are kept in the dark—but considering the lack of accusations against Russia and China for giving meaningful support to Iran, we can assume there is no such support. We heard—oh yes—America was shocked, Washington was shocked that the Russians could possibly be supplying military intelligence to Iran. How horrible. That's as much as we

saw. The Israelis said that yesterday they blasted out of the water ships that were carrying Russian arms to Iran. Russia has denied that they were carrying any weapons or that these were even Russian ships. But aside from that, we don't hear a word about Russian arms being supplied.

So what is the meaning of the alliance or the cooperation agreements? What is the meaning of Iran being in the Shanghai Cooperation Organization or BRICS? I would say at this point, zero. Now, I don't mean to be too harsh here, because what we've all learned—including the Russians and the Chinese—is that, as Mr. Trump and his close associates have shown, Iran is quite capable of looking after its own interests, more than anyone expected, without even taking into account the 4,000-kilometer two-stage missile that was fired at J.R. Garcia. But even within the limits of short- and medium-range missiles, they've shown a capability for maintaining prioritization of firing, timing of firing—all the things that come from command and control—which supposedly was utterly destroyed by American and Israeli attacks.

So the Iranians have held on very, very well. Of course, their backup is the Strait of Hormuz and their ability to cause economic damage to the Middle East and to everyone supplied by the Middle East—meaning primarily the Far East and, to a lesser extent, Europe. This was not something anyone anticipated, that their organization could survive such dramatic, horrific attacks as they had experienced. But they did. And therefore, you have to go back and ask the first question: maybe the Iranians were perfectly justified in not concluding military defensive alliances with Russia or China and in keeping their options open. Perhaps. I won't say more; I just mention it in passing.

But the power of Iran to survive all of this has been stunning. Their ability to maintain pressure on the globe and to destroy, at will, almost all hydrocarbon production in the Middle East makes their control over the Strait of Hormuz almost irrelevant. If there's no production, then there's nothing for tankers to take through the Strait of Hormuz. So, whichever way you look at it, they are in a commanding position. That was not to be expected. Certainly, the Russians—officially, the Russians—never expected that Iran could be more powerful through its asymmetric defense than the United States with its direct, barbarous attacks on Iraq.

#Glenn

Given that we see all the rules are essentially gone—thrown away—and the U.S. is so blatant about it as well, especially with Pete Hegseth and this whole rhetoric that following international law or the rules of engagement is just political correctness, that they'll do whatever it takes, essentially dismissing international law—how does this work in the military calculations of the Russians and the Chinese? Because the U.S. seems very determined to defeat its opponents. And again, you point to the idea that knocking out the Iranians would also serve the purpose of weakening China. So how does this affect military cooperation? Is there any talk now of deepening military cooperation between Russia, China, North Korea, or others?

#Gilbert Doctorow

All right. First, if we go back to the very start of this—as I mentioned earlier in recent interviews and in my writings—the American and Israeli attacks on Iran shocked the Russian foreign policy establishment out of its skin. They were shocked to the point where they began to realize that the method the Putin government has been using—the slow, slow war of attrition—is not appropriate to the present security environment. And they started speaking openly about it. This was done on one of Solovyov’s programs to a shocking degree. They all but denounced Putin in every way except by name. The next day, Solovyov ate his words and was talking about our wonderful commander-in-chief who works tirelessly at three in the morning to look after our welfare. But there are others who have kept up the pressure.

Alexander Dugin, a court philosopher—as he was considered within Putin’s Kremlin—came out with at least as harsh a critique of the war management as that one show of Solovyov did. And of course, Dugin is untouchable. After the brutal murder and assassination of his daughter, he was made a hero, and you cannot say a word against him. Yet there he is, in open space, on his own website, denouncing the “go-slow” approach. So there is a change in mentality. The question is where and when this pressure is applied to the president, and to what effect. As to the question you posed, this was directly discussed again on the same program—the same talk show. Mr. Solovyov, after that shocking attack and then recanting his words, disappeared from television for a week, and I thought, my goodness, it looks like press freedom has just evaporated.

#Glenn

No, no, I was quite mistaken.

#Gilbert Doctorow

He disappeared from television because he joined a parliamentary delegation from the Duma to their counterparts in Beijing. This happens periodically, and it was very timely. One of the members of that delegation, a chairman of a Duma committee who later spoke again on the Solovyov program, explained that they were keen to engage the Chinese on the very question you’ve posed: shouldn’t there now be a forged, three-way defense alliance between Russia, China, and North Korea? And, of course, the question arises—why North Korea? How can we equate North Korea’s power situation with these two superpowers, Russia and China? The really interesting contribution of North Korea, of course, is its will and determination to act rather than just to speak.

And there’s reason to believe that the North Koreans are supplying munitions to Iran—specifically, underwater drones and missiles capable of destroying aircraft carriers. These have reportedly been supplied by North Korea. If you think about it, we can ask: why aren’t they supplying them with a nuclear bomb? Or maybe they are—we just don’t know about it. But the point is, the North Koreans

aren't talkers; they're doers. The Chinese and the Russians are just talkers. And that really comes through in yesterday's—or today's—address by Lavrov, commenting on the latest situation in the Middle East. It's just whining, just whining. "Oh, look what's going on."

I'm sorry, this is the second most militarily powerful country in the world, and all they can say is, "My goodness, how sad this is." This is a pitiful verbal tragedy—a response to America running amok in the Middle East. Not to mention, where is the physical response to America's actions there? And just to say, as Dmitry has been telling everyone who gives him a microphone, "Boy, this is really going to upset the world economy." A brilliant observation, which none of us, of course, could have made on our own without his intervention. Russia has been holding back and saying nothing. And let me address why. Again, I don't want to be critical.

I just want to be analytical here. The reason, as I understand it, is very plain. Russia has made a strength out of maintaining talking relations with everybody. But when you have a situation as critical as the one we're in now—one that could easily escalate into World War III and could lead not just to a global recession but a global depression—it's not a virtue to be talking to everybody and holding hands with everybody. You've got to do something, take a stand, and Russia's not doing that. On the contrary. I heard on the program Sunday evening—he was reading, it was so obvious, it was a teleprompter—he was reading lines that must have made him very embarrassed, but they were clearly coming from the Kremlin.

And the lines were, "Oh, how sad that the Gulf states are being harmed in this conflict." Well, that's because Mr. Putin wants to hold everybody's hand and advertise how Russia is very "intermediary," because it's speaking to all sides. I don't believe that's the proper response to the present dire situation. The notion that Russia sheds tears—which I think are crocodile tears—over the harm done to its competitors, the Gulf states, who are after all its competitors in supplying hydrocarbons to the world, is shabby-looking. The fact emerges, and many other observers have made this point. I didn't weigh in on it before, but now I have no choice but to weigh in. Putin leans toward Israel; there's no question about it. And his justification for it does not stand up to reason.

The justification was, "Oh, there are two million Russian speakers who are passport holders living in Israel, and we can't see harm done to them." Well, friends, those are no friends. The Israeli residents—the Israeli passport holders who are dual nationals and have Russian passports—are also no friends of Moscow. And anybody who says otherwise is not being serious, including the president of Russia. They are enemies. Just as Mr. Tobias was an enemy, just as Naina Yeltsin is an enemy, they all get coddled by the president of Russia. I won't say more. He has every possibility of changing direction, and I hope he does. But as it stands now, Russia's great-power status is utterly wasted on resolving a global crisis in the Middle East.

#Glenn

I was thinking—you mentioned that, of course, the Gulf states are competitors to Russia, especially in the energy markets. But how do you see the other, I guess, what benefits could come to Russia? Because the media often points out that Russia is the big winner in this war. I guess it makes sense to some extent: energy prices are going up, a lot of its energy competitors are going off the grid. The fact that the U.S. had to drop some sanctions on Russia—once that solidarity around the sanctions falls apart—it might be difficult to rebuild. You have weapons being redirected that would otherwise have been used to kill Russians. But I thought a more specific thing, which also affects the Chinese, would be the faltering of the alliance systems in the Middle East.

We see some Gulf states, you know, rethinking how wise it is to host all these U.S. bases—in East Asia, like in South Korea. Some must be wondering how certain the security guarantees really are, as the U.S. pulls out all these THAAD and Patriot missiles. And indeed, in Europe too, you see a deepening split between the U.S. and the EU. So, do you see this as a benefit, or do you see it more as part of the same trend—the weakening of the alliance systems? Because that seems to be a key component of the hegemonic position: if you can divide all the regions of the world into obedient, dependent allies and weakened adversaries.

#Gilbert Doctorow

Well, I'll address that question, which is very important. But first, I want to turn it around. The alliances of the weak and the alternative media, which had been seen as so important in ushering in a new global governance that would be polycentric and multipolar, have been shot to hell. Listening to Russian television, they were now talking about BRICS in terms none of us could have expected. Following their discussions and what's happened in the last two weeks, they were more or less acknowledging that BRICS is worth zero—zero. And I say that to all of our colleagues: if Russians are saying that, why are they saying it? Before that, they saw that the United States had upended BRICS by imposing these 50% sanctions on countries trading in Russian oil.

And it worked. India dropped all of its purchases of Russian oil. Well, that was the past. Now they're saying simply, "BRICS." You know, by the way, BRICS was never intended to be anti-American. This is Russians speaking on state television. BRICS was supposed to build an alternative framework that would eventually replace the faltering IMF and World Trade Organization, all those other structures dating from the post-World War II period. It was meant to be a new order. Now the Russians aren't saying that anymore. This explains why a year ago—I think it was the last BRICS meeting, maybe two years ago—when we all... when was the meeting in Kazan? That was October, wasn't it?

#Glenn

Yeah.

#Gilbert Doctorow

Okay. When we discovered that there was going to be no alternative to the existing exchanges—currency exchange—there'd be no BRICS currency. That seemed peculiar, but nobody really highlighted it. And now it's perfectly clear why: the Russians understood back then, but never said it aloud, that BRICS is virtually worthless. That's what's come out of this. And I'd say the Shanghai Cooperation Organization hasn't come out much better, although in its last meeting it was clear that the Russians and the Chinese were looking to invest more in that as their main vector for moving forward with new world governance, rather than BRICS, which was falling away in importance.

So when we say that the Western organizations—whether it's NATO, the EU, whatever—are being shattered or are opening up hidden fissures that will be important for their future evolution, I'd say what we thought were the organizations uniting the East have turned out to be shattered as well. That creates an even more chaotic situation than any of us could have imagined. Yes, of course, here in Europe, the shattering of the EU is only in its first stage.

#Gilbert Doctorow

I can't imagine.

#Gilbert Doctorow

How will Ursula von der Leyen survive her statements last week that we will not import one gram of Russian gas under the current situation of shortages, spiking prices, and high inflation? How can she survive this? Much as they are not pragmatists, all the leaders of Western Europe are faced with the politically hazardous inflation that's coming.

#Glenn

How do you make sense of the Europeans here, though? Because this is quite a shock to them. They cut themselves off and celebrated having no more purchases of Russian oil or gas. And now, of course, they're being cut off from the Middle East as well. We see the United States realizing that Europe is now completely dependent on American LNG, which allows Trump to essentially say to the EU, "You will pass this trade deal, this horrible trade deal that nobody in the EU wanted. Otherwise, you will no longer have favorable access to our LNG." So, you know, who could have foreseen this? You cut yourself off from all other suppliers, and then the one supplier you now depend completely on has political leverage. I mean, it's quite predictable, but still shocking in some way.

What is happening within the EU? As you mentioned, the statements from von der Leyen go so far against the national interests of the member states. How do you see this playing out? There are exceptions, I would say. The Belgian prime minister, especially, I think, is quite impressive in these days of unbearable conformity, where everyone falls in line. They always use this expression "European solidarity," which is just a poor excuse for rejecting common sense, because one is obviously going down the wrong path and using the slogans of European solidarity as a way of

suggesting that all dissent is something negative. But the Belgian prime minister suggested, you know, minor things—like after this war, we should normalize relations with Russia—which he was then criticized for. So how do you see Europe adjusting to this Iran war? Because that, of course, will also affect its position on the Ukraine war.

#Gilbert Doctorow

Well, it hasn't adjusted fully. It hasn't even adjusted partially. When you look at the odious behavior and odious statements coming out of Trump, they're in such violation of European values that the question is how much longer this hypocrisy can hold. That this man and this country are the closest allies of Europe—it's in such violation of all their ideals that sooner or later this has to break. The question is when, and who will lead the way. Now, coming back to Bart De Wever, I'm very glad you mentioned him. I've got a personal take on this. I think he's campaigning to become the president of the European Commission. He's in front of the microphone every day.

His N-VA is putting up his speeches and answers to questions on YouTube. He comes to a meeting, as he did a week ago, of the European heads of government, and he passes about 200 journalists lined up with their microphones. He stops here, he stops there, he stops at a fourth place—he's campaigning to take charge. Now, I don't take at face value any of his conformist statements. I think he's running the same race as Fico and Orbán, but in a very shrewd way—not upsetting people, guarding his flanks, and avoiding saying anything that would allow his enemies to stick in a dagger and remove him from where he wants to go.

Therefore, he says that he supports Ukraine 100%. He tells you about his parents and how they took in Ukrainian refugees. He says that, yes, we will have normalized relations with Russia only after a peace treaty is signed—a treaty acceptable both to us in Europe and to Ukrainians. From my understanding, that's all hot air. It's simply defensive, protective talk, while he's going after the things that count. After all, he did say "normalization of relations with Russia." And he did say, explaining himself, that if you have a peace treaty, it is a peace treaty, not a scrap of paper.

A peace treaty means you've resolved all outstanding issues, and after that, you normalize relations. As he said, that's what we did after World War II—we suddenly started trading normally and everything else. That's in direct contradiction to what we're hearing from all the Russia-haters in the EU. They want a peace treaty that's only a truce, setting the stage for round two or three, when they'll drive Russia out of Europe or make sure it stays outside of Europe. So he's going in a very different direction, and I'm sure it's a campaign he's waging to take over the direction of the EU.

#Glenn

Now, that's a good point. And again, this falls within the whole idea of the Europeans—they don't even want to enter the war, it seems. They just want a ceasefire. Nobody really wants to try to find a way of restoring relations after the war. And as you correctly say, you hear this in the rhetoric over

and over again: once this is over, we can find some different avenue where we can compete with or fight the Russians on more favorable terms. Even the Ukraine war can't really be brought to an end. They say quite openly they need a break to breathe, to regroup, to rebuild—but the fight isn't over.

So I'm missing this from the discourse—the willingness to take a step back and discuss basic things, like what actually are the sources of peace there. How do we envision a stable, prosperous Europe in the future? Is that one where the largest country in Europe, by territory, population, and military economy, will be under constant containment and attempts to sever it from the rest of the continent? Is that a source of stability? Is it going to be the Western countries dominating so much that Russia has to adjust? Or will it be some way of everyone sitting around the same table? There's no discussion of this. I just hear politics being reduced to cheap slogans about, you know, our values and Russian aggression.

At the end of the day, if all their crocodile tears over Ukraine were genuine—if they really wanted to save Ukraine—their first priority should be to remove it from the front lines of this new geopolitical game. You can't seriously convince anyone that this has benefited Ukraine in any way. But in terms of putting an end to the war—how has the Iran war affected the possibility of diplomacy? I would think the Russians, after the deceptive diplomacy with Iran—first the JCPOA, then those two surprise attacks when negotiations were going well—are not very trusting. How does this affect things? I mean, do they still talk about Alaska now in Moscow? And what are they saying in China? Because Xi Jinping was supposed to meet Trump next month, but that meeting was postponed.

#Gilbert Doctorow

Well, I've criticized the way Vladimir Putin is managing the world, and I have to criticize even more sternly the position of the Chinese, who look like absolute wimps. Their stand on Iran is utterly incomprehensible, given, as I said, their sponsorship of Iran in those two key organizations where China and Russia are both leaders—I mean both BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization. It's incomprehensible that they've done nothing of substance to assist Iran, and the MFA has been so cautious in its words about him. But that's enough about the Chinese. I don't know where this is headed, but it's clear that Europe is going to change.

It's clear that the position of several people is unsustainable, and it's going to take a lot of change in leadership across the continent. But a good start would be cleaning house here in Brussels and in the European institutions. I don't see how, as I said, the lady can survive what she's done with her own two hands—and that would be a good start to cleaning house. But there's a lot more that has to change. We'll see whether Mr. Orbán survives his vote coming up two or three weeks from now, since he's been so important in resisting the machine in Brussels. But I'm sorry, I think I'm straying from your question. Could you rephrase it?

#Glenn

The possible pathways now for diplomacy—because the Russians were looking toward Alaska as a way to go, and the Chinese, I think, were hoping that some relations could be improved with this meeting that was supposed to take place next month—because for them, of course, this could be an opportunity. If the US is now struggling, perhaps they'd like to put a pause to this economic war against the Chinese.

#Gilbert Doctorow

Well, the present situation, of course, is very embarrassing for President Putin. Going back a little more than a month, there was an open public break between his position and that of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The opposition within the Ministry started with Sergei Lavrov, who famously said that the initiative—the impulse from Anchorage—is gone, that there is no further room for diplomacy, and that this will be resolved on the battlefield. He was immediately reprimanded. But then, within two or three weeks, we find that his boss, Sergei Lavrov, was saying the same thing.

All this time, Peskov, speaking on behalf of Putin, has been saying the opposite. And they appointed Dmitriev, made him very important. Let me not mince words: Dmitriev, in my understanding, is an American plant. He's part of the liberal elite—liberals whom Putin has always coddled—in a traditional power play where you tilt to the right, then to the left, then back to the right. That's how Gorbachev maintained his power until he fell. And I think the present head of state is playing the same game, which could lead to the same result. There's a point where you have to stand on one side or the other; you can't keep shifting back and forth.

And it is time, since President Putin invested so much of his political capital in these negotiations—and if you look at them, you'd have to be mad to believe that anything can be achieved with Donald Trump in negotiations, for all the reasons you just gave. Nobody is speaking about it so directly, but it's pretty obvious that this war will end on the battlefield and that Mr. Trump's role is less than nothing. So there you have a big divide in Russia, and it remains to be seen when or whether the president will adjust to the new conditions. So far, he hasn't. So far, they're quite pleased that Trump has pulled back and is not pressing new talks with Putin on.

But that day will come, and Putin will have to decide whether he's going to continue this farce or not. At the same time, we're well aware of what Mr. Zelensky said a day ago—that the Russians are preparing or starting a big summer offensive right now. He's correct; they are. The only thing that was false in Mr. Zelensky's statement was the claim that it's very costly to the Russians, that they're losing a thousand a day. As we know—and as I've seen over the last four years—every time the Ukrainians talk about Russian losses, they're projecting onto the Russians their own losses. That the Ukrainians are losing a thousand men a day is entirely believable. The Russians are not.

Nonetheless, the Russians, of course, have losses. But what was significant about Zelensky's remarks—which, otherwise, aren't reflected in what Russian state television told their audience—is that he was speaking about the use of tanks and heavy equipment coming back into play. Now,

partly this is seasonal, because they have more cover; the leaves are coming out, spring is underway. But I don't think that explains the whole thing. I think the Russians are simply much more confident that they can keep the Ukrainian drones at bay, or counter them one way or another, and they're massing heavy equipment, which they haven't done for close to a year.

So that is in preparation for a big drive on Kramatorsk and Sloviansk, which are now just 18 kilometers within artillery range from a Russian standpoint—after which you've got a clean sweep. At the same time, looking forward, as you and I do, it's shocking that after four years of war—now in the fifth year, a war that's gone on almost as long as World War II—Russia has only captured, in the last few months, an additional 5% of Donetsk province, or 8%. It's gone from 17% to 25%—sorry, from 25% that was held by Ukrainians down to 18%, roughly. Until now, their moves, for understandable reasons, have been extremely modest. We'll see very soon whether they can make the end run and reach the Dnieper in a matter of weeks rather than years. So that is all in front of us.

#Glenn

Well, how about just one last question? We've seen, in terms of world developments, some successes from the Ukrainian offensive, especially down south in the Zaporizhzhia region. How do you make sense of that, given that they've lost a lot of access to money and weapons over the past few weeks?

#Gilbert Doctorow

Because it's a 1,200-kilometer-long front, if they find a weak spot—whichever city it is—they exploit it. But I wouldn't say that any isolated successes or surprises they achieve are going to overturn the big picture, which is the Russian advance, as I described, against the last two medium-importance outposts and highlands of Sloviansk and Kramatorsk. The Ukrainian success would be surprising only to those who, day after day, week after week, have been saying that the Russians have shattered the Ukrainian lines, that their recruitment efforts have been utterly unsuccessful, and so on.

As you know, among our colleagues and on various YouTube platforms, there are many who issue daily the most lurid, most sensationalist accounts of the war—stories about it coming to an end, a Russian victory, Ukrainian capitulation, as if it's a pushover. It has never been a pushover. The Ukrainians, despite everything, have fought with great valor, which Russian state television actually acknowledges, but almost none of my colleagues mention. And I say shame on them, because the fact remains that there is fighting spirit in Ukraine. There is, however, the problem you've highlighted: they are very short on equipment, and of course their number of soldiers has been significantly depleted. That is undeniable, and it's why, as I say, they can concentrate force in only one or two locations. But along the whole 1,200-kilometer line, the Russians have by far the strategic advantage.

#Glenn

Well, thank you for taking the time to speak with us. I appreciate it. I think this seems like an indication that it's taking the shape of a world war when you see one conflict impacting another. I don't think we're quite there yet, but given how large the global ramifications are, and how these wars and conflicts—from the one in Ukraine to Iran—are also impacting the U.S.–Chinese rivalry, it does appear to be taking on global dimensions. Do you have any final thoughts before we wrap up?

#Gilbert Doctorow

No, I think I agree completely with your summary. It has a global dimension. The two are intimately related. And, of course, the depletion of American air defenses in the war of Israel against Iran is a major setback for Ukraine. So, in very simple terms of equipment available, the two wars are directly interrelated to the disadvantage of Ukraine.