The Scary New Phase of the Ukraine Proxy-War | Prof. Steven Starr

The CIA is running the show in Ukraine. Not that we didn't know that but the fact that mainstream is now admitting this and is simultaniously prepareing the general public for more war is a very bad sign. We might be entering the next phase in the West's long-war against Russia. Steven Starr joins Pascal to examine intelligence operations, drone attacks and the danger of escalation between Russia and NATO. Starr presents his interpretation of Western reporting, military preparations and nuclear deterrence, questioning who controls American policy. They discuss Europe’s strategic choices, tensions over Kaliningrad, preparations for wider conflict and the risks surrounding Iran. The conversation also contrasts military spending with infrastructure investment in China and explores industrial decline, political accountability and the growth of America’s national security state today. Steven's Links: Nuclear Famine — website and publications: https://nuclearfamine.org/about-steven-starr/ Neutrality Studies Links: Neutrality Studies Substack: https://pascallottaz.substack.com Support Neutrality Studies: https://neutralitystudies.com/donate Neutrality Studies shop: https://neutralitystudies.com/shop Time Stamps 00:00 The CIA, Russia and presidential control 04:35 Drone attacks and Europe’s involvement 09:30 Kaliningrad and the danger of escalation 13:50 The Pentagon’s Fortress preparations 18:09 Military spending versus infrastructure 21:23 Ukraine, ceasefires and Western strategy 28:41 Iran and the risks of a wider war 42:04 America’s national security state

#Pascal

Welcome back, everybody, to Neutrality Studies. Today, we have an update on the CIA-Russia war with Professor Stephen Starr, a former professor at the University of Missouri and a member of the Los Alamos Study Group. Steve, welcome back.

#Steven Starr

Well, thanks for having me again. It's always a pleasure to speak with you, and it's an honor to be on your show.

#Pascal

It's fantastic having you because you always prepare wonderful presentations. Let me load it here. And you are going to update us on what is actually going on in the shadows—the real war, which is not primarily between Russia and Ukraine, but between the CIA and Russia. Can you please take it away?

#Steven Starr

Well, you know, Marco Rubio mentioned some time ago that Ukraine was a proxy for the United States in its war against Russia. And I think that's fairly well understood, although the media always talks about Ukraine and not the U.S. But The Atlantic, which is a fairly important publication, had this article on October 23rd that really caught my attention. If you look at the second line there, it says, "CIA Director John Ratcliffe leads an agency that's at war with Russia." So the CIA is waging war against Russia. That's a little different than saying the United States is. And given recent events, where President Trump very publicly told Zelensky to stop hitting the refineries in Russia, and then the drone attacks escalated, it makes me wonder: is Trump really in control? I mean, what's going on?

#Pascal

Can you just tell us for a second what The Atlantic is? How should we understand this publication?

#Steven Starr

Well, it's a prominent publication. It's considered to be a neocon publication, but it's been around for a long time, and it's taken seriously. So if they publish an article on national security, it makes the news. I mean, this article was noted by a number of people. I don't subscribe to it, but my attention was called to it by a couple of other people who pointed out the idea that the CIA is waging war against Russia. I mean, if you go back, though, you can see that the CIA has been deeply involved since 2014. You know, John Brennan went over to Ukraine almost immediately after the coup there. And they called it an anti-terrorist operation, but it was really just a civil war where the Ukrainian armed forces attacked the cities in Donbass. Something like 16,000 people were killed there before the real war that we're talking about now broke out.

So the CIA has been deeply involved for a long time. But, you know, what's happening is the drone war is escalating. I want to explain that a little bit more. But, you know, really, if we have an intelligence agency that's waging war without presidential approval, then our system is more than broken. The Atlantic noted that the CIA operations in Ukraine are now much more aggressive than they were under Biden. And Trump publicly ordered Zelensky, as I mentioned, to stop drone attacks on the Russian refineries and infrastructure. But the attacks continued practically the next day, and they've escalated. So I would contend that the CIA appears to be a rogue organization that the executive branch can't control. The president is supposed to be commander in chief.

#Pascal

The point is, they couldn't attack these refineries without the CIA's intelligence and targeting data, right?

#Steven Starr

Right. So the point is, it's not just the CIA. I want to point out that the satellites that provide the satellite intelligence are operated by the National Reconnaissance Office. And that's under the control of the Department of Defense, not the CIA. So, in other words, the Department of Defense is cooperating with the CIA to wage war against Russia. So at this point, you might ask, well, is this whole thing a psyop? Is this theater just to deceive the public or whoever, to make them think that Trump isn't in control? I don't know, but I find the whole question very disturbing. And, you know, this spy satellite information provides early warning to Ukraine about incoming Russian missiles and drones. It's absolutely vital to Ukraine.

Ukraine wouldn't be able to last more than a week or two without this information. And it's used to guide drones past Russian air defenses to hit targets deep in Russia. I mean, they have to use this intel because they still lose a lot of drones. And people like Larry Johnson might say, well, look, they lose almost all their drones before they get to the target, so it's maybe not that big a deal. But I think it is. It's not just the CIA. Europe was also preparing for war with Russia. The U.K. was bragging in August that its factories had produced drones for deep strikes in mainland Russia, and Russia responded at that time by threatening consequences for that. That was on August 15th. On September 20th, 1,600 drones attacked Russia, and it was the last day of the parliamentary elections.

#Speaker 1

It is a war of attrition, and it's growing ever more violent. An oil refinery near Moscow was set alight by several drones in this Ukrainian attack. Kyiv is hoping that petrol shortages will persuade Russians to turn against their president. This was part of what Moscow's mayor said was the biggest Ukrainian assault on his city so far. Residential buildings near the refinery were also hit, and three people were reported killed. The Russians said over a thousand drones had been shot down across the country overnight. This happened on the last day of parliamentary elections.

#Steven Starr

So the CIA and the Department of Defense are continuing to escalate the drone war against Russia. In March, things changed radically, and Ukraine sent over 7,000 drones to attack targets in Russia. That averaged about 237 drones per day. Well, in October, the CIA supervised attacks against Russia involving 900 to more than 1,000 drones per day. So that's 30,000 drone attacks on Russia per month right now. What would the United States do if Russia or China sent 30,000 drones in one month to attack U.S. refineries, cities, and infrastructure? I mean, we're not hearing about this in our mainstream media or anything, but it's certainly an issue in Russia. I've been really surprised that the Russians haven't taken stronger action. Just on October 30th, 1,214 drones were

intercepted by Russia, but they hit a really large Russian refinery. Somebody filmed this from their car. You can see these aren't pinprick strikes. These aren't little drones causing minor damage to the refinery. This is big damage.

#Pascal

It's huge. Oh, my God.

#Steven Starr

This is a close-up. And look at that. So, you know, the mainstream media tells us that Russia has lost 40 percent of its petroleum exports. I don't know if it's true or not. But with 30,000 drones a month coming in, even if they're shooting most of them down, a lot of damage is being done. So the Russian ministry has published a target list of drone manufacturers in Europe, including just about everybody listed down there. Even Israel was on the list. They should take this seriously in Europe, I would think. The U.S. is still building military bases in Europe.

Fifty-one new bases are going into Finland, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark. And, you know, all these nations have agreed to host not only U.S. but also French nuclear weapons. This is a big deal. RUSI is the Royal United Services Institute—that little heading below there. And they were bragging about how French and British nuclear cooperation strengthens European deterrence, obviously against Russia. But, you know, the British make fun of deterrence. Glenn Diesen pointed out something that I thought was an important comment. He said that in Europe, they don't talk about nuclear deterrence. They talk about Russian nuclear blackmail.

#Pascal

Hey guys, Autumn Spirit is here, and we've launched our new merch. For instance, the monster from our Kilt Symposium has arrived on T-shirts, tumblers, and magnets. The little fella is really cute. Check it out. Every purchase directly helps us keep the lights on. So thanks a lot, and see you soon.

#Steven Starr

And they're showing here that they're making fun of Putin and saying, "Oh, he's helpless. He wouldn't dare use his nuclear weapons against us. His threats don't work anymore."

#Pascal

Yeah, and I mean, the picture that you're showing us shows that the red button is actually not connected to him. As in, he's bluffing; he doesn't even have anything. I mean, we are at that stage of stupidity where we think that the largest arsenal of nuclear weapons on Earth is actually just an empty threat.

#Steven Starr

That's right. I was talking to Dr. Postol the other day, and he's just aghast at the stupidity of these people. I mean, when you think back on the Cold War, I wouldn't even dare do any of these things. But meanwhile, you know, Germany is militarizing. They're now buying U.S. Tomahawk missiles that can strike Moscow. I think the Russians take that really seriously coming from Germany. These are long-range cruise missiles. And in the EU, they're now boarding and detaining Russian ships in the Baltic Sea. It's happened eight or nine times. Russia has called this a hostile provocation. And Patrushev, who is an aide to Putin, announced plans by London and Brussels to block the Baltic Sea. Well, look at this map of the Baltics. You can see Kaliningrad is a Russian enclave. It's in the center there.

And it's a very important port for the Russians. It's very militarized. You know, Russia captured that from Germany in World War II. They maintained it, but it's completely separate from the main body of Russia. So it has to be supplied by sea and by land. Belarus is an ally of Russia, so there's a gap there where trains have to go through. If they start blockading Kaliningrad, Russia has said this would be an act of war, and Putin has made a point of saying this. And this was not just a casual discussion. They had a five-part miniseries that featured former UK and Scottish ministers playing roles in this. It depicted a conventional strike on the Russian enclave of Kaliningrad and on Murmansk, which is a big Russian naval base. And subsequently, Russia and Putin said that they would use nuclear weapons to defend Kaliningrad.

#Speaker 2

Is this sort of a war game with a difference?

#Speaker 3

I did not come here to be assaulted. I know. I am giving you a warning.

#Speaker 2

And I am telling you, I am telling you that rather than Russia being on the attack in this scenario, Moscow is the one facing the dilemma.

#Pascal

This series was taken very, very seriously, wasn't it?

#Speaker 2

It was. The rebels want his regime to be even more aggressive towards NATO than it already is. It's an uncomfortable challenge that must be crushed with help from a reluctant Belarus.

#Speaker 3

Do you want me to tell the red team that you are breaking ranks with Moscow?

#Speaker 2

Can't I be prevaricating? No. This is one of four rooms taking part in a simulation run by a think tank at a university in the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius. It's one of three scenarios involving Kaliningrad that were simulated here last week to explore Russia's weak spots and highlight NATO's strengths.

#Speaker 4

These games that involve scenarios where NATO does nothing and stands by while big, fat red arrows cross the border and go rolling into the Baltic states—it’s all nonsense. Actually, these countries see things we don’t see, they hear things we don’t hear, they understand things we don’t understand, and they do things we don’t do. And they are super vigilant. Moscow would, of course, disagree, though it surely won’t find the outcome of these war games very reassuring.

#Steven Starr

So it's ridiculous, you know? They're trying to say that Kaliningrad is vulnerable and that Russians should be worried. I mean, they've got all kinds of nuclear weapons in Kaliningrad, and anybody who tries to get near there with a military force should be destroyed instantly.

#Pascal

So what you're showing us here is all of the documentary proof that in Europe, the mental and logistical preparations for war against Russia are well underway.

#Steven Starr

It's not just a psyop. I mean, it's a comprehensive effort. Germany has made it mandatory for 18-year-old men to have physical exams now. If you're going to leave Germany for more than three months, you have to register. They're talking about conscription. The English are telling people to stock up on food and water. And meanwhile, you know, here in the U.S., the Pentagon just announced a fortress plan to prepare for a cyberattack or a major war.

#Speaker 5

The Pentagon is preparing for a nightmare scenario: a global war that could knock out power grids, cripple supply chains, and leave military bases cut off from essential services. Chief National Security Correspondent Jennifer Griffin reports live from Washington. This is getting a lot of play online, Jennifer.

#Speaker 6

That's right, John. Well, the Pentagon has a doomsday plane, and now it's updating its doomsday plan, moving beyond its Cold War-era continuity-of-government planning, which called for key military leaders to retreat to hardened facilities in Cheyenne Mountain in the event of an incoming nuclear attack. Now the Pentagon sees a new nightmare scenario: a global war that knocks out America's power grids, cripples supply chains, and leaves U.S. military bases cut off from essential services. Other allies, including the U.K., have been warning their populations to stockpile 90 days of food and water, just in case. Under the new Pentagon initiative called Fortress, every major military installation in the continental U.S. would be expected to operate independently for at least 90 days with its own electricity, water, fuel, and communications.

Documents obtained by Fox reveal plans for portable nuclear reactors, backup power grids, and massive reserves of ammunition, critical minerals, medical supplies, and spare parts. The Pentagon also wants civilian factories ready to switch to wartime weapons production, alternative supply chains in place if foreign suppliers are cut off, and military communications capable of functioning even if GPS and satellites are disrupted. Experts agree America's next major war could reach U.S. soil through cyberattacks, drones, and long-range weapons, particularly in a potential conflict with China, which appears to be preparing the battlefield by targeting U.S. critical infrastructure through ongoing cyberattacks like Salt Typhoon and Volt Typhoon.

#Steven Starr

Well, they're nuts, you know. And notice that this plan is to protect the military bases. It's not designed to protect the American population.

#Pascal

It's utterly insane. And with these kinds of scenarios, they're also drumming up these enemies at the same time: Russia and China are about to attack us. It's war mania at its worst.

#Steven Starr

And it's all over the Western world. Newsweek published this map of the governments that are advising emergency food stockpiles. They're explicit about it in Europe. They said it's because the Russians are coming. Here, they're more vague. We had that program about electromagnetic pulse, which I wrote a book on, and how it could knock out the grid. I'm not sure how well their nuclear

reactors would work if that happens. But at any rate, it's a concerted effort. It's coordinated, I believe, across all the Western governments—a major fear campaign. Meanwhile, this is another heartwarming article that came from the U.S. Army. They're practicing digging temporary battlefield graves. But the question is, are the graves for soldiers or civilians? Scott Ritter had an opinion on that.

#Scott Ritter

Let's be honest. They say it's for burying troops. This is the exercise that's used when you have mass deaths among civilians, when the military rolls into an urban area to prevent, you know, a mass outbreak of disease that comes with rotting corpses. You know, this is where they bulldoze the dead American bodies in the failed urban areas into their mass graves. This is what the exercise is. This is not burying American troops. This is about burying dead Americans.

#Steven Starr

So that's quite a collection of bad news I've presented to everybody. But, you know, I think everybody's kind of being bombarded by this at the same time. And we're really at a point where we have to speak out. You can't just passively accept all this that's going on. I hope that people in Europe take the lead. But here in the United States, it's dangerous. And, you know, there are better ways to spend money than on war. It turns out you could fix all of Cuba's electricity needs for $8 billion. For $23 billion, their entire grid would be made up of renewables. We spend $8.5 billion for four B-2 bombers. Instead of invading Cuba, why don't we take $8 billion and completely redo their grid so that they're not having blackouts every day because they've had their fuel cut off?

Other things that we could do: high-speed rail lines. You know, China has built 31,000 miles, 50,000 kilometers, of high-speed rail. And, you know, guess what? They haven't had any foreign wars. The U.S. has 50 miles of high-speed rail, and all we've had is endless war for the last 26 years. China has built 84,000 miles of new highway. Look at the defense spending. The U.S. has spent $17.2 trillion since 2000, and China has spent $4 trillion. So this is what you can do if you don't put all your money into war. We don't see any of this in mainstream media. I tried to show it to my students the last time I taught, and they were all surprised. So I'm just going to say, you know, we have alternatives. We don't have to blow up the world. We don't have to have endless wars. We can devote our resources to infrastructure and human needs. It doesn't have to be, you know, the horrible things that we see going on now. So I guess that'll end my presentation.

#Pascal

Well, thank you very much, Steve, for that overview and also the visuals that you gave us. I think you're speaking for many, many, many of us who think, again, it would be much nicer if all of that money could be used for infrastructure and for social spending and for making sure people have schooling and health care and livelihoods and roofs over their heads and so on. But instead, we're all

told that we need to prepare to be buried in mass graves and just die. For what exactly? For a war with Russia, please. And with China. But then again, the reality right now is that the CIA is actively conducting deep strikes inside Russian territory. And for some reason, the Russians are actually putting up with it because they have their strategy in Ukraine, which is to decisively take Ukraine away from the West as a bargaining chip.

And they do that very methodically by just plowing on and not falling anymore for these failed promises of another Minsk or whatever, in order for them to reload Ukraine and then remilitarize it against Russia. Now, where do you think this current strategy of the CIA is taking them? Like, what do you think, on their side, is the whole battle plan? Because Mr. Ratcliffe actually went to Moscow yesterday. And most people in our bubble of the internet are interpreting this as Ratcliffe going there in order to threaten Russia, to tell them, "You need to stop. You need to agree to a ceasefire again so that we can reload the Ukrainian gun against you." And the Russians said no. Right now, the West is trying to persuade the Russians to just stop and agree to a ceasefire. The Russians don't agree. So what do you think the CIA is cooking up at the moment?

#Steven Starr

I think the single biggest issue we have right now is that the elites in Europe and the United States seem to believe that Russia is losing the war, that Russia is weak, you know, and that we can still win somehow. On the other hand, if you look at the battlefield, it does seem that the Russians really have intensified their attacks on the infrastructure in Ukraine. It's going to be a terrible winter there. I really feel for the people who are subjected to all this. But, you know, the Russians, from the beginning, had security concerns that they wanted to have addressed. In 2021, they proposed draft treaties that the U.S. and NATO just rejected out of hand.

And the U.S. now keeps saying, "We want a ceasefire." They will not address the Russians' concerns. The Russians say they want a comprehensive peace settlement, and we want a ceasefire. The Russians say the ceasefire is to rearm. What the CIA is thinking, I really don't know. I worry that if there are no controls, there's no restraint. I mean, if the CIA really is not under the control of the executive branch, then who knows what will happen? I think some people, like Brian Berletic, would probably say, "Well, this is a psyop. It's intended to deceive us. It's been the American plan all along to do this, to defeat Russia and China." And maybe that's the case. I don't know.

But regardless, it's quite clear that we're sending 30,000 drones a month now to attack Russia. I don't see how this can endure. I think there's a really good chance of a false flag in the near future. Because if something happens—suppose a drone gets through and hits the Kremlin or shoots down a Russian airliner—I mean, we're really on thin ice here. And stopping Russian ships in the Baltic Sea—it's a comprehensive effort to go at Russia from about every direction you can think of. So, I don't know. I put all this out here in hopes that it can wake people up, because I don't think most people are aware of this. I mean, except for shows like yours, people don't hear this information.

#Pascal

I mean, it seems to me that Russia's approach is still, again, to try to take away Ukraine, right? As soon as the Ukraine war stops, right, and Russia takes the perimeter that it can and then imposes neutrality on Ukraine one way or another, the West basically loses that launching pad, right? Because what they need is a place at war with Russia that is not themselves. So, you know, Ukraine is fulfilling its purpose beautifully, being a proxy not within NATO. That's why you cannot do it from NATO territory. If you do, it's an all-or-nothing kind of thing. But in Ukraine, you can dial it up, you can dial it down. And I can see how these sick people in Washington and Brussels would think of this as a good thing, because then you can, like, pound the Russians and you can teach them a lesson, and then you give them a little goody: you stop the drones coming, and then you tell them what you want to happen.

I can see how they think in those terms. But if Ukraine is gone, then you cannot play that little game anymore, right? You would need another proxy, like Georgia or Moldova. But Poland is part of NATO, so that wouldn't work, right? It would be all or nothing. Unless the alliance wants to prove that it's not working for its members, but then they would have to show their hand.

#Steven Starr

They just had sort of a constitutional crisis there with Tusk. You know, he's anti-Russian, but I think he imprisoned or arrested somebody there who was on the other side and wanted to moderate things. You know, I don't know. I think the U.S. is intent on defeating Russia and China. And if they have to use their allies to do it, then who knows? There's always been a debate about Article 5. Would the U.S. really fight a nuclear war against Russia to save Brussels or Paris or something? A lot of people have thought that they wouldn't. And it's not a straightforward article. You know, if Poland or one of these countries attacks Russia, then they're not bound to come to their defense because they initiated the strike. But anyway, I don't think there's any simple scenario. I do think they're intent on getting a war started. I mean, what more can they do? They've got 30,000 drones going into Russia a month right now.

#Pascal

Yeah, but I do wonder how long this can be kept up because, okay, these drones are relatively cheap and quick to manufacture, yes, but you still need a manufacturing base for that. And the Europeans are losing that fast and ever faster. And the war against Iran is also draining U.S. resources. I mean, we're only one day away from your midterm elections. On my end, it is already the 2nd of November. On the 3rd of November, you're going to vote, on Tuesday, right? And Donald Trump announced, "Oh, I'm going to strike Iran again after the midterms. You know, I'm going to wait for them to be over, and then I'm going to go to war again." I mean, he just casually

announces that. But the Iranians take that very seriously, and they're preparing to knock out the last remnants of U.S. power in the Gulf. How do you think this second theater is now going to impact everything?

#Steven Starr

Well, you made a point there. You know, the U.S. air defense systems don't work. I mean, every military base around the Gulf was almost obliterated by Iranian missiles. We don't have a viable air defense system, so we certainly can't defend against hypersonic missiles armed with nuclear warheads. So why would we want to start a war with Russia or China? Because they have those weapons. You know, I don't know. If Trump launches into another war with Iran—we had a senator come out and say that he'd been briefed on the attack plans, and he said they're insane. He didn't have enough guts to really spill what they were.

#Scott Ritter

I think that would have been more useful on his part.

#Steven Starr

Iran has made it clear that they're going to obliterate all the petrochemical refineries in the Gulf if the U.S. strikes, say, Kharg Island, where their facilities are. I didn't even bring that up in my presentation because I've been so concerned about what's going on in Europe for a while. We really are very close. We are fighting a war against Russia there through the CIA. And if we get into another war in the Middle East and it turns out to be a nuclear conflict, that could bring in Russia and China. But in Europe, we're right there already. We're fighting Russia. So people aren't aware of that. They're asleep. Our media hides it.

#Pascal

What is amazing to me is that, yes, on the one hand, the media is hiding it. On the other hand, there are these outlets that publish very important pieces about what is actually happening. I mean, The Atlantic is just one example, but there were at least two very important reports in The New York Times, one in 2021, I believe, and one this year, in early 2026, in which The New York Times detailed the involvement of the CIA and a number of CIA bases on the front lines, and how these communication networks actually go back to Wiesbaden in Germany, where the generals are, and how the targeting is actually done there and then provided to the Ukrainian partners for them to select targets.

It's like BS. Come on. I mean, you couldn't give us a clearer picture of how the actual chain of command really works. And the implementation partner, or the implementation vassal, is the Ukrainian army, which is then going to do all of this stuff, right? And we know that thanks to the

mainstream media, which actually makes me wonder what the game here is, because it seems that this is part and parcel of the communication strategy of this Western alliance in order to coordinate among themselves. What do you make of that—that we know this thanks to The Atlantic and The New York Times?

#Steven Starr

Well, I think you're correct in pointing out the importance of those publications, especially in The New York Times. They come out and admit that the U.S. generals are directing strikes from Germany. But that seems to go over everybody's head. Meanwhile, the daily news reports always talk about Ukraine attacking Russia. It's never the United States. And that worries me a lot because I think we're at a point now where, if they expand these strikes in some way or another to make them worse, or if some sort of false flag is engineered, Russia will have to respond.

They've been guessing about whether or not Russia would hit the drone factories in Europe for some time. They don't have to use nuclear weapons. They have their Russian missiles, which literally are very capable of wiping out entire blocks. But once you cross that threshold and Russia strikes NATO territory, then you wonder, well, will the war expand? Trump doesn't appear to be interested in doing that. We get the impression that he wants to get away from the whole Ukraine war.

But I don't know what to believe, honestly, whether it's theater or a psyop. I mean, I've become so distrustful of news reporting and stories. Every time I see a story, I don't think, "Is it true?" I think, "Why am I hearing this now? What's the agenda today?" So it's really hard to make sense of it, particularly with Trump. I wonder if he's even suffering from, you know, dementia, with some of the things he conflates. I had a clip of him talking at a rally where he talked about when they bombed Iran. They had drug factories underground there and nuclear factories. And we were like, "What the hell was he talking about?" You know? And there are many examples of him just saying things that are completely untrue or don't make any sense. So we have a commander in chief who may be really kind of bordering on lunacy. Well, that doesn't make me feel any safer.

#Pascal

And, you know, that's the second one in a row, right? I mean, Biden, we know, was in an even worse mental state. And it just seems that the U.S. system now produces these mentally gone people, which then does make you wonder who's calling the shots. And, I mean, the argument in the Atlantic article is that it's the CIA. I mean, in a sense, it's very much on brand because the CIA is, of course, the offshoot of the OSS, which was responsible for a big part of coordinating stuff that was happening during the Second World War. So the CIA has always been this kind of private army that works under the radar because it cannot be audited.

#Steven Starr

That's right. They work with MI6, too. And, you know, you mentioned Biden. And if you recall, we were all aghast when Biden okayed the missile strikes into Russia. That was in the several months before Trump took office. And Trump was saying, "Well, it's all going to stop." So the Russians seemed to hold back. And now we're at a point where it's just gone completely in the opposite direction.

#Pascal

Yeah, and at the same time, the Europeans and the Americans—the whole NATO crowd—create this fake narrative about Russia waging a hybrid war. Whenever something blows up somewhere or goes wrong, or a dog eats a kid's homework, then it was Russian hybrid warfare that was responsible for that, right? So the idea is being massaged into Western brains that Russia is already attacking us through anything that we cannot really wrap our minds around and anything that we cannot really understand. At the same time, they are physically attacking Russia. Drones manufactured in Europe are blowing up stuff in Russia, while at the same time, the population is told that we are under attack, right? The Russians are attacking us, and we need to get ready for war. I mean, it's a really, really dirty game, isn't it?

#Steven Starr

Well, it is. And I don't know where it's going to end, but that motivates me to try to speak out about it.

#Pascal

Just before you came online, we also talked a little bit about your colleague and somebody who was on this show as well, Greg Mello and the Los Alamos Study Group. One of the encouraging things that he told me about a year ago is that, actually, the United States doesn't really have the engineering capacity anymore to renovate its entire aging nuclear arsenal. They just don't have enough skilled engineers, and the ones they have can easily leave and go to a better-paying job somewhere in IT. Do you have any sense of how the US manufacturing base is doing for conventional and nuclear weaponry?

#Steven Starr

Well, we offshored most of our industrial base, and it's created a profound shortage of skilled technicians in almost all areas of manufacturing, which is one of the reasons why it makes little sense to try to start a war with China. We've been dependent on them for decades for everything from parts to critical minerals that they won't send to us, so we can't make the radar for F-35s or Tomahawk missiles. I mean, none of this makes any sense. The idea that we have to keep China down—they brought 800 million people out of poverty. They have four times as many people over there as we have here.

I mean, why would we be aghast at the idea that their economy would be bigger than ours? I don't understand. My idea is that we should work together. We should use our own strengths as a nation, work with the rest of the world, and we can have a great future as a human race if we can just get away from devoting all these enormous resources to the military. But there's a big profit there. And it's not just in the United States. You know, Russia's got its military-industrial complex, even though it is state-owned. But the oligarchs own a lot of these factories, you know. So, you know, money is a big problem. We need to make it more profitable not to make weapons, don't we?

#Pascal

It is, it is. But it's also the mindset. You know, just this morning I read a beautiful tweet from somebody sharing two pictures of a German schoolbook, where it says that, you know, many Chinese people don't have cars, they use bicycles, and that's kind of dangerous, and they live in tiny little cramped apartments. And then one Chinese commentator was pointing out, "Yeah, look, the German schoolbooks haven't been updated since 1980." That's right. They don't have money for that because the money is going to Ukraine, right?

But it's kind of emblematic of how it seems to me that the whole collective West is currently stuck somewhere in 1980. And they still have a picture of the world as it was roughly around 1980. And, you know, China is something that you could hold down. You can't hold something down that's already overshadowing you. It's like, you know, the thing is much larger than anyone in Europe and the United States, actually, and is performing much, much better. So, I mean, you can't keep that down. You would have to bring it down, right? But that seems like a lunatic proposal. This idea of the mindset, like the 1980s mindset, which was in many senses, you know, the best decade, I would say, for the West, because it was the one where, at the end, you won the big...

#Steven Starr

It was still bigger back in the 1990s. You know, for every one ship the United States manufactures, China makes about 293. A little behind. You know, I was watching a video of China's highways. They had no highways, no superhighways, in 1988. So, yeah, that book was from the 1980s, but look at them now. I mean, my God. You know, I'm here in the United States. I have to get the front end of my vehicle aligned every couple of months because I drive through so many potholes on the way into town. Our infrastructure is crumbling here. It's really falling apart. But again, the emphasis is on fortresses, military fortresses. They're going to spend another $500 billion for a military budget. It's really out of control. I don't know.

I mean, ordinary people have a sense of desperation here because both political parties really are corrupt. They're voting in a couple of days. There's not a stark choice between good and bad. You know, I thought when we voted for Trump, he had promised no more foreign wars and all that. Look, you know, there is a question: Who is calling the shots? Is Trump calling the shots, or do the

politicians get their scripts from somebody else—the oligarchs of the world, the bankers? I don't know. You know, what's going on doesn't make sense to me in any sort of rational way. If there's any hope for the human race and a good future for humanity, we're going down the wrong path right now. We have to get away from endless war.

#Pascal

Can I throw just this one at you and see your reaction? I mean, one of my pet theories to make sense of how the United States operates is that the United States is actually not a civilian state. The United States is a military state. It's a military-industrial state that camouflages itself as a civilian democracy. You know, you need the clothes on, right? But actually, if you look at it, the United States was born out of a military campaign against the Brits. It got 13 little colonies on the East Coast together, and then, from there on, used its military to grow to the size it is now.

It took about 150 years. Then it went abroad with its military, occupied and incorporated Hawaii, then went all the way and fought a war in the Philippines and all over, and then used its military capabilities. And I don't only mean the Department of War, or the Department of Defense, and then the Department of War again, but also the CIA and the different intelligence structures. And there are, like, what, how many—16 or 19 different intelligence agencies in the United States, right?

I mean, this idea of violence, physical violence and guns and whatnot, is so deeply embedded in this society and is being used externally and internally that I just wonder if we can still understand the United States as a civilian state or not. And the other thing is, if you really want to know who holds the power, just think about what you cannot insult. And the one thing that you cannot insult—neither a Democrat nor a Republican will take it—is the armed services. If you call a military serviceman a son of a bitch and the military sons of bitches, then both of them will come at you immediately because you need to honor the service of the people who render service. What do you make of this?

#Steven Starr

Well, I do think that we've become what you might call a national security state. If you look back in history, though, in the 19th century, Michael Hudson—I admire him. He's from Missouri. He's a professor in Kansas City. He talks about industrial capitalism versus financial capitalism. And the U.S. was doing industrial capitalism, where we were investing in infrastructure. But we switched over to the FIRE economy—finance, insurance, and real estate. And then we got rid of our industrial base, and it's all speculation. So that played a big role. The Constitution and the Bill of Rights were very important in the United States, but they've been thrown out at this point. So, yeah, I would call it a national security state.

And right now we're building something like 4,500 data centers around the United States. And they're a mess. They're spending this money on the largest single industrial project in the history of

the United States. What do we need it for? What do the data centers do? So we can do better research on Google? I mean, it's not been made clear to anybody here. People who live near the data centers are having their electric bills triple. There are all sorts of issues, but again, that's a symptom of a society where the people have no input. Certainly, the ordinary people I know where I live would like to see human needs addressed—our educational system, our highways, our hospitals. So, yeah, I don't know.

I think you have a point about the militaristic background of the United States. And I think, you know, what really changed was when we had to set up the Federal Reserve in 1913 and got into World War I shortly thereafter. The whole United States really changed from there. And coming out of World War II, you know, that's when the CIA really took off and nuclear weapons were developed. You know, nuclear security is a big deal. The idea that nuclear information was born secret wound up making everything secret. We had black budgets and all these things that have really blossomed. And I look at the nuclear industry and nuclear weapons production as being a really big part of the cancer that kind of ate away at the United States. So, yeah, you know, it's a pretty general topic.

#Pascal

Yeah, yeah. No, it's just, you know, the question to me is: what is the most useful framework for understanding the political entity or entities that are running the show? Again, focusing on Donald Trump is like focusing on the water running down the drain. It's obviously gravity that does it. It's not that the water wants to run down the drain. It just does what will naturally happen. I'm going a little bit astray here.

#Steven Starr

Frank Zappa said that politics was the entertainment division of the military-industrial complex.

#Pascal

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

#Steven Starr

Trump's pretty good at it.

#Pascal

There we go. That's a useful framework. It's like, here's your Hollywood while we do what we do anyhow, right? And enjoy your little Hollywood over there.

#Steven Starr

Fortress America.

#Pascal

Fortress America. Well, this was very interesting. Thank you for your presentation, Stephen. Where should people go if they want to follow you?

#Steven Starr

Well, nuclearfamine.org is my website. And, you know, I just try to make presentations on your podcast and a few others. That's what I do. I write an article once in a while. I did write a book and an article about an EMP attack on the United States. The article was published in The Unz Review a couple of years ago. And so, I don't know.

#Pascal

I will link to your homepage in the description box below, and we will certainly have you back for further updates in the future. Stephen Starr, thank you so much for your time today.

#Steven Starr

Thanks. It's good to see you again. Good seeing you too.