Ukraine’s Last Defensive Line Is Gone; Kiev Turns on Itself w/ Stanislav Krapivnik

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#Alex

All right, Alexander, we are here with Stanislav. Stanislav, how are you doing? Welcome back to The Duran. Where can people follow your work?

#Stanislav

Okay, so you can follow me on YouTube at MrSlavikMan—Slavik with a K, all one word. And when you sign up, check every day. There's always something new, and YouTube isn't going to tell you about it, unfortunately. But that's just how the algorithm runs these days. Having said that, on X, I'm at Stanislav Skripivnik. Can't fit the whole name. We Russians have very long names. Zmei Garemich is the Substack, and I'm using that mostly as an archive. Some of my writings are on

there. And also on Telegram, Stas Tuda i Obratno is the Russian page, and Stas Was There is the English page. Oh, yeah, and I got Instagram back up and running, just under my name. All right, another place to post.

#Alex

Great news. I will link those in the description box down below and as a pinned comment as well. Alexander, Stanislav, let's talk about what is going on in Ukraine.

#Alexander

Indeed, let's talk about what is going on in Ukraine. I mean, Ukraine continues to be in the news in the West. We supposedly have diplomacy taking place, with negotiations to begin on the 10th and 11th of November. I don't know a single person who takes this seriously. But alongside that diplomacy, the war continues, and it is intensifying. And my sense is that we're moving into a completely new and very, very much more intense phase. And we're seeing the cracks in Ukraine get wider and worse all the time. So there's nobody better to talk about these things than Stanislav. We've discussed many aspects of the war. He knows the terrain. He's been to Donbass.

He's familiar with the landscape there, which is absolutely crucial. And of course, he's got a military background, which gives him that extra dimension to understand what is happening. And I think it's also fair to say that he's steeped in Russian military history and understands how the Russian army thinks and works. So, Stanislav, we have had some important battles recently. We've had the capture of the town of Dobropillia in the Donbass, near Kramatorsk. We're also having events shape up in Kharkov. But let's start with Dobropillia, because you talked about Dobropillia in the past, and this looks like an important battle. Can you explain why? It's now Dobropolya again.

#Stanislav

Interestingly, it’s “pyl” in Russian, as opposed to that cardboard version of Russian we call Ukrainian. Sorry, I do have my views on things. “Pyl” means dust. Fortunately, we didn’t have to grind it into dust. What everybody should have noticed is just how quickly it got surrounded and how quickly it fell. And there’s a reason for that. There were very few fortifications inside the city. There were very few fortifications around the city. The question is, well, why? Because everything else has been fortified. Well, because that was never part of the fortification line. The interesting thing about Dobropillia, or Dobropolya—“Good Field”—is that it was the deep logistical rear for the fighting that was taking place in the Donbass agglomeration.

And by agglomeration, I mean all these cities and villages—a lot of them flow into each other. So the line wasn't just fortified north to south; it was fortified in depth. So for these last four years, Russia would push Ukrainian troops out of one village or one town. They'd fall back a couple of kilometers into the next one, and rinse and repeat, rinse and repeat, rinse and repeat. And all of a sudden,

you're out of space. So when the Russian army is now approaching Dobropolya, that means there is no more fortified line. That's it. It's done. It's gone. The only remaining section of the fortified line is the agglomeration of Slavyansk, Kramatorsk, and Druzhkovka. And the thing is, while that's important, it has to be taken.

Taking it is more important politically. It's no longer strategically important. This is an isolated chunk of this line, while the rest of the entire line, running basically from Orekhov on up to Druzhkovka, is done. There is no line left. Now the question is, how fast will the Russian military move? This is why Russia was able to move relatively quickly through the few field fortifications in that area, surround Dobropolye, and then crush the Ukrainian forces inside Dobropolye. Now, what does that mean? Well, first of all, like I said, this is the deep logistical rear for the Ukrainian forces. It's not only that everything the Ukrainians were building up for 14 years is gone; the deep logistical rear is gone. So what do we have now?

From Dobropolya, there are four directions that the Russian military can expand into, starting from south to north. If they go southwest, they go straight at Zaporozhye in a deep encirclement, basically coming at Zaporozhye from the northeast. If they go directly west, then they go to Pavlograd, which is Petersburg—I need to look that up. It's the last large town before eastern Dnepropetrovsk. And that's still a good chunk of land with just small villages, small towns, and empty fields, and no place for the Ukrainians to dig in. If they go north, they move into a southern encirclement of Kharkov. If they go northeast, then they move into a deep encirclement of the Slavyansk-Kramatorsk-Druzhkovka agglomeration, that last fortified line.

And just understand, that line is already basically cut off by road. The roads are roads of death. I've watched videos of Russian drones flying underneath the netting, and it's just a graveyard of men and machines—destroyed, burned-up machines, burned-up soldiers, just up and down that road. So getting in and out of those areas and bringing in any extra equipment is a suicide trip. Now, the one bonus for the Ukrainians is that, unlike in normal years, it's been a very dry fall. I guess maybe it's because of El Niño. Even as far north as Moscow, for example. True, last year was an extreme year. I don't think we had a single dry day in October. It just rained. It started around the 2nd of October, and it just rained until it started snowing on the 24th of December.

Quite literally, it was just rain, with very, very few days in between without rain. This year, in October, I think we had like five days of rain. Right now, it's raining and snowing, and that's going to continue for the next week or so. And then it'll just get cold without either. So this has been a very dry year, and further south, it's been an even drier autumn. So you look at the weather, and, well, normally these towns would be in the middle of a black swamp. You know, you can walk across these fields because they have grass on them, so the grass roots hold the soil in place. But the moment you get machines, particularly heavy machines like trucks or tanks or BMPs, IFVs, driving across them, they churn all that up, and then good luck getting across them.

It'll take your boots, your socks, and probably the first couple of layers of skin off your feet trying to get in there. I mean, you'll go deep, deep, deep—knee-deep into mud, into this really fine, thick, black mud. So for anybody that's been to Hohenfels, the brown mud there is a cakewalk compared to this. So that's a plus for them, at least from that point of view: they can still use the fields to get in and out in very small groups. Probably not in a vehicle, because those areas are constantly under surveillance by aircraft, drones, and reconnaissance and sabotage groups. But at least that way, they can somehow get in and out. But the rain is going to come sooner or later anyway. So we'll see. But right now, those areas are isolated.

And the Russian forces are heading right now more in a north-by-northeast direction, so toward Kharkov and toward a deep encirclement. So basically, any of these guys who are left in that area in the short run are dead men walking unless they surrender. And Ukraine did an interesting thing. We know about these counteroffensives around Krasnoarmeysk, where they threw in the Third Corps, which is Azov, which is their strategic reserve—what's left of it—in these counterattacks. And they did it right when Zelensky needed to go to the U.N. because, you know, you've got to have the photo ops. Yeah. Well, now they've been pulled out. They took a certain amount of land. Some are saying up to 200 square kilometers. I think the reality is much, much less.

Maybe 200 square kilometers is no man's land, but in a lot of areas, they come in, they take photos, they take the drone photos, and then it's "Survive the best you can." There was a very interesting interview I watched with a Ukrainian soldier, a veteran—I think he was missing a leg—in Kiev, who said, "You know, to hell with you, to hell with your government. I'll never do anything for Ukraine again. I'm leaving." He said, "You know, they didn't sacrifice my company. They sacrificed our entire battalion for a photo op." They were sent in on one of these suicide attacks: get the photos showing that you've penetrated, and then to hell with you, whether you survive or not, because you're not important to us anymore, while the Russians reorganize and counterattack. Ukrainians take land faster than Russians because they don't give a damn about casualties.

They will literally use human waves when needed, which is most of the time, and they lose a lot of people. So there's that. The Russian military is counterattacking right now around Krasny Liman and starting to roll the Ukrainians back, which happens every single time in the long run. So in that area, you've still got the Russian forces. The DRGs are now in Dzerzhivka. They've penetrated into the southern outskirts. In the north, Krasnoarmeysk has bought some time. The problem is, there's really nothing they are going to do with that time except sit in place. Well, they've done something even stupider. So there was a Russian offensive going directly west toward all three of these towns.

And in the northern part, in Sloviansk, they pulled troops from Sloviansk and Kramatorsk to launch a counterattack on the Russians. And it pushed the Russian soldiers back about three kilometers. Russia is now counterattacking, rolling the Ukrainians back. But the point is, this is the stupidest thing you could do. You have a limited manpower pool. You cannot get any more troops in, in any kind of mass. There are no troop rotations. There's no deep reserve that can get in there. The last

thing you want to do is use up your troops on some kind of PR attack, which is exactly what they did—especially a PR attack where you cannot hold the ground, in an area that's isolated from your main defensive positions.

If you're making a sortie to destroy some key positions, that'd be one thing. But an assault for PR is stupid. So they've used up a good chunk of the troops that were needed to defend Sloviansk and Kramatorsk on these idiotic attacks. But hey, you know, when the enemy is making a mistake, don't interrupt. Let them proceed at all speed and haste. And that's what they've done. They've basically assured that—well, it's going to fall anyway, but it's going to fall that much faster because they've got that many fewer troops and that much less ordnance left for the defense, having used them up on this pointless counterattack. So this is the situation in that area.

Sooner or later, I think once Orekhov has fallen in the south, there will be a push in the southwestern direction to come at Zaporozhye from yet another direction and cut off the two main roads from the north and northeast that feed into Zaporozhye and keep it supplied. The bridge has already been heavily damaged. There are only three bridges coming in. There's only the beach at the north end of Zaporozhye where you can actually float across the Dnieper. The Dnieper flows pretty fast, and along most of its course through Zaporozhye, there are cliffs on both sides and rapids. So you're not going to put any boats or barges across. So you've got a limited area from which you can try to resupply the city, and that's easily controllable by aviation and drones.

So there's that. I think that's going to develop further. So Dobropolya is a critical situation because, on top of that, the Ukrainians simply do not have the manpower to ring that big an area with actual troops and dig in. Digging in in those areas means digging in in open fields, or maybe tree lines if you're lucky, because those areas have nothing. If you look at a map, all your major towns and villages and everything else have blended into each other. They're all behind the Russian army now, and ahead are mostly just small, isolated villages. They aren't prepared for any kind of actual combat because even if those are concrete-block houses, believe you me, a .50 cal will go right through them.

A 7.62 will do a lot of damage and will eventually go through them. Any kind of high explosive—a 152-millimeter round hitting one of those houses will just flatten it. That's the reality of it. So the Ukrainians have very little area where they can dig in. And on top of that, they're digging in when their opponent has air dominance—not air superiority, but absolute air dominance, right? The majority of Ukrainians are dying from artillery, not even drones. There's a chunk that are dying from drones, and that's not because Russia lacks drones. It's just because Russia has absolute artillery dominance. So they don't need to use as many kamikaze drones. They just use artillery. Drones fly out and spot a house that the enemy is located in.

Why just throw a drone in there that's got a small explosive charge when you can drop a couple of 152-millimeter rounds on top of it? And then you've got battery fire wiping out that entire house and the foundation. Next, and next, and next. Rinse, repeat, rinse, repeat. And that's how the Russian

military is salami-slicing its way to the Dnepropetrovsk region. And the Ukrainians are just out of troops. And then in the northeast, the Kharkov area, you know, if you look at the Institute for the Study of War, which is one of the worst—I mean, it's even worse than Deep State for absolute propaganda BS—they had this article out saying that Russia's only actually conquered 76 square kilometers of land. They just show no proof. I mean, of course, they absolutely have no proof.

"It's our calculation, you know, 76 square kilometers. Just take our word for it." Well, that northeastern pocket itself is 600 square kilometers. I mean, just saying, you know, that's just that little area in that little corner: 600 square kilometers. The reason it took that much longer to take that pocket was that the initial estimate was that there were about 2,000 Ukrainians trapped in that area, and that turned out to be 5,000. So it took longer to take that pocket, for obvious reasons. But that means the Ukrainians lost a full brigade-plus in that area, which they can't afford. And now the next pocket is being formed. So Russia's taking it in chunks. It's got the shark teeth coming in, taking one chunk, chewing through it, taking the next chunk, chewing through it.

And the whole drive is to get up to the Seversky Donets River, which will separate out the entire eastern part of Kharkov Oblast from Kharkov itself. And if you've got another push coming in directly south of Kharkov, you're now isolating Kharkov from the south. And Sumy, which I think will fall before Kharkov does, is now going to be the last major supply route, because Sumy is a logistical hub feeding Kharkov from the northwest: directly from Chernigov and from Kiev to Sumy, and from Sumy to Kharkov. So you'll isolate the city that way, from all directions, and then come in and take it. It was a big city, with about one and a half million people at its normal population. It's much, much reduced right now. So that's the situation right now on the battlefield. And it's moving. It's moving everywhere.

#Alexander

Can I just make a few quick points? So, way back in 2022, there was a place called Popasnaya that was captured in Donbass. And I remember all sorts of Russian commentators talking about the Popasnaya flower that was blooming, that was enabling the Russians to move in all kinds of directions. And indeed, that's exactly what it did. It led to the fall of all sorts of other important places, like Severodonetsk, for example. And it seems to me that what you're describing with Dobropolye is a Dobropolye flower, only a much bigger one. That's one thing I wanted to say. I mean, yeah.

#Stanislav

It's true. No, you're absolutely right, but there's a big difference. Back then, that flower was limited because just outside its range was the next set of built-up areas. So, of course, you've got three or four different directions you can go in, depending on which of these built-up towns you're going to hit next. Here, it's open fields. There is no Ukrainian line beyond it. It's open fields with, at best, spot resistance. You know, if the Ukrainian military makes a stand in any one village, you just surround it

and bypass it, and then level the village with artillery, with aviation, with rocket artillery, drones. Just level them in there. You can put in second-echelon forces. I won't say second-rate.

Second-echelon forces, just to keep them bottled up and level everything that's in there until there's nothing left alive, no spiders crawling, and just keep on going. So that's the problem with these little isolated villages. There's no line. And even if you use them as an anchor, the rest of your line is thrown out in the middle of a field with scattered entrenchments, which are easy to spot because the leaf cover is almost gone. And when the rain starts, they'll flood because they're not properly prepared. And they can't dig in because they don't have the artillery to keep themselves in place. So there is no winning option for the Ukrainians at this point, except to maybe retreat to the other side of the Dnieper River and try to dig in there.

#Alexander

We'll come to that. We'll come to that in a moment. I mean, I just wanted to make that point. We are going to see this. And I made this further point in previous programs that we have done. I'm very, very familiar with the Ruhr, which is, again, very much the way that you described Donbass: a heavily industrialized, heavily urbanized cluster of places. If you are familiar with the last months of the war in Europe, the Americans were extremely concerned that the Germans would be able to convert the Ruhr into a major defense line. And it didn't, in fact, happen because, by that time, Germany was collapsing from all kinds of blows, and there were events happening in the east and all of those sorts of things.

But it's very, very difficult to imagine moving large armies quickly through a territory like this if it's properly defended and properly fortified. And this is, I think, a key thing to understand about this war. So that's one other thing I wanted to say. A third thing I wanted to say is that we mentioned the Institute for the Study of War. I think the Institute for the Study of War is one of the reasons why you have these counterattacks by the Ukrainians that you describe, because what the Institute for the Study of War does is accept that the Russians are advancing in some places, but it subtracts the territory it thinks the Ukrainians have captured in counteroffensives from the territory it thinks the Russians have captured.

Now, for that to be plausible, there have to be Ukrainian counteroffensives. It doesn't matter how costly or unsuccessful they are. Provided you have a narrative about counteroffensives, you can continue to do this. It's another example of how, if you get trapped inside a narrative rather than an actual battlefield reality, it can turn out extremely badly for you. Oh, absolutely. Now, there is something else I wanted to ask, and that is about what's going on in the north. In a moment, I'm going to ask you to talk about the Dnieper bridges and the attacks on the Dnieper bridges. But these Russian moves in the north, I mean, they appear to have some bearing on what's going on in Donbass.

But are they preparing some kind of staging ground for an eventual move on Kiev? Because we're seeing all of these attacks taking place on Kiev now. The Russians are telling the West, "Leave Kiev. Kiev is becoming dangerous." And we can see this. We're seeing attacks on the bridges across the Dnieper, which many people say would be the one event that really would be a game changer. And there are reports circulating that Putin has given an order, or has agreed, or whatever it is, to a Russian plan that the whole of East Bank Ukraine, Left Bank Ukraine, ultimately should pass under Russian control. What are your feelings about all of these things? Can you give us your thoughts about it?

#Stanislav

Well, in my personal opinion, all Russian land should pass back to Russia. And that would mean starting with Kiev and moving directly south to Odessa. So both sides of the Dnieper River are Russian land. Past that, you start getting into lands that are very questionable—once Russian, but historically very mixed over the last 500 years. And as Russia has said many times to the Poles, "Take Western Ukraine back. We don't care. We really don't care." Same thing for the Hungarians and the Romanians and the Moldovans and the Slovaks. They all have claims. In fact, the Belarusians have claims too. So every single neighbor has a claim. As far as the bridges—yes. Well, I won't say that this is a preparatory move for Kiev, any more than Operation Bagration, which destroyed Army Group Center, was a preparatory move for Berlin.

Yes, it led to Berlin, but it wasn't a preparatory move. It was one of the basic moves that got you to where you needed to be. Right now, the job is to dry up the Ukrainians' logistics. Again, the fact that these bridges weren't hit before is strictly a political decision. Yes, destroying these bridges outright to get them to collapse is extremely difficult, and I don't think the Americans could do it either. They've never hit bridges like this. This is one of the points I'm making, by the way. It's different from the Ruhr, which is a heavily industrialized zone. Maybe its industrial days are now becoming a thing of the past, but the buildings are still there. Yeah.

Unlike the Ruhr, when the Soviets built these massive industrial sites, they built them, by the way, to be able to survive a nuclear blast, A, and B, to function as a forward military base in case of a NATO invasion. Yes, the Soviet Union was actually quite worried about NATO invading the Soviet Union. I know everybody in NATO was constantly worried that the Soviet Union was going to invade. On the Russian side, it was quite the opposite view. So all of these facilities were not only heavily reinforced, but they also had labyrinths upon labyrinths underneath them. And that's why taking those areas is so difficult, because you've got to clear those labyrinths out. You could quite literally hide whole battalions underneath them.

And in more comfort than the Vietnamese had when they hid companies and battalions from the Americans underground. These are very well-protected and prepared shelters. So the bridges were created to withstand a nuclear blast, quite literally. And if we remember the bridges leading into

Kherson, when the Russian military pulled back out of Kherson, the bridges had been damaged. HIMARS missiles were striking them. Artillery was striking them. They weren't using any drones at that point, but the bridges were hit with everything that could be used, including aerial bombs. And the bridges did not go down. The surface was destroyed, so it made it very difficult to get across, but the bridge infrastructure was still there. The bridges were finally brought down by Russian sappers. They just cut the pylons with enough charges.

And that was a lot of charges. So we're facing the same thing, the same type of bridges. But the point is, you don't need to bring the bridge down. You just need to make it impassable. And Russia is doing that quite well. You start hitting the surface of the bridge. You're making holes that are a meter or two meters wide and punching all the way through the bridge. So now the bridge has to be repaired. But you can keep hitting it relatively cheaply, day in and day out. You know, Russian FABs can now get that far because Russian planes, fighter-bombers, can easily fly in and over Ukraine, where they wouldn't fly earlier because of anti-aircraft systems. So this has done a lot to disrupt.

Look, you know, sure, you could throw up pontoon bridges. Russian drones and satellite imagery are constantly looking for those too. Sure, you can use barges, but let's look at it realistically. Even if you put up a pontoon bridge, which is faster than a barge once it's up and running, you could previously get a convoy of trucks across one of these larger bridges in two minutes, three minutes maybe, especially if you cleared the bridge of all civilian traffic. If you're using a pontoon bridge to get across, you can move one, two, maybe three vehicles at a time, maximum, depending on the size of the vehicles you're pushing across.

With pontoon bridges, what started as three minutes is now turning into several hours. If you're having to use barges, you could be spending half a day. So the rate of logistics changes. The actual physical transportation logistics collapse. You get much worse logistical nightmares, and that's part of the reason. On top of that, over 500 locomotives have been destroyed. The only thing I don't understand is why the tunnels in the Carpathians haven't been blown up yet. They should have been blown up. That's one I would have gone after right off the bat. From day one, take out the tunnels. A very large chunk of NATO weapons traffic goes through those tunnels, as a matter of fact.

So at that point, yes, you're destroying the capability of the Ukrainian military to continue any kind of maneuvers. They've already had problems with diesel because all of non-Russian Europe has problems with diesel. And Ukraine doesn't produce anything, so it gets its diesel from Hungary, from Slovakia, from Romania. Even under Orbán, they were getting their diesel from Hungary, something that people didn't particularly talk about. That diesel was made from Russian oil, by the way. So when they were cutting the Druzhba pipeline, they were quite literally sucking themselves dry of diesel. This is one of those idiotic moves from the Ukrainian side.

And they were also losing the money they were getting from transit fees. Yes, Russia was actually paying Ukraine transit fees for oil going into Hungary and Slovakia, as insane as that sounds. But that's the reality of it. So, I think there are 15 or 16 bridges in total, not counting the ones that were

cut back in 2023 by Surovikin. And all of these bridges are being hit. All of them are being damaged. For eastern Ukraine, this is equivalent to what is being done to the ports in Odessa, which the EU needs to get grain out. It's just cutting the logistics core off totally.

#Alexander

Shall we now move on and discuss another thing, which is very interesting to me and rather mysterious, but I'm sure you can bring some clarity to it? And that is, of course, the offensive in Liman—or Krasny Liman, perhaps we should call it—that the Ukrainians carried out, which you talked about, and the fact that it was run by the 3rd Azov Corps. Its commander, a man called Andrei Biletsky, was also almost certainly the commander who ordered that offensive from Slavyansk, which you talked about and which led to all of those losses. Now, there was a brief period in September when we were hearing an awful lot about Azov on the front lines. They were fighting in the Krasny Liman area. Biletsky, as I said, was directing this offensive east of Slavyansk.

His rival and associate, Prokopenko, was trying to stage some kind of counterattack in Dobropylia, which completely failed. They seem to have vanished from the battlefields. I'm not saying that they've vanished politically. Obviously, they haven't. Can you say a few things about Biletsky as a military commander? Because you spoke about the strange decision to launch the counteroffensive east of Slavyansk. But, of course, Biletsky is not a military officer by training. He is, in fact, a political figure. And what is happening to Azov? Where are they now? And what is this story we're hearing about all of these transitional camps or houses all over Ukraine? Budanov has told us that there are many of them. But there's been a big outcry in Ukraine about them. Apparently, all of them—at least the ones that have been found—were run by Azov.

#Stanislav

What is going on here? Well, you know, we oftentimes compare Azov, Tornado, and all these other SS-style battalions or brigades—in this case, an entire corps—to the SS. They're not territorial units. And if you've read any of the biographies, like, for example, The Forgotten Soldier, which is a prime example, he talks a lot about these SS battalions. They were fanatical Nazis who believed in Hitler like a demigod, and they were the ones who were thrown in first against the Russian Soviet defenses. They took massive casualties, and they drove forward. They didn't have any skill. They just drove forward in stupid ideological rage, trying to carry it with the bayonet. Well, we're not talking about the same thing here. We're actually talking about very, very different people. They're very good blocking forces.

Oh, they love to block things. Oh, and pillaging? Oh, my God. They are some of the best pillagers in the world. I mean, they make the Mongol pillaging look nice sometimes. Yeah, these people are very much, by the way, self-funded. They were, anyway, before all this started. And they did their self-funding through mafia-style racketeering, by being muscle, by charging protection money from businessmen. So you're dealing with that sort. The first and last time they really stood in battle for

any length of time was Mariupol, and we saw what happened with that. "We're going to stand to the very end." "Oh, we can surrender now? Yeah, yeah, okay. We'll go into prison camps." So we saw what kind of fanaticism they have, even though they all talk about wanting to go to Valhalla because they're mostly pagans.

And by the way, their paganism was something that was created by MI6 and Mossad and the CIA. They mixed the worst of the Slavic pagan gods and the Norse pagan gods into a new religion, sold it to these guys, and indoctrinated them into it. But as much as they all wanted to go to Valhalla, for some reason they all surrendered. So, having said that, there have been multiple incidents where they were told to assault Russian positions where Russia had taken a key target, and they just walked away from the battlefield. They said no. You've got to remember, too, even if their fighters are willing to fight, their leadership's not willing to throw them in, because the fighters in each of these pseudo-SS battalions are what give their owners or their commanders the political muscle that they need.

So, yeah, of course Zelensky would love to have all these guys dead and rotting on a battlefield somewhere. It gets rid of a lot of his competitors. Of course, absolutely. Go attack. We want you to attack. Attack, attack, attack until there's nothing left of you. But they're a little smarter than that, because you can't make money from protection rackets, racketeering, and terrorism inside Europe if you're dead on a battlefield fighting the Russians. And that's coming, because a lot of these guys will flow back into the rest of Europe. That's what you have Colombians for. You toss the Colombians in en masse, along with whatever you pick up off the streets. So we have that.

And we did see Azov reappear. You're right. There were these transitional houses where you transition from the physical world to the ethereal world. There were certain soldiers who had decided not to fight anymore. I think we call them deserters. And others were trying to be conscientious objectors, you know, beaten, tossed into a van, and driven out, and still really not wanting to fight. They were subjected to certain extreme persuasion techniques that make Guantanamo look like a Boy Scout trip. They obviously didn't understand the limits of what they could do based on Guantanamo, because at Guantanamo, we know that waterboarding was not considered torture, but anything beyond that was.

They never read that memo, we'll put it that way. One house that was discovered had a transitional base in the basement. They had people who had been persuaded very heavily, to the point where they had broken spines or had been blinded. One guy, quite literally, if you look at the video, had part of his intestine hanging out where apparently he'd been cut, and that was bad. It's on the videos. It's on the videos that have been published. It's horrific. And they had at least one 14-year-old child, a boy, who, from the looks of him—I'm not going to say what happened to him; I don't know—but he was being guided out by a nurse, and he had a traumatized look on his face. He was catatonic, basically.

He's still walking, but he's basically catatonic. And then later on, we saw Budanov interrogating him in a hospital bed, quite literally standing over him—not yelling, but being intense, you know? And I don't think he was even able to talk back. Yes, we had Budanov run over there, and Budanov let slip. What I'll say about Budanov is that it seems this was unscripted. This was a surprise to him. He wasn't a very good actor under pressure. For one thing, under pressure, he switches back to Russian. So his Ukrainian nationalism seems to flow out very quickly, and he's back to speaking only Russian because he thinks in Russian, because that's how you know people.

You know, you can tell what a person's native language is when they're surprised and they start cursing. What language do they start cursing in? Because that's when the curtain comes down, and you see, at least for a split second, what language that mind actually works in. And Budanov switched straight to Russian. Second of all, he let slip that there are many transitional houses to move people in one direction or the other and allow them to find their spiritual refuge, if you understand what I'm saying. I know you do. Just in case anybody didn't quite get that.

#Alexander

I'm sure everybody understands. Carry on.

#Stanislav

So now, in the West, they're being described as transitional houses. The people there had a few other words for them. We won't mention them because, you know, this is a family channel. But take every single curse word you can combine, and that was tossed at the police. And the police were standing there. When the highly emotional crowds vented their emotional energies by turning over buses, burning police cars, and pelting the police with eggs, while the police stood there very quietly, Azov decided that this was inappropriate behavior. And, you know, how can we fight a war when we have this in the background? So they came in there and started breaking heads.

And there are videos of the Azov thugs running into the crowd and just beating everything and everybody they could find. What we see now is a regime that is starting to eat itself internally. I mean, obviously, somebody leaked the information that this was here, that there were a lot of people being trapped, including, obviously, at least one child, right? This is something that was leaked. This is something, obviously, they didn't see coming. More likely, it was internal. I'd like to say Russian intelligence, but I'd probably say 99% not. This was done internally. More likely, it's internal opponents of the Zelensky regime.

But what we see is not going to appear in the Western media, because the Western media is going to avoid this or downplay it. Again, they're already calling it transitional housing, pre-deployment points, you know, anything, any euphemism but saying what was really going on in these places. What we see is a government that's now losing whatever curtain it had drawn over the eyes of

however much of the population, getting them to believe in some kind of ethereal victory with the next superweapon, the next Wunderwaffe, or whatever have you. It's all being drawn away. It's all dissolving.

Yeah. And the people are starting to see the reality of the brutal regime that sits over them, strangles them, eats them alive, and uses them to gain money by sacrificing them and their children in this meat grinder, where Ukrainians are quite literally losing ten to one. And it's going to continue as long as that regime stays in power or another regime that has the same ends in mind comes to power. And I think that people, you know—this is a boiling powder keg. I guess powder kegs can't boil. But this is a powder keg near a very open furnace that, sooner or later, is going to explode. So this is the situation as more and more of this comes out.

And if suddenly, in the next week, we see more of these houses—transitional points—being discovered, as Budanov has told us, there are multiple of them. How many, we don't know. But I'll tell you this: this shouldn't be a surprise. We've seen this before. Mariupol is a prime example. There were multiple black sites in Mariupol. When Mariupol was liberated by the Russian forces, one of these black sites, with lots of remains, was found under the airport in Mariupol. Again, this is a Soviet-built airport, so there are tunnels and labyrinths underneath it to fight World War III from.

There were other ones found in an old, abandoned gas station where they'd used the underground storage tanks as containment areas, and in plenty of other places like this. So this is nothing new. As more and more areas are being liberated, more mass graves are being found, more of these black sites are being found, and this is going to go on for decades after this conflict is over. Just like what happened with the Nazis, we're still finding mass grave sites of civilians killed by the Nazis. And there are digger teams—very dedicated people—looking for the remains of soldiers, but along the way they also find the remains of civilians killed by the Nazi regime.

#Alexander

I mean, one point I would make here is that when Budanov says that there are lots of these buildings, he shows a knowledge of what is happening. And he is Zelensky's chief of staff. Before that, he was the head of Ukrainian military intelligence. So he held an important senior position in the Ukrainian political, military, and intelligence system. And obviously, he didn't do anything about it. I mean, he didn't do anything practical about it. So one way or the other, he's implicated. I mean, it was not just him admitting that there are lots of buildings. It is him admitting that he is, in some way, at some level, involved and responsible as well. I say that as somebody, as I said, who's had some experience of, you know, building evidence on people.

So, a power struggle in Kiev of some kind, and a so-called elite military force that is less of an elite military force and actually more involved in other activities. And the leaders of this so-called elite military force are not really soldiers but politicians. “Politicians” may be a kind word to use to describe them, but they are people who are more interested in politics in Kiev. It's extraordinary that

people in the West are not better informed about this, but that's an entirely different subject we'll talk about another day. I would like you to discuss a bit now the war in the sky, the war in the air, because it seems to me that things have dramatically expanded over the last few weeks.

We are seeing missiles, many different kinds of missiles coming out of Russia, all the way from, you know, the Oreshnik to these very small Dante missiles. There are new ones all the time. It's an extraordinary arsenal of new missiles. The same is happening with drones. The drones are being perfected every day. I was reading in the Russian media today that the Geran-4s and Geran-5s are being improved constantly. And I read in an official Russian publication that the Geran-5 can now achieve speeds of 1,000 kilometers an hour, which is very fast for a drone. I mean, it's very fast for a cruise missile. So tell us what's going on in the sky. And you spoke about Russian aerial dominance. I think that is exactly the right word. But can you enlarge on this a bit?

#Stanislav

Yeah, while the Geran-4 is a drone, the reality is that the Geran-5 is not a drone. It's a cheap cruise missile, a mass-produced cheap cruise missile that carries a 100-kilo warhead. This is now a second-generation version of the Geran-5, and it's flying at 1,000 kilometers an hour. There's basically nothing Ukraine has that can touch it except Patriot missiles. I'm calling the Geran-5 a cruise missile because that's exactly what it is, and it costs about $120,000 a pop, compared with $5 million for a Patriot missile. Now, PAC-3s can intercept those. They can't handle ballistic missiles like they're supposed to by design, but they can handle cruise missiles. I'll give them that. They're not absolutely worthless anti-aircraft systems. But at $5 million a pop, to try to go after a $120,000 cruise missile—okay, let's play bankruptcy.

How many can you have? Because we can mass-produce them a lot faster than you can. Well, the U. S. can't mass-produce. That's the problem. Yeah. The U.S. is now, by the way, trying to produce the Barracuda, which is something that Palmer Luckey and Musk are trying to produce—something similar, except much worse in quality. They're playing catch-up, just like the LUCAS drone was a really crappy copy of the Shahed drone, and then the later LUCAS copy was a bad copy of the Geran-2s and Geran-3s. So the Barracuda, which is still in testing, is going to carry only a 45-kilogram warhead and is going to fly at a maximum speed of, I think, 900 kilometers an hour. It has a shorter range, too. So the point is, Russia is already in mass production. And this is total Russian production: chips and everything, processor chips, guidance systems. Everything is in-house. None of it is imported.

So that already tells you that the Russian military can outproduce and outthink the opposition at a very quick pace. It can renew its systems at a very quick pace. Look where we came from in four years. This is as much of a burst forward as we saw in World War I. In 1914, there were a few planes, and they were only used as spotter planes. They had nothing on them. And by the time you

get to 1917, at least on the Russian side, you get the Ilya Muromets, which is a four-engine super bomber for its age, with machine guns sprouting from every direction. German pilots just flat out refused to go up against it because they had zero chance of surviving in their fighter planes.

But this is just as much of a jump forward when we look at drones—where Russia started in 2022 and where Russia is right now in drone warfare. So, yeah, that's a huge change. And Russia has absolute air dominance. Look, whatever few systems Ukraine still has, they can't fully use because they'll use them up very quickly. Russia can launch an average of four or five hundred drones a day at the Ukrainian side. You know, I live on the edges of Moscow. You can hear the explosions when these drones get taken out—the blast wave. I mean, I've had drones taken out quite literally over my head—not in Moscow, but maybe 100 meters from me, popping overhead.

But we noticed them as everybody was firing at them and they were coming down. It's like, "Oh, shit. That was a drone." So, you know what drones sound like when they get destroyed 200 or 300 meters away. You know how they sound when they get destroyed several hundred meters, or a kilometer or two kilometers away from you. The blast wave travels, especially when they're destroyed by a missile, because you get that thump, like a thunderclap, from both the drone exploding and the short-range missile from the Pantsir exploding. Okay, I can say, compared to the summer, about a week ago we had more drones getting taken out, but it was like five of them.

While in the summer, in some directions, you'd have like 20 or 30 or 40 being taken out in that area in the morning, coming in towards the edges of Moscow or maybe a couple of kilometers out. So it's a very big difference in quantity. I mean, if you think about it, even though the drone is wooden, there's the electronics in that drone for control systems and mapping, and the engine. Even if it's a two-piston engine, it's still an engine. It has to be put together in a machine shop. It still takes machining hours.

#Alexander

You're describing Ukrainian drones now.

#Stanislav

Right, right.

#Alexander

These Ukrainian drones are...

#Stanislav

They are massive investments that are not giving you the return you would expect from weapon systems. They are PR because, sooner or later, one in 500 or one in 1,000 gets through. They'll blow

up some oil refinery storage facility, and you get the big smoke, and the media in the West is having orgasmic experiences. And the NAFO trolls are having orgasmic experiences. They're not noticing that in two days, that fire's out. In another week, they've got a new storage facility up and running, and everything's back to normal, as if nothing happened. Or even a hit on a refinery doesn't mean that all the lines of the refinery are down. In a big refinery, you have multiple production lines. You may have one line down. The other lines are still producing gasoline or diesel or what have you.

Actually, it's a cracking process. You're producing all of them in varying amounts as you go through the cracking process. So, as far as investments go, yeah, the Ukrainian drones, the European drones—for failing European economies, this is a very bad investment. But it's a PR thing because this whole war, from their side, seems to be a PR-driven thing. From the Russian side, it's quite practical. I mean, Kiev is pummeled every single day, day and night now. The gloves are off. The gloves are off. Russia could have done this earlier. Maybe not at this intensity, because Russian mass production of these drones and rockets, like the Iskandar ballistic missiles, has also gone up quite a bit, considering Russia's still not a wartime economy, interestingly enough.

But now it's getting pummeled on a daily basis. Other points are being pummeled on a daily basis. And we hear the insanity from the Ukrainian side, where even Zelensky's now offering security guarantees to Russia, as funny as that is. And these talks, they're a dead end. Look, Ushakov already flat out said, yeah, Zelensky can come to Moscow, we'll have talks. I mean, that tells you everything you need to know. At best, this is going to be third-echelon talks in Abu Dhabi to discuss things like prisoner exchanges, other humanitarian efforts, things like that. Nothing more. Because

#Alexander

I'm going to ask you two very quick questions. Firstly, what is the diesel oil situation like inside Russia? Because, of course, there's a lot of speculation about this in the West, lots of claims that Russia is very short of diesel oil. They've again extended the export ban on diesel. I have my own thoughts about this, but I'd be interested to know how you see the diesel situation in Russia. That's one. And the second is, what has happened to the Oreshnik? I've heard some claims that the Oreshnik is very much in serial production, but what is running behind is the production of mobile launchers, which is an entirely different thing altogether. And they're obviously, I mean, quite labor- and capital-intensive things to build as well. But I just wanted your thoughts on those two things.

#Stanislav

Well, first of all, let's just be clear: the Oreshnik is not a missile. The Oreshnik is a block, a hypersonic block that sits on top of a ballistic missile. So a ballistic missile, like a Satan ballistic missile, can be used to carry the Oreshnik. When it gets up toward the top of its ballistic arc in the ionosphere, the block separates out. So you could technically shoot one down as it's going up, but you have to fire into somewhere in Russia, know where it's being fired from, and be able to reach it. Once the block separates out, it releases six glide vehicles, which are the hypersonic vehicles.

They're going Mach 11 to Mach 13. They're maneuvering. They're inside a plasma envelope. And then each one of those releases six rods of God that are coming down—tungsten steel rods covered in carbon nanotubes, which keep the tungsten steel rods from melting at 4,000 degrees Celsius. Because any gas station country can build one of those. Oh, except for the U.S. We're still having problems making those. Whoops. So, yes, they come down, and then they smash in with kinetic energy. So you can reuse launchers. I mean, you can put a new missile onto a launcher and launch the next missile.

So while it may be true that the mobile launchers are probably not more expensive, they obviously involve more detail. But you can reuse the mobile launchers that you already have. Once the missiles are launched, you bring in and put a new missile on the launcher, however long it takes. I mean, it depends where you're launching from. And I'm pretty sure you could probably launch some of these missiles from stationary points as well. There are well over 20 Oreshniks being produced a month. I'm not going to say how many, but it's over 20. We'll just leave it at that. And if you consider just 20, that's 640 rods of God.

How many does it take to take out every industrial point, including the underground gas storage facilities and the LNG ports in Germany? I think a month's worth of production can easily turn Germany into a second-world nation, or maybe even a third-world nation at this point. So, yes, Russia never has to go nuclear. And Germany may get destroyed, but at least it won't be radioactive. So there's a plus side to that: minimal radioactivity. So from that point, yeah, Russia has got a very big arsenal it's preparing, and it's preparing it for when Europe keeps saying it wants to go to war with Russia. Europe is being heard. They're not being ignored.

They've finally come to the conclusion that, yeah, this is probably going to happen. And my advice to any officer or politician is: if or when this happens, don't sit around your government buildings, particularly any Ministry of Defense headquarters buildings. Quickly, quickly. Diesel oil, diesel oil. Yes, the diesel oil. It's 77 rubles a liter, sometimes 74 rubles a liter. You can fill up with however many liters you want. I mean, they won't let you fill up extra canisters unless you've got a license for that because you've got some transportation company. But then again, you wouldn't be buying that from a gas station anyway, because you'd probably be buying it with direct delivery, which you can get any time you want.

Any other questions? Yes, we have diesel everywhere. We have petrol everywhere. There are no fuel shortages in Russia, no matter what they're saying in the West. Some people haven't gotten over trying to price-gouge, which is incredible to watch, because you'll get three or four petrol stations where it's 67 to 69 rubles for 92-octane petrol, and then you get one that's still trying to hold out at 110. Like, sorry, you know, there's a free-market element there. Sure, you can charge whatever you want. I don't have to buy it. In the south, it's more expensive. But fuel in the south, for some reason, is always more expensive. So if it's 69 rubles here, it would be like 74 rubles in the south.

Yes, we have fuel. We have plenty of fuel. There are no shortages. Russia is selling diesel, though. It's a diesel ban with lots of caveats, like, for example, sending diesel to Europe via the U.S. Because whatever Russia is selling to the U.S., the U.S. is going to export to Europe at twice the price. So everybody makes a profit off that. You know, and they're saying, "Oh my God, Russia will never be able to fulfill that order." What, 1.6 million barrels? Russia is exporting around 700,000 barrels a day, depending on whom, of course. Yeah, that's two days' worth of production, even at a lower tempo right now.

#Alexander

Stanislav Krapivnik, thank you very, very much for coming to us and taking us through this complex situation. I'm sure we'll have you again very soon. I think we're in a very dynamic situation at the moment. Yes, yes. And thank you again.

#Alex

Stanislav, before you go, where can people follow you?

#Stanislav

Okay. So, YouTube at Mr. Slavic Man—Slavic with a K, all one word. Check every day because YouTube more than likely won't notify you, with a few exceptions. I'm at Stanislav Krapivnik on X. Instagram is just my name. Oh, yeah, and Telegram: "Stas Was There" is in English. "Stas Today" is my Russian channel. I'm going to make a cheat sheet because the list is just getting too long. Oh, and "Zvigar Image" is a Substack.

#Alex

All right. All right. I'll have some of those links in the description box down below. Take care.