Russia is Finishing Europe | Stas Krapivnik

To win in Ukraine, Russia is changing tactics not only on the battle field but also in it's approach to Europe. And Brussels hasn't even realized what is about to hit it. Stas Krapivnik joins Pascal to discuss American politics, Europe’s economic strains, and Russia’s objectives in Ukraine. Krapivnik argues that energy shortages, disrupted shipping, and fertilizer costs could intensify global food insecurity. They examine sanctions, Russian industry, infrastructure strikes, and the relationship between military operations and political goals. The conversation also covers tensions within Europe, the danger of wider war, and competing scenarios for Ukraine’s future, while distinguishing Krapivnik’s assessments from outcomes that remain uncertain as the conflict continues today. Stas's Links: YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/@MrSlavikman X: https://x.com/STANISKRAPIVNIK Substack: https://zmeigarinich.substack.com Telegram (English): https://t.me/staswasthereenglish2 Telegram (Russian): https://t.me/stastydaiobratno 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 Introduction and the US political outlook 06:02 Vance, Trump and Washington’s wars 11:37 Energy, shipping and global food insecurity 22:02 Russia’s economy and the effects of sanctions 25:03 Infrastructure strikes and the costs of war 34:04 Economic attrition and Europe’s political tensions 44:32 The danger of a wider European war 47:27 Russia’s endgame and Ukraine’s future

#Pascal

Welcome back, everybody, to Neutrality Studies. Today, we're here for another update with the one and only Stas Krapivnik. Stas, welcome back.

#Stas Krapivnik

Thank you.

#Pascal

Stas, a lot of things have happened. Of course, last week we had the midterms in the United States, and we've had some more diplomacy going on, especially between Russia and Iran. What are your expectations for this new phase that we're going to be entering pretty soon, when Congress is going to look very different from how it looks now?

#Stas Krapivnik

Unfortunately, nothing good. I wish I could say something good. From a domestic American perspective, you're going to go back to the insane woke agenda, because the unfortunate part is

that the Democrats, just like Labour, have not understood why they got elected. They didn't get elected because people suddenly fell in love with the failed policies they were pushing before, just as with Labour. They got elected as a protest vote against the Republicans—they're called conservatives, but they're Republicans—for failing to deliver on the promises they had made. The same thing happened in the U.K. with the Tories. The Tories failed on immigration. They failed on jobs. They failed on everything, for the most part, and there was a big protest vote against them.

Labour came in. Labour starts pushing its policies, thinking, "Oh, the people suddenly love Labour," and they don't. And it's the same thing with the Democrats. I'm saying, you know, the worst thing for the Democrats for the presidential elections in the U.S. in two years is winning bigly in the elections. I'm using Trump terms. I know it's not a real word. I know, I know. I digress. It's probably actually going to become a real word because people are going to use some of his ridiculous terms. But winning hugely in the elections, because they're going to start pushing all the failed policies again because they think, "Oh, everybody swung back our way." They didn't. I think the biggest underrepresented minority in the U.S. is white Christian males.

Flat out, you've got to consider the average white Christian male—and, in this case, heterosexual, because that actually plays a very big role in hiring. I'm going to be a little bit crude, but when people describe themselves by where they stick their wanker, that says a lot about the person. But when the system is judging them by that, it's a breakdown in the system, for God's sake. First of all, I don't even believe in racial profiling of any kind. Look, you want to get rid of racism, you stop talking about it. That's how you get rid of it. You take it off the forms when you hire somebody, so you don't automatically say, "Okay, we need some Black people, so we put the Black people up front," or some Hispanic people. You don't know the person that's coming in there.

You're more likely to judge them by their character when the person shows up, rather than pre-sort them. But the sorting goes on. And you've got to figure white males in the U.S. are about 30-plus percent of the population. And there's an insane statistic that came out: over the last five years, out of the new jobs that were created, they got 2 percent of the jobs. That's insane. It's an insane statistic. But they were the ones who went out for Trump the hardest. And Trump didn't deliver anything for them. So, for a third of the population, he didn't deliver anything except higher taxes, worse economic policies, and another forever war.

And the problem is, the Democrats don't get that. We've already seen these democratic socialist hopefuls. You know, they'll change things. Well, I've got news for you: they're not going to change anything. Look, Mamdani, the mayor of New York, was asked, "Now that the Democrats have won, we're going to be able to make peace with Iran, right?" It's like, "Well, you know, but we've got these other issues we want to cover." War makes money. And if you think for a second that the Democrats aren't going to make money off of the Iran war, of course they are.

They want to go back to making even more money off the Ukrainian war, of course. But there's already talk about how the military-industrial complex and the high-tech companies are now

retooling their lobbyists. When you hear from Congress, “Oh, we've got to stop development on radical artificial intelligence, and we're going to call these companies before a committee,” what they're saying is, “We haven't been paid yet. Gentlemen, do you hear us? We haven't been paid yet.” And that's what it's going to come down to: “Give us our share. You gave to the Republicans; now give to us.”

#Pascal

But I mean, I agree. I don't think that there's going to be a radical change. I mean, the most likely outcome is that maybe the Iran war hawks are a bit decimated by now in Congress. But in return, you're going to have more Ukraine war hawks in there. And the likelihood that both of these wars are going to continue more or less as they have is actually quite high. But what do you make of the comments by JD Vance about, you know, being so brutally honest: “Yes, it's the wars, the wars, the wars that were driving our election results, these very horrible results for us”? Do you think that there might be some sort of rethinking of how to approach US foreign policy in order to somehow give him a chance in the 2028 election? I mean, that's now going to be on the minds of a couple of these people, right?

#Stas Krapivnik

Oh, absolutely. Look, Vance, whatever you want to say about him—and I'm not, you know, a Vance fanboy of any sort—but let's be realistic. Trump actually tried to fire Vance.

#Pascal

Which he can't.

#Stas Krapivnik

Yeah, apparently Trump wanted to fire Vance—I guess this was about half a year ago—because Vance was constantly, well, you can't countermand what Trump wants, but you can at least counter or comment on it. And Vance's position was, “This is all wrong. We shouldn't be involved with Iran. In fact, we shouldn't really be in Ukraine either.” And then it had to be explained to Trump, “Mr. President, maybe it's time for you to read the Constitution.”

#Pascal

In your second term, maybe you can actually get around to it. At least a little chapter a day, you know.

#Stas Krapivnik

You can't fire the vice president. He's an elected official, just like you are. Why am I saying this is a horrible situation for the Democrats? It's not only because they're going to bring back the stupidest policies that nobody wanted in the first place. That's going to kill them in the next elections. But Vance is also going to come out looking like a golden boy. One of two things happens: either Trump sticks around or they get rid of Trump. And if they get rid of Trump, that's even worse for them.

Because if they get rid of Trump, Vance is going to become president—not president-elect, but president because he's next in line. That's going to give him an extra two years in office and two years to work on his brand. Yep. So when he walks in, there are going to be no primaries on the Republican side. And if his policies are any better than Trump's, by that point, people are going to be sick and tired of Democrats. And you've got somebody who's better than Trump, who's shown himself to be better than Trump for a year or two, and he's going to have a huge lead on the Democrats.

#Pascal

So, weirdly enough, Vance might now become an insurance policy for Trump against impeachment, because the Democrats might prefer having Trump there doing his stupid stuff instead of having somebody more competent like Vance, but on the other side, right?

#Stas Krapivnik

You would think so, if they were smart. I don't think they're smart. Emotionally, they're dumb. And this is the emotional reaction: "We're going to get Trump this time." And they probably will, but it'll be to their own detriment. But you have to think further than, "I'm upset, and I'm very mad, and now I'm finally going to get my revenge." It's like when you're pissed off, you're leaving a company, you scream at everybody, and you burn all your bridges. And then a month later, you realize, "I need a recommendation from somebody, but I told them all to go screw themselves. Whoops." You get that emotional five minutes of triumph.

Yeah. And then reality kicks in: “Maybe I shouldn't have done that.” I think the Democrats are going to do that. I'm not pro one party or the other. I mean, obviously, I don't vote in U.S. elections anymore. As a citizen, I didn't at the end because it was just pointless. I voted third party, but third parties don't break through in the U.S. The system is made to make sure that a third-party candidate can never climb up on stage. There are obstacles in every direction. You have to register each candidate separately in every state, quite literally. It's a federal election, but every state has to have the candidate registered separately.

So you need an army of lawyers, and the Republicans and Democrats set it up this way over the last 60 years to make sure that it's nearly impossible and very expensive for any third party to get a candidate even up on stage in every state. The Libertarians almost did it back in the early 2000s. They almost had a candidate, but their paperwork in Texas and California got lost. And if you can't

even get on the ballot in Texas and California, you have zero chance of winning. Not that they had any real chance anyway. I mean, the system's stacked against them. But yeah, it got lost. But it got found right afterwards.

#Pascal

It was on my desk. I didn't look in this corner.

#Stas Krapivnik

I'm sorry. Better luck next time, in the next elections. That's it. Why are you switching to an Eastern European accent when you're doing that one? The incompetent bureaucrats. But...

#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. Any purchase helps us directly to keep the lights on. So thanks a lot, and see you soon. Let's switch gears a little bit and talk about what you think this might now mean for foreign policy. I mean, on the one hand, the Democrats have now said, "Yes, we're getting what you're mainly complaining about. I mean, we won because you want people to focus on your livelihoods, right?"

And a lot of the Democrats who won actually talked about that, how it's important to improve the economic situation. On the other hand, I talked to Larry Johnson yesterday, and he said, "Well, look, the oil crisis, the energy crisis—actually, even if everything opened today, the Strait of Hormuz, Bab al-Mandeb, and all of the oil, you know, all of the commerce came back, you would not have enough oil right now because so many of these facilities are damaged, and the vessels are damaged and sunk and whatnot." I mean, this is a crisis already, and it's only going to get worse. What are your expectations for how this is going to hit the US and the rest of the globe?

#Stas Krapivnik

Well, it's already hit. Unfortunately, if we haven't seen it yet, we're on the cusp of major starvation, particularly in Africa, partially because Russian grain isn't getting out of the Black Sea because there's a war going on there. And Russia feeds a very large chunk of Africa. Countries like Egypt are fully dependent on Russian grain. And we've seen that the NATO-Ukrainian side is quite willing to hit non-Russian ships carrying grain, including ships from Azerbaijan and Turkey, interestingly enough, even though Turkey is part of NATO. You've got to wonder about it. I mean, Ukraine's attacked quite a bit of NATO. I mean, Ukraine's attacked Hungary, Ukraine's attacked Poland, Ukraine's attacked Slovakia, Ukraine's attacked Romania, Greece, Turkey.

So NATO is, you know, it's not about joint defense. It's about jointly going to war and dying against Russia. Maybe because the elites want that. But if their favorite son attacks refineries in three countries or tankers belonging to the Greeks and the Turks, hey, man, that's okay. That's your problem. It's not our problem. It's your problem. So we already see this dichotomy. Well, it's not even a dichotomy. This is flat-out insanity. It's not even a double standard. But the problem is, again, one, it's grain transport and things like that that are already causing issues. Two, it's a lack of fertilizers. Look, let's just look at European crop yields.

Potatoes are down 30%, grain is down 20%. The only thing that went up is actually sunflowers. I'm not quite sure why. Maybe because there are just so few of them being grown that it actually clocked about a 5% increase. Everything else is down between 5% and 30%. Let's just remember that the European Union last year imported almost 17 million tons of grain. And now its own production is down 20%. And they can't import from Ukraine because, again, there's a war going on that they insist on prolonging as long as possible. That means those grain exports out of Ukraine through the ports are gone. The grain will rot before it gets to the European Union. And that also impacts meat production, for obvious reasons.

You're going to get a short span when meat prices are going to collapse because farmers are going to start slaughtering their animals if they can't feed them. So the meat will hit the market, but that's for a very short time. Long term, except for pigs, chickens, and rabbits, most of your meat animals actually take a while to repopulate. For example, American beef herds are at their lowest in probably the last hundred-plus years, because a cow gives birth to one offspring, maybe two, but usually just one. The same thing goes for sheep and goats. Okay, pigs, they breed like pigs. Rabbits like rabbits. But still, you have to have enough feed, and there's still a lag time.

I mean, if you want a big pig, you've still got a lag time of at least half a year for it to fatten up enough. And that's all going to hit. And now you've got Africa. And what happens when countries run out of food? Civil war, wars between countries, and masses of refugees. Where are these refugees from these poor countries going to go? Oh, let's go to the rich countries up north. Of course, the rich countries up north are no longer rich, and they're having problems feeding their own people. So what happens at the borders? That's a good question, because this open-border idiocy can't last, especially when you don't have enough food now, and you've got massive food inflation hitting your own countries. How many more millions can you take in before you collapse? And we see Western Europe is collapsing.

Now, whether or not that gets used by the powers that be to create a full-on police state, I think it will be. I don't think they're quite ready to collapse fully yet. They'll go through a stage with an extreme police state. That's what France and England and Germany are going to turn into. They already are there partially. They've got one foot in that square, and the other foot's lifting off from the so-called democracy square. Remember, they're defending their democracy. The 100, 200 people sitting in Brussels running things—that's their democracy. Is that your democracy? You're not

welcome to this party. I'm sorry. You're the peasants. Go away, do what you're told, or you get beaten. But the problem is that there's a lag effect. Fertilizer is a major issue. Fertilizer went up almost 300% in price.

Looking at futures in oil is pointless because it's futures. It's wishful thinking. Looking at the cost of the products, that's another thing. But here's one of the things that nobody talks about: the logistics costs. They've increased so much, and they do cause a very large knock-on effect. Look, before this, the average oil tanker was costing a company about $60,000 a day. To operate? To operate, to pay the crew, for the fuel for the tanker, which is running on diesel. So the average fuel tanker coming out of the Middle East, going up through the Suez Canal, popping out somewhere around England or France—you've got to figure about three weeks. So, you know, multiply about 20, 25 days by 60,000, and you get your price. Well, right now it's $1,400,000 a day. $1,400,000 a day? No way. It went up like a hundredfold? More than a hundred?

#Pascal

No, not 100-fold. It went up 50-fold.

#Stas Krapivnik

Fifty-fold, around fifty-fold. Fifty-fold, yeah.

#Stas Krapivnik

Oh, yeah, yeah. And that's not all of it. It gets worse. It gets worse if you're doing east-west transit, because the only transit point that's open right now for fast transit is the Panama Canal. The Panama Canal used to charge about $60,000 for passage. Then, after the start of the conflict, it went up to $2 million. About a month ago, it went up to $4 million. Yes, you really can't pay that. It's the grain ships that can't pay that. They're sitting around, either trying to collect the money or trying to get in line. The lines are pretty long, and the grain is rotting. Panama is in the tropics.

#Pascal

Why would the Panama Canal raise its prices? I mean, that has little to nothing to do with actual oil prices, does it?

#Stas Krapivnik

Because of transport costs, because of the number of tankers. When that area closes down, particularly when the straits in the Red Sea close down because of conflict, we reroute. That's one. Two, it's insurance companies. I mean, look at the number of tankers destroyed, and I'm not talking about just oil tankers, but dry bulk carriers, because, you know, grain isn't hauled in containers.

Grain is hauled in the hull of a big ship. Insurance costs are skyrocketing because a lot of tankers have been destroyed. There are a lot of tankers that are trapped inside the Persian Gulf or outside the Persian Gulf in Oman, waiting for a chance to get in. It would just be easier to pay the Iranians and get through. But then the Americans will get you.

So it's one of two things. Either you take the secret American route and switch off your transponder and get whacked by the Iranians, or you pay the Iranians and the Americans are waiting to sink you, turn you around, or confiscate your ship. So it's a knock-on effect, and there's always a buffer for earnings. There's always the fear effect that also adds to that. It's an additional knock-on effect. But you've got to figure, you know, if earlier the cost of a barrel coming into port had $60,000 per day attached to it, and now it has $1.4 million per day attached to it—and, by the way, crews are expecting to be paid more too, because now it's highly dangerous. They're quite literally risking their lives. You're going to pay more at the pump just because of that.

#Pascal

So, long story short, I mean, it's not just the shortage of oil, but also all of these knock-on effects that are now necessarily going to lead to price increases across the board, especially for energy, food, and everything else connected to that. And this is probably going to be a global thing, not just a regionally isolated one. Russia, however, produces a lot of food, and it basically has its own energy supply. Do you think that, overall, Russia is going to be less impacted by all of this than, let's say, the Europeans and the Americans? And what is your assessment for China, Southeast Asia, and Japan?

#Stas Krapivnik

Yeah, first of all, we don't have any fuel shortages. I know that's the same old drum that they're now starting to beat. They've been beating that drum again for two months. The Zelensky attacks on the refineries—again, almost everything they're hitting is fuel storage facilities. That's where you get the big fires that the West so orgasmically loves to post everywhere. And those are repurposed or repaired or replaced relatively quickly. Having said that, yes, of course, Russia, on the one hand, has all the energy it needs and all the food it needs. It feeds a third of the world. And Putin, just to make sure, has extended the ban on exporting diesel. We still export diesel to places like China. To close allies, we still export.

Now, having said that, Russian industry, of course, is growing. Money is pouring in, partially because of sanctions—not just because you can't get Western products, but because a lot of companies, including Western companies that used to pull money out of Russia, can't pull that money out anymore. So, of course, they may be, quote, “out of Russia,” but when they still have hundreds of millions, if not billions, of euros’ worth of cash in rubles inside Russia, they're not going to let that sit

around for five years and collect dust. Their banks in Russia are going, “Well, we need to make something. Hey, let's invest in the economy.” And after a while, it becomes so profitable to invest in the economy that they're going to go, “Well, why are we going to pull this out into Europe again?”

What have we got to invest in Europe? In that collapsing second-world economy? We've got better investments here. And then it develops its own logic, depending on how long these sanctions go on. I'm expecting they'll go on for the next 100 years or until the European Union collapses, whichever comes first. I'm hoping the European Union collapses first. That money isn't going to leave Russia anytime soon, but it's earning money. So sooner or later, there's going to be absolutely no reason for that money to leave Russia because those corporations are going to go, “Well, you know, our money's safe there, and we are making a pretty good percentage, right? Let's keep it.” The council will say that to him.

#Pascal

In a really weird sense, the EU and the Americans actually did Russia a favor by making sure that neither its labor nor its capital can escape anymore. And you kind of stopped the brain drain and the capital drain. The way this is backfiring is quite mind-boggling. But on the other hand, you know what? The pain point, of course, is still there, and that is Ukraine. Yes. And the war is continuing. And what we are seeing now is that there are these huge daily attacks, with tremendously large-scale drone warfare going on.

And one of the things that has changed over the last few months, which wasn't the case before, is that Russia is now systematically going after really key targets—key infrastructure, especially energy infrastructure right now, and train lines and roads. I mean, I understand that there are military calculations behind it, although most of this stuff is mostly used for civilian purposes. But the tragic thing about war is that at some point you get to the point where you need to strangle the other side, right? And we've seen how the Allies did that to the Axis in the Second World War.

The Americans usually do that from day number one with their shock-and-awe thingy, right? When they go and blow up all the infrastructure. They did that in Yugoslavia. They did that in Ukraine. They just tried to do that in Iran as far as possible. And now it seems to me that Russia is at that point where you're kind of really driving the dagger deep. How are you seeing this developing now? And what do you think is Russia's strategy to somehow get to a point where you can say, "Yeah, it's done now. We've checked everything off the list"?

#Stas Krapivnik

Well, by the way, I will add one thing about what you said about the Allies in World War II. Let's not forget that what the Allies did in World War II was commit genocide.

#Pascal

Yeah.

#Stas Krapivnik

I'm not defending the Nazis. They were the biggest genociders of all of them. But the Allies, the Western Allies, were right up behind them. Not only did Churchill starve 5 million Indians to death, but God only knows how many suffered but didn't die because he just stole all their food from eastern India and took it over to England in 1942, 1943. Instant famine. By the way, India didn't really have major famines until the English arrived. But that's just a side note. And then everybody remembers Dresden. But Dresden was just the last city. The British and American air forces literally burned down every single German city there was. And they started with enclosed German cities, the ones that still had the medieval walls around them, because they'd get the formula just right: high explosives, followed by incendiaries, followed by antipersonnel mines.

And they did that for three or four days on any one city. You'd get a column of fire that would rise up five or six kilometers into the air, and trees that were literally a meter, a meter and a half wide would get ripped out of the ground at the edges and sucked into this vortex that was created by these massive fires. People were either incinerated or asphyxiated in those areas. And the reason, by the way, for the antipersonnel round of bombs was to kill anybody running for their lives and to kill any emergency crews trying to fight the fires. And you did this to every single German city. I've talked to German survivors. I wrote a paper on it when I was at university, which I got a three on, or a C. It was assigned to me by my military science professor. He just didn't like the result. I didn't even know anything about this. He was just like, "Here is your topic."

#Pascal

Stas, if you want to establish your authority on a topic, you wouldn't mention that you got a C on a university paper about it.

#Stas Krapivnik

Well, the reason I got the C on it wasn't because it was badly written. He said, "I don't agree with your conclusion." And the conclusion was that the U.S. and the U.K. were committing genocide. Five million people burned to death. Five million out of six million German civilians who died, died from firebombing. And his whole point was, "I don't agree with your paper." A C? What? Okay. That was a rude awakening as a young cadet. But anyways, I digress. So, what the West was doing in Germany—and in France, by the way—they burned a lot of northern French villages and towns that had absolutely no Germans in them. Churchill was even starting to panic because he said, "You know, the French will never forgive us." But de Gaulle buried it all just to keep things going after World War II.

#Pascal

So, yeah, that was different. So did the Swiss, by the way. Just a fun fact: the only city of ours that got bombed in the Second World War was bombed by the Americans, when they bombed Schaffhausen in 1945, I think, in January or February. Really? Yeah, they did. And later on, I must say, they apologized. They said it was a targeting mistake because, in their defense, it is a town on the border with Germany. So, yeah, maybe you got it wrong. You thought it was German. They did apologize. They did pay reparations. But the only city of ours that got bombed was bombed by the Americans, not by the Nazis. The Nazis never bombed the Swiss. But that's just an aside.

#Stas Krapivnik

Yeah, we paid reparations. Sorry for the people we killed. Here's some money for them. You can't bring them back.

#Pascal

No, you can't. That's the problem. You actually do diplomacy when you admit, "That shouldn't have happened. Sorry." Anyhow, see? I mean, it's different from what they're doing with Iran, right? Those are intentional attacks and so on. This one was unintentional. Okay, fine. We're going to compensate. Anyhow, back to the topic. Right. The topic is actually Ukraine. So what do you think the thinking is right now in Moscow, in the Kremlin? Why these large-scale attacks now, including on infrastructure that is actually important to keep civilian life running?

#Stas Krapivnik

Well, for one thing, that infrastructure also runs the military, and it should have been destroyed back in ’22. The fact that it wasn’t destroyed was a strictly political decision. Any military planner at the theater level or higher is going to tell you what you go after first. You don’t go after the enemy military first. You go after their logistics. Because if they cannot feed and supply their military, their military’s capabilities run out really, really quickly. So what do you do? You go after the tunnels. You go after the bridges. You go after railroad junctions. You go after the trains themselves or the locomotives.

You go after depots, fuel depots, electric stations. By the way, those electric stations also run electric locomotives. Those electric stations also power manufacturing facilities. By the way, Kamuvaka—I think that’s the name of the town—they’re all screaming that a school there was destroyed by multiple FAB strikes by the Russians. Yes, it was destroyed, except videos have come out showing that the school was full of Ukrainian military personnel. It was mostly underground, full of Ukrainian military personnel manufacturing drones. Whoops. You know, at least don’t put up your own films about it, but they do. So thankfully for that.

So that's just another one of those cases. They're using civilian infrastructure for military purposes. There's been tons of photos of them in schools, bivouacking or training inside the schools. Kids aren't in the schools, but the military is. Or they're putting their equipment right beside the schools, in the yards. Yeah, of course it's going to get hit. Sooner or later, it's going to get hit. And then they scream out, “The Russians are blowing up a school,” or “The Russians are doing something else nefarious of that sort.” But, you know, they put anti-aircraft equipment on top of a hospital roof, knowing it's going to draw fire.

#Pascal

I mean, the unfortunate fact now is that this is kind of the Hamas effect, right? Everybody's accusing everybody else of using civilians as human shields. And there's really no way for us, sitting in front of our screens, to judge what's actually happening. I mean, this is where you do need these war reporters who go really, really deep and so on. And of those, there's a handful, a handful. The question, though, remains: why was this not done in the beginning, and why is it being done now? And do you think Russia is trying to, you know, finish it off? Is that the thing? Do they want to tie it up within the next half a year or something like that? Or what's the thinking at the moment?

#Stas Krapivnik

Of course, Russia wants to finish it off. There is another aspect to why this conflict has dragged on. This is a multilayered conflict. If you listen to what Russia has said over and over again: “We're not fighting Ukraine. We're fighting in Ukraine. We're fighting NATO.” And what we're seeing in Western Europe is the result of this fight with NATO. The NATO economies are buckling. They're going more and more into police-state mode, into dictatorial-state mode. We call it the Ukrainianization of Europe. So the masks are coming off, basically. They can't maintain the masks and keep control over their societies and economies. And it's wearing them down.

So the attrition warfare isn't just on the battlefield. There's economic and financial attrition warfare going on on a larger scale. So we're seeing these issues popping up. So yes, there's a reason to keep it going in its own way, but outside of the actual conflict on the ground. And again, taking out the key infrastructure or not taking it out was strictly a political decision. The military, like I said, would have gone after these bridges ASAP, but they weren't allowed to. Now they're allowed to. The gloves are off. And the government said, “Go, do what you should have been doing already.”

“We didn't let you do it.” So I think they've gotten to a point where Western Europe is in enough of a state of collapse that we can start trying to wrap this up. But the point about wrapping this up is, one, it's not going to happen overnight. It's still going to take time, especially when you're still doing attrition warfare. And two, the problem is: what will the Western Europeans do? Are they insane

enough to go in and start a ground war, or try to start an air war that will turn into a ground war? Or will they shut up and sit on their behinds? And I think they're getting ready. We see more and more signs of a bigger war coming.

And we partly see them in places like Serbia and Poland, where the EU is trying to stiffen up. Yeah. Well, okay, so in Serbia we've got these student lists, and it's questionable which side they're really on. The problem with student lists is that they never articulated their actual policies. They told everybody what they wanted to hear, and they had representatives from all sides. So they won because, you know, if I tell everybody what they want to hear, they'll probably vote for me. This is one of the key problems with any kind of actual republican or democratic system: if I just lie enough, I can get your vote. And all the incentives are there for me to lie to get your vote.

You know, it's a popularity vote, not a policy vote. They lied enough to enough people, but now they have to actually firm up their policies. So there's an internal fight between the people who go, you know, "Russia is our friend," or "Russia is our protector"—they've gone and said that directly. "There's not going to be any sanctions on Russia." And then there are those who say, "Hey, we need to get into the EU as fast as possible, and maybe NATO too. That would be cool. So sanctions, everything else? Yeah, sure, we can do that." So there's a fight between these two extremes. And as they form a government over the next couple of months, we're going to figure out which side they really are on. Or they're going to split up, and there won't be a single party.

If there's enough of a difference between the two camps and enough weight, they'll reach critical mass and just explode into different parties because they won't be able to stay together. So there's that with Serbia, former Yugoslavia. Okay, but that's more of a minor thing. But Poland, as an example—we got rid of Orbán in Hungary. So Magyar, even though he's going slow, is still a creature of von der Leyen, the Kaiser of the Germans. Although, let's be honest, the Germans ruled the European Union, or what would have been called Hitler's New European Order 2.0. Because Hitler wasn't building an empire; he was building a new European order.

And that's exactly what the EU is. They just went slower this time. No tanks, just money. Just transports full of cash for the elites. And it worked. I mean, it can't maintain itself, but it's worked to build itself. Well, the problem in Poland, first of all, is that Poland's not really fully a parliamentary republic or a presidential republic. It's something in between. If you have both from the same party, most of the time it'll work. I mean, there may be personal differences between people, but mostly it'll work. But when you have them from radically different parties—Law and Justice on one side, the Civic Coalition on the other...

The Civic Coalition are absolutely the Kaiser's animals. They're her puppets. Yeah. What happened is that, because Law and Justice had been in power for so long, apart from a little break, they were able to put their judges into the Supreme Court or the Constitutional Tribunal. Well, you call it packing, but over time, you know, they kept adding their judges. Well, the prime minister, under the constitution, is allowed to appoint three judges.

#Pascal

So, three out of eight.

#Stas Krapivnik

And he did that. And Nawrocki accepted the swearing-in of the three judges, as the constitution stipulates. But Tusk wanted more. Obviously, Tusk wanted all eight judges. He took the swearing-in of the other five, which he has no right to do. And then they waited till Nawrocki was out of the country, and they charged into the Constitutional Tribunal, ousted the other judges, and put in their own judges, which is a soft coup. Well, it's a constitutional coup because they've now trampled all over their own constitution and taken power into their own hands. The problem is the patriot movement, and I think the patriot movement has grown quite a bit.

People who were on the sidelines are now throwing their support behind the patriot movement. They charged in and surrounded the police, and Nawrocki's plane turned around. So I think he knew this was coming. I think he'd been forewarned. The only question now is who forewarned him, because they waited until he was out of the country. But he was, you know, going to Senegal. Senegal's pretty far away from Poland. But he was able to return and land within three hours after this started. So obviously he hadn't flown that far, and he knew this was coming, and he got that plane turned around. So I think he was forewarned. You know, I've got my opinions on who could have forewarned him.

Moscow. You know, I'm sorry. Nice. So he comes in, and what do you have right now? The constitutional crisis is only getting worse. People may think, "Oh, it's over. It was a one-day event." Not only is it still not over, but society has seriously split because it turns out there are three power centers. First of all, there's the military, and the military flat out said, "We're behind the president, the constitutional order. That's it." The military is on his side—the big guns. Then there's the police. There are two types of police. There's the regular beat cops, and the police union sent a letter and said, "We don't know what the hell is going on."

"We're not taking any sides. We're going on strike, basically." The police just won't show up. And then there's the police who are around the constitutional building and backing Tusk. First of all, he used a lot of police cadets who didn't know any better. I don't know if they're still there or not. But the specialist police have backed him. The anti-terror groups, the SWAT teams—these kinds of police have backed him. Well, and then there are Germans all over Poland right now for a military exercise. But, of course, the difference between a military exercise and a direct military intervention in Polish affairs is just a matter of issuing live rounds, quite literally. It's not much.

A lot of military exercises have been jumping-off points for actual military invasions or occupations. Well, it's all going to come to a head in five days, counting today, because Nawrocki has given Tusk until November 11th to resign, dissolve the government, and call new elections, which Tusk will lose.

Tusk has no incentive to leave. He's got the European Union behind him. Why is this coming to a head now? I mean, this hasn't appeared overnight. In my opinion, the European Union is trying to shore up its internal affairs before the big war with Russia. The last thing you need is countries like Poland, or provinces like Poland, suddenly going, "You know, actually, we're an independent nation."

"We're going to make our own decisions. Maybe we don't want a little war." You know, God forbid that people might back off. They've already got problems in Bulgaria. The new government that's been elected wants quite the opposite: no sanctions, trade, and no war with Russia, which shouldn't be a surprise from Bulgaria. And other countries might get those kinds of opinions and ideas in their heads. And you don't want the peasants to start getting ideas. They have to know their place. Pay your taxes, do your work, and go die when we tell you. Wait, wait, wait. You think you actually have an opinion on this? Whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa.

#Pascal

The new technocratic state doesn't allow that. Yeah, you must be a Putin-loving traitor if you don't want to go and die for the European Reich. Yeah. I mean, I'm absolutely with you on that. But I do not see the overall situation in Europe developing in the direction that maybe these people would want, because the French protests are still there, and they're not really abating. We've got the problem in Poland. We've got a lot of issues at the moment, actually. And as you said, you know, the EU is going the other way. But in a sense, you're fearing that what they're deciding to do is to fail forward—fail forward into a larger war—because that's basically the only direction that's still open to them?

#Stas Krapivnik

Yeah, because the problem with war for the average person is that things could start blowing up around you, and you could wind up on a front line where you may never want to be. But the other problem with war, on a political level, is martial law. War, especially a declaration of war, gives you superpowers. I think it was Adam Smith, the American Adam Smith, who said, "War is the health of the state." Or it may have been Washington. I may even be wrong on those two.

#Pascal

That sounds more like something that Carl Schmitt would say.

#Stas Krapivnik

Or maybe Thomas Jefferson. But who knows? But war is the health of the state. This is a point where the government can declare martial law, bringing in the military to crush the protests, crush them violently. Believe you me, if they open fire on these protesters, the protesters will disperse. I mean, you figure, you bring in 100 or 200 military personnel or police with assault rifles, and they

just start laying into the crowd, as happened in France many times, by the way, where the military opened fire into the crowds. And for God's sake, Napoleon, as a matter of fact, a man of the people, also shot a lot of those people later on when he needed to.

It's interesting how governments work: today you're a revolutionary for the people. Tomorrow you're crushing those damn dirty peasants who don't like you anymore. So it happens quite often. At that point, they can crush the demonstrations. They can take full control, and any of their political opponents can either be flat-out arrested or sent off to the front to die somewhere and be gotten rid of. Plus, they have a chance to get rid of those extra males they cannot feed and provide work for. You cull the male population. You do that by sending them off to war. That's the unfortunate tendency in humanity.

#Pascal

I hate that vision, but I cannot rule out that it might be in the back of the minds of some of these lunatics in Brussels and the Baltics at the moment. But Stas, just in closing, what do you think is now the name of the game for Russia? Because, you know, one of the reasons why this war took so long is that, for about three years or so, the name of the game was attrition warfare, because you wanted to get rid of all of the NATO equipment, the NATO stuff. And in the process, you also had to get rid of a lot of Ukrainian soldiers, although I think that was the least of the priorities. But it was attrition warfare. And Vladimir Putin said several times, "It's bloody. It's horrible."

But that's what it is, because the other side keeps throwing that stuff at you. Now they've degraded them. And you're the one who said they've already degraded three or four armies, actually, in Ukraine. And it seems to me that the name of the game has changed toward, again, these massive infrastructure attacks in order to prepare the coup de grâce, when you do something that's going to be so large that, you know, it's going to be like occupying Berlin. And that's the point where the Second World War in Europe basically ended. What do you think is the military end that Moscow is foreseeing now or is planning for Ukraine?

#Stas Krapivnik

And just before going into that, there was also this forlorn hope that the Europeans would sober up and come to the negotiating table.

#Pascal

I think they've given up on that, finally. No, no, there's no sobriety whatsoever in these people. They're intoxicated with their own power, with their own stupidity, with their own ideology. They're deep in an ideological hole, and getting people out of that is going to take decades—time which Russia doesn't have. Yes, exactly. Or a war. I hope not. But again, what do you think is the aim now? You know, the biggest fear everybody has is that Moscow will make a deal.

#Stas Krapivnik

Any kind of deal Moscow makes is just putting off a bigger war by a couple more years.

#Pascal

You mean, in Russia, the biggest fear is that Moscow might be persuaded to make a deal instead of doing it militarily?

#Stas Krapivnik

Yeah. What's the military objective now?

#Pascal

Well...

#Stas Krapivnik

The military objective is to destroy the will of the enemy to continue fighting, right? It doesn't necessarily mean destroying the enemy. It means destroying the enemy's will to continue the conflict. But it's always subordinate to the political will. And here's a little problem. If you just get rid of Zelensky, they say, "We're going to have new elections." Who's going to get elected? I mean, if you look at Ukraine as it stands right now.

#Pascal

Budanov or Zaluzhny or one of these guys.

#Stas Krapivnik

Exactly. Okay, Zelensky is not a Nazi fanatic. He quite likes using Nazism because it helps him, but he's first and foremost a thief—a murderous thief, but he's a thief. But sooner or later, the next person who gets elected could be a Nazi fanatic. And the problem is that the counterweight in Ukraine is gone. All those territories where you had the pro-Eastern, Russian population are gone. And the Russian population in central Ukraine has been reduced because they're the ones who, first and foremost, have been rounded up and sent off as soldiers to die on the front.

So the population in western Ukraine has the majority now. And, of course, they're going to keep electing psychopaths just like they are, because they've been least touched by the war. So what are you going to get? You're going to get a Budanov. You're going to get a Zelensky. You're going to get somebody who's going to continue this frigging policy. So, yeah, sure, we'll give you peace for a

couple of years, and we'll build back up for the next round. Do we want that? No, of course not. So either A, you take all of Ukraine, or B, you destroy Ukraine enough that you can put your own people in there and, you know, basically install a puppet regime.

Or C, you take all of the Russian territories, which means both sides of the Dnieper, and you leave a rump Ukraine that's landlocked and is going to have problems reorganizing itself, with lots of neighbors who are all looking at it going, "Well, you know, that's actually a piece of my land. I think I want it back." So the problem is, sure, you may have some internal fighting in Ukraine between these different extremist power centers because they all want to be king. But sooner or later, that's going to sort itself out, and you're back to dealing with another radical, even more radicalized government in Ukraine. What do you do? And that's a problem for the political side.

#Pascal

Do you think there's a chance that the thinking in Moscow is now that, okay, we're going to consolidate what we want inside Russia, including Odessa and whatnot, and then the rest of Ukraine will be occupied the way Austria and Germany were occupied, with a view toward creating a friendlier regime so that you can then slowly withdraw? Is that thinkable? Because the occupation of western Ukraine, to me—and I know also to Mearsheimer and others—still seems unthinkable because it's just such a wasps' nest.

#Stas Krapivnik

You know, I know different people in the political sphere and in the journalistic sphere, some of whom say, “We need to rebuild the Soviet Union.” No, we don't. But they're a very small minority. Others say, “Yeah, we're going to have to occupy it.” But here's the problem: do you want to occupy it? The best-case scenario, honestly, is you leave a rump Ukraine, you build a big wall on the border, and you make the border tight. Sure, you will have some drones, but they have to fly very far now. You let them fight it out, and they will eventually. When you have several hundred thousand armed veterans with no jobs, they can't go east because they'll be shot at the border. Where are they going to go? They're going to go west. They're going to go into Europe as mafia organizations, as terrorists, as guns for hire. And they already are, to some degree.

They're already bleeding into Western Europe, or into Central and Eastern Europe. And now this becomes an EU problem. This is if we don't have a big war with the EU in general. Then it becomes a big EU problem, and sooner or later, all the neighbors around there, if they haven't already taken a chunk of it—like, for example, the Hungarians with Zakarpattia—are going to be forced to go in there themselves and deal with it. First and foremost, the Poles. And Poland claims a lot of those areas. By all means, go take them. But you have to pacify them. The Poles would prefer them to be pacified by us, and then they could go grab that land. But, you know, sooner or later, they're going to have to deal with it. They're going to have an issue they're going to have to deal with. So, like I said, we'd prefer them to deal with it rather than us having to deal with it.

#Pascal

Yeah, for very obvious reasons. Okay, in short, as we speak today in early November 2026, we don't really see the outlines of this future configuration yet. There will be something somewhere down the line. We will discuss this again once things get clearer. Stas, if people want to follow you, where should they go?

#Stas Krapivnik

Okay, so you can follow me on YouTube at MrSlavicMan. That's “Slavic” with a K, all one word. Check it out. I'm posting pretty much every single day—one to two videos, sometimes three. And most of the time, YouTube won't let you know. So if you sign up, bookmark it and check it out anyway. That's the unfortunate part about how the algorithm treats me. I'm pseudo-shadowbanned. There's a Substack. There is now Instagram under my name. There's X, at Stannis, I think. I couldn't fit the whole name in. Our names are too damn long. It's not Jon Snow. Let's see, what else have we got? And Telegram. “Stas туда и обратно” is the Russian channel. “Stas Was There” is the English channel.

#Pascal

I will put the links to all of your channels in the description box below. And we will do another update soon. Stas Kropivnik, thank you so much for your time today.

#Stas Krapivnik

Thank you.