

# Alexander Mercouris: The Political Legitimacy Crisis Across Europe

Alexander Mercouris discusses the political legitimacy crisis among a discredited elite, which is leading Europe toward a pre-revolutionary moment. The Duran: <https://www.youtube.com/@TheDuran> Alexander Mercouris: <https://www.youtube.com/@AlexMercouris> Follow Prof. Glenn Diesen: Substack: <https://glennDiesen.substack.com/> X/Twitter: [https://x.com/Glenn\\_Diesen](https://x.com/Glenn_Diesen) Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/glennDiesen> Support the research by Prof. Glenn Diesen: PayPal: <https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/glennDiesen> Buy me a Coffee: [buymeacoffee.com/gdieseng](http://buymeacoffee.com/gdieseng) Go Fund Me: <https://gofund.me/09ea012f> Books by Prof. Glenn Diesen: <https://www.amazon.com/stores/author/B09FPQ4MDL>

## #Glenn

Welcome back. We are joined today by Alexander Mercouris, the host of the very popular Duran and also host of the Alexander Mercouris podcast. And I will leave a link to both of them in the description. So thank you for coming back on the program. Delighted to be here, Glenn. So I'm always impressed by your detailed knowledge and focus on European politics, and I wanted to ask you about what's happening in British politics because it seems to be quite unprecedented, what we're observing. But first, I thought a good place to start might be the common thread across European politics, because it does seem like we're watching a denationalized political elite which tends to ignore very basic national interests. You could say an excessive focus on foreign policy or war, and this, you know, might be fueling economic and political problems. We see low approval ratings, undermining of political opposition. What is it that you're seeing across Europe at the moment?

## #Alexander Mercouris

Well, I think you've described the situation exactly correctly. And the crisis in Britain is related precisely to this. One of the reasons why we have a political crisis in Britain is because there is a perception that the political leadership in Britain and the current prime minister, Keir Starmer, are narrowly focused on what is euphemistically called foreign policy, except it's not even properly speaking foreign policy, not in the classical sense of the word. What they're really focused on is Russia, the conflict in Ukraine, and the wider process of European integration.

And the elites in Europe, and Britain is no exception, as a consequence, have been losing interest and the ability to understand the actual accumulating problems within their own countries. And it is this that is creating increasing political volatility. If we're talking about Keir Starmer, I mean, one of the terms that he's referred to by here is "Never Here Keir," because he's constantly traveling

around the world, mostly worrying about Ukraine. And I think that basically says it all. There's a wide sense that he's fundamentally disengaged and uninterested in the problems of the British people and in the problems that face Britain — the very big, growing, intractable problems that face Britain overall.

## **#Glenn**

But are the days of Starmer coming to an end? And how do you see the next election changing British politics? Because now we're looking at possibly, you know, Mr. Brexit, Nigel Farage himself taking, well, the role of prime minister.

## **#Alexander Mercouris**

Well, this is, again, it goes back to your original point about a Europe-wide elite that continues to be focused very much on these things, that Starmer himself is not an exception to the rule. He is the rule. He is absolutely typical of all the others. I mean, you can see this with Heiko Maas in Germany, who's mostly focused on rearmament to fight Russia and supporting Ukraine and all of these things. You see this with one politician after another. You saw this with Frederiksen in Denmark. You see this with the various leaders that we've had in countries like the Netherlands and Poland and wherever. They're overwhelmingly focused on these issues. And if we're talking about Starmer, yes, probably we are gradually moving towards the end of the time when he will remain prime minister.

But for the moment, the established political elite remains in place. And what they're trying to do is they're trying to get rid of Starmer and find someone who will be exactly the same as Starmer, but only somehow a little bit more popular than Starmer himself has been, which is why this crisis is becoming so complicated and so intractable, because there isn't anybody, basically, who could take over and continue to do the things that Starmer is doing and who can become popular in a way that Starmer is not. Now, as for Farage and Reform, well, Farage comes from outside the elite that we've just been talking about. He has in the past suggested changes to British foreign policy. He wrote pieces, for example, in which he suggested that the war in Ukraine had indeed been provoked by actions taken by the West.

But the closer he gets to power itself, the less he talks in this way and the more he starts to talk, like the elite does, about foreign policy, about relations with Russia, about the overall situation in Europe. And one gets the sense that, in the end, he is not going to be the person who has the political authority or the political skill to carry out that major sea change in British policy that is needed. For one thing, he's far too interested in attracting support from members of the elite, from members of the Conservative Party who are defecting to him. And he doesn't want to scare them away by seeming too radical about foreign policy. The link between foreign policy and the crisis in domestic policy is not, I think, one that he understands completely.

## **#Glenn**

Yeah, well, this has been a common theme, though, in the United States and Europe, it seems. That is, you can vote for whomever you want. You can put someone else on the throne, but eventually you can't change the policies. And not just with Trump, but I think Meloni as well became a good example of this. The Italians always speak about the Meloni who was during the election, and, of course, the one who took power thereafter, which are very different people. But, of course, these very unpopular leaderships, I mean, the reason why they're all plummeting in the polls across Europe is because there is a crisis. That is, they're not actually pursuing the basic national interest, it seems. And this isn't going away, even if Farage takes over. So where do you see Britain going here? Because at some point, the economic problems will have to—well, this reality will have to impact its foreign policy as well.

## **#Alexander Mercouris**

We are in a particularly difficult situation because, in some respects, our problems are particularly intractable. Britain in the 1980s perhaps over-invested in its financial system. It was the first European country to basically de-industrialize its economy, or to move away from manufacturing, as the core of a Western economy. It went heavily into financial services. It also depended heavily on oil from the North Sea to cover costs. And the result was that when the 2008 financial crisis came, Britain was exposed as a one-dimensional economy that lacked the necessary strategic depth to basically ride the problem out. So what we have had since 2008, as a result, is a very long period of economic stagnation.

Living standards have been flat or falling. Output has been basically flat. Debt levels have been rising as costs that governments have to pay continue to grow, but the economy doesn't grow at the same pace. Taxes are rising, and the current account, the budget deficit, and the trade deficit constantly widen. So we have this major problem in Britain, which is greater, more severe than what you will find elsewhere in Europe. At the same time, for historic reasons, we have become even more boxed into this foreign policy consensus than perhaps is true in other European countries. So there is no equivalent, for example, to the AfD in Britain, where you do see people engaging in particular alternative ideas and programmes.

We have nothing like Le Pen and the National Rally or Mélenchon and his left-wing forces, which also challenge these ideas. There's no one like Salvini, who is there in Italy, who is a deputy prime minister and carries some authority and argues against these things. So we have a particularly intractable set of problems which require a solution and a lot of attention. And we have a political class which is perhaps even more closed to these realities than you find elsewhere in Europe. So this is creating growing tensions and growing exasperation on the part of the British public. Many people are saying that for the first time they sense an atmosphere of anger within wider British society. If you go to the British media, you find that word "anger" all over the place.

And this is the cause of it. And the danger is that because the political system here is proving so unresponsive, it's like a pressure cooker with this anger increasing all the time, and we might eventually see the pressure cooker explode. That could throw up political movements and political forces which we can't yet see, but which could be much more radical than anything we have seen up to now, with levels of political change happening in Britain very suddenly and very sharply, which are not going to be moderated by consensus and which might be, in the long term, extremely destabilizing. So I've spoken about this as being almost a pre-revolutionary situation. This is basically the reason why.

## **#Glenn**

Yeah, no, well, we're not quite in 1848 yet, but still, it does feel that the political legitimacy is undergoing a crisis to the extent it can't hold on anymore. At some point, as you said, the pressure cooker opens. You can only go so far. But I'm glad you mentioned Germany because they do have other alternatives. Well, the Alternative for Germany, which is now the most popular party in the polls in Germany, which is quite remarkable given that it was only established in 2012 or 2013. So it's a relatively new party. But in this regard, we do see that the German chancellor, Friedrich Merz, he's even less popular than Starmer.

So, of course, he's always... What's happened to Germany is quite remarkable because, as we know, after the Second World War, Germany kind of rebuilt its whole image. It learned from history. It was becoming less engaged in wars. It would be the economy driving Europe forward, all of these things. You had German leaders meeting the Russians, essentially putting – and overcoming history, all of these things which kind of defined Germany, which kind of rubbed off on what Europe was supposed to represent. We're seeing a very different Germany today. It's de-industrializing, it's a massive economic problem. As I said, a political legitimacy crisis. And as this is happening, we're also seeing the targeting of the opposition.

That is, they're using the intelligence services now against the AfD by referring to it as an extremist organization. And of course, Merz himself is... you know, this learning from history, not so much, it seems. Again, he, like his predecessor, was supporting the genocide in Gaza. Merz said that Israel was doing the dirty work for us when they attacked Iran. And of course, now they're working on mass-producing drones and missiles so they can attack Russia. This is a very different Germany than we saw, especially in the 90s and even thereafter. So how sustainable is this, though, if we revert back to your pressure cooker analogy, because this seems to be only intensifying. It is intensifying.

## **#Alexander Mercouris**

And it's important to stress that all of these things that we're talking about — the talk about banning the AfD, the restrictions on speech, assembly, and all of these things — in Britain, incredibly, and it's received far too little attention, a lawyer who successfully defended his clients in court, who came

from a protest group that protested against some of the events taking place in Gaza, that lawyer, after successfully defending his clients, was prosecuted on a charge of contempt of court on the basis of the defence speech that he made in court. And it then became, for a time, contempt of court — which is a criminal offence that can carry a sentence of five years — to report the fact that this trial was taking place. I mean, it's incredible. But, you know, we are in these kinds of situations.

The barrister, by the way, I should say, was acquitted. So he won the case. The point is, all of these things are manifestations of increasing insecurity and nervousness on the part of the political system — talking about banning the AfD, having it investigated by the security services. All of that sort of thing is a sign of a political system that can't bring itself to change its policies, won't adapt to the coming change, and is pushing back in the only way that it feels it still can, by using these repressive and administrative tools. Now, again, I have to say this: when we get into any kind of situation of that kind, you are looking at a potential crisis. I mean, it's clearly an indicator of a major legitimacy crisis when you're talking about banning your most popular party and investigating it in this kind of way.

And a legitimacy crisis for which we have no real, you know, compass to take us through. Now, you're absolutely right. And this is about Germany, by the way. And this is a fundamental difference between Germany and Britain, because in Germany, they're going against the grain of their recent history, which is to seek a peaceful, stable Europe, a stable relationship with Russia, close economic contacts with Russia, Ostpolitik and all of this — politics that go back to the 1960s. In Britain, it is the other way around. It is almost a surfeit of policy, because here, always, the founding myth of British foreign policy is Churchill in 1940. And that's always what people talk about, misunderstand profoundly, by the way, and want to revert to. But the effect is the same.

And you have a legitimacy crisis in Britain. You have a legitimacy crisis in Germany. It's going to gradually expand across Europe. To be absolutely clear, it's not something I want to see or feel comfortable about at all. I don't want to see disorderly, chaotic change. I want to see an orderly change of policies as the system adapts to circumstances and is sensitive to movements in opinion, which is the kind of political system that I grew up with. But it's a reflection of the very brittle system that we have today, which has become very inflexible and very incapable of adapting, and which is now in this crisis. And I don't myself know exactly how things are going to play out. But I will say this: in Germany, as in Britain, it is unsustainable.

## **#Glenn**

I also prefer slower, incremental changes, but that's the problem when one holds back, no longer able to reform. And also, when that legitimacy drops and the opposition emerges and they're held back or even attacked, the problems aren't solved. It's just that the pressure builds up, and you're going to ensure that once the changes come, they will be more disorderly and disruptive. But, of course, when you speak of Germany and Britain, you could put France in the same category. Macron will hold on to power almost irrespective of how people vote — well, to a certain extent.

And he also used, of course, lawfare against the opposition, Le Pen. But what do you see happening in the more medium- to small-sized European countries? Because we did see now that they were able to essentially cancel the election results in Romania, but this seems to be falling apart. They had a new election in Bulgaria. Hungary, perhaps getting rid of Orbán, was celebrated a bit too prematurely because it doesn't look like the changes will be that profound. And of course, Slovakia is still holding the line. So it's not as if it's just the larger countries in the EU.

## **#Alexander Mercouris**

Yes, the smaller countries are still showing more political agency and vitality, probably because they're relatively small. They don't have the elaborate security states that the bigger countries do, and they're less invested in the system than the bigger states are. In a smaller country, it's easier for people to organize because it's less challenging to organize in a small country than in a big one, where you need to organize on a much, much bigger scale.

The problem is that the small countries can only do so much in order for there to be a change in overall direction. The bigger countries in Europe have to be involved. Germany, France, Italy, Spain, Britain — they are the countries that ultimately decide the direction of European policy, not Slovakia or Poland or Croatia or Slovenia or Hungary or Bulgaria or those sorts of places. So the small countries are important because they do provide a counter, and they provide scope for dialogue and activism. But we have to look for change in the big countries before change will happen.

## **#Glenn**

Well, as you said, a lot of the foreign policy obsession is, of course, with Russia, and this further creates problems for the economies of Europe. But there seems to be some change in rhetoric — not something that's gained significant momentum, but... after four years now, more than four years of essentially arguing that weapons are the path to peace and boycotting diplomacy, which seems to be part of this wider strategy of fighting to the last Ukrainian, we now see that there's some talk about perhaps there's a need to — you know, very radical in the EU and controversial — but to speak to the other side, diplomacy.

And again, given that they all more or less agreed not to do any diplomacy and criminalized it, it's perhaps a bit difficult to walk all of this back. But the Finnish president, Stubb, he made this point that it's time to talk to Russia — at least that's what's reported in the Washington Post. I'm not sure if that's suggesting that he should be the one leading the talks with the EU. But do you see this going anywhere, or is this discussing who's going to talk? What can we talk about? You know, who should represent us?

## **#Alexander Mercouris**

This is where it becomes so particularly frustrating because, yes, events are now beginning to press on them. They are aware of a deteriorating economic situation in their societies. They are aware that their people are becoming restive. They are nervous and insecure about their own control. I sometimes do wonder how much they really understand about the situation in Ukraine and about the direction of the war. I sometimes get the sense that they are completely detached from reality about it, but maybe some of them understand. I have some glimmers of understanding that the war isn't going well and that the much-longed-for and desired victory over Russia isn't going to happen.

But the problem is, even when events force them towards the logical conclusion that diplomacy with the Russians is essential, you get the sense that their heart isn't in it and they don't really have an enormous amount of conviction behind it, because they've been talking about this now for several months. And it really got underway in December, around the time when there were the arguments over the loan to Ukraine. But we're now in May. They haven't yet agreed even on the person who's going to lead the negotiations with the Russians. I mean, they are no further advanced on that at all. They've not really come up with proposals that they can talk with the Russians about or even go to Moscow and share ideas.

I mean, a point that you make many times in many of your writings: they show no real interest in listening to what the Russians have to say. We had this disastrous episode when Macron sent two of his people to Moscow, and the Russians found that they were being lectured all over again and were hearing the same talking points that they always hear. And the Russians said, well, what's the point of all of this? You know, this isn't a negotiation; it's just a one-way dialogue. It's a dialogue of the deaf, basically. So they don't seem to be able, even if they've intellectually understood, or some of them have understood, the inevitability of talking to the Russians.

They're not yet doing the things that they need to do in order to move forward with that, with any prospect of success. They've not even defined realistically what success is, what their objective in this conflict is at all anymore. Is it to defeat Russia? How? How do you defeat Russia now? Is it to fight the Russians to a standstill? What does that even mean? Is it to try to adapt to the possibility of a Russian victory, whatever that is? But again, they've not had a discussion about that. So given that there is really fundamental agreement about nothing, it's very difficult to see these negotiations, these proposed negotiations, moving forward at all.

**#Alexander Mercouris**

Yes, it is.

**#Alexander Mercouris**

A sign of reality breaking through, that they talk about talking to the Russians. But before anything actually concrete happens, they have to accept that just talking to the Russians by itself isn't enough. They have to decide what they're going to talk about and who is going to represent them.

## **#Glenn**

Yeah, no, it's strange to watch because it's always the same logic — the Europeans arguing that they need a seat at the table. It's not fair that this is being discussed by the Americans and the Russians over the heads of the Europeans. So they want a seat at the table, but nobody wants to talk to Russia. And the ones who say, well, perhaps, you know, people like Kaja Kallas, you know, she should lead the talks, but... that seems like the effort is simply to make sure it doesn't move forward. I mean, this is the same Kaja Kallas who said there's no point in talking to Putin. And of course, Russia should be broken up into many smaller countries because they're also easier to manage.

So I don't see the genuine diplomacy coming forth. And even Mertz, he seems to go on Twitter daily now, or at least quite often. Every time there's a strike by Russia against Ukraine, the argument, not just from him but from other EU leaders as well, is, well, look what the Russians did. They attacked Ukraine in a big attack. That proves they're not interested in a negotiated settlement. But these are the same people who refuse to even pick up the phone and talk to the other side. So when they say negotiations, they seem to believe it's capitulation. That is, if Russia wants peace, it should stop all attacks and essentially give up its leverage.

But this doesn't make any sense when the Europeans only want a ceasefire to, I guess, end, regroup, and replenish Ukrainian arms. Sometimes I think about 2022, because when this big consensus came that we should all boycott diplomacy, Macron was the last one to fall in line. He tried for a bit afterwards to keep the dialogue with the Russians. And I remember they reported in the news then as well that Macron made the statement that why it might be important to talk to Russia, that the future of Europe should not be decided in Washington or Moscow. So we have to be engaged. And I thought that made a lot of sense. But of course, he fell in line like everyone else. And now he doesn't want to talk to the Russians either. It's incredible to watch.

## **#Alexander Mercouris**

It is incredible to watch. And it is... we come back to what we were talking about with the domestic crisis. The domestic crisis, these legitimacy crises that we see across Europe, are to a great extent a product of this kind of mindset. You don't adapt to realities. You don't adapt to the economic realities, the foreign policy realities, the social changes that are taking place within your society. You are right. You insist that your values must prevail. And they always talk about values and retreat into

that language, which again precludes any real way out of the sort of trap they put themselves into. And, well, they, you know, they comfort themselves from time to time. They say the war isn't going so well for the Russians. Things are a bit slower now.

That means that they're at a standstill. They hide behind this wishful thinking because they can't bring themselves to break with the line that they all chose to take, including Macron eventually, in 2022. 2022 is going to be, when people look back on it, it's going to be seen as an extraordinary year. It's going to be seen as a year when the first step towards disaster was taken. I mean, we in the West could have adapted to the changes, the results of what happened in the war and the economic changes. But our refusal to do so has, well, basically doomed us to a major crisis, which is inevitably coming. And the Americans, for their part, are becoming exasperated and frustrated and are now showing signs of walking away. And the Russians look like they've been increasingly antagonized.

## **#Glenn**

I see the media now across Europe being filled with similar headlines. They're going back to the idea that Ukraine is winning, suggesting that it turned the tide already. And, you know, Putin is shivering in his boots. And, of course, Putin is sick again and dying. These kinds of news stories come up every now and then when there's a need to assure the public that, you know, we can actually win in Ukraine. All the corruption problems in Ukraine are being spun in parts of Europe now as, well, look, it means that people are held accountable.

Democracy is working, which is, again, a hope strategy in terms of if you can just socially construct the world as you wish it was, then perhaps, just perhaps, it will come true. But a lot of this mass hysteria in Europe does appear to derive a bit from where Europe has lost its place in the world. It's no longer the junior partner of the US. They don't collectively, the political West anymore, have the same cohesion that formed the unipolar or liberal hegemony. And indeed, you have this economic decline, which also fuels the desperation. So if one looks at this, how do you see this long-term stagnation? What are the main, I guess, structural causes behind it?

## **#Alexander Mercouris**

And can I just say, all that you say is not only true, but it is particularly true of Britain because, of course, Britain exited the Second World War as still a global power, a great power, as an important ally of the United States, a country with very, very powerful armed forces, the world's third biggest industrial base. And the entire operative assumption in Britain is that we are a great power still, despite the fact that we've fallen back from all of these positions. So, there is, this is...

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Privately, of course, widely understood. So there is this idea that, you know, we are losing our position. We are now in extreme descent. And somehow that must mean that we must cling even more tightly to that element of our position as a great power, which we still have, which is somehow the struggle with Russia. Where does this leave Europe? In a very big, very difficult, very bad situation overall. Europe has become very accustomed, not just in the 20th century, in the 19th century, but basically for hundreds of years, to being the cockpit of humanity, the major place where human progress takes place, where living standards are highest, where economic change is most dynamic, where science and technology are promoted most vigorously, where philosophical thought and culture and art are at their most vital.

And now what we are facing is the real possibility that we might become a backwater. And that is something that is very, very alarming and very disturbing, not just for European elites, but I suspect deep down for much of the wider European population, which is probably starting to sense this, which also explains some of this legitimacy issue. Now, it doesn't have to be that way. One of the reasons why Europe became so important in the first place was precisely because it was flexible, precisely because it did diplomacy, precisely because it had objective, or if not objective, at least pragmatic approaches to economic policy. It's the fact that all of that has fallen away, the mindset that we've just been talking about, which is threatening Europe with marginalisation.

Whether we have the will and the imagination and the vitality left in Europe to turn it around is going to be a very, very big question. But in order to turn it around, we have to understand one absolutely vital truth, which is that in order to turn it around, we have to come to some kind of understanding with the Russians. I mean, the Russians are part of Europe. They're a major part of Europe. They made a major contribution to European culture. But even putting that aside, we simply cannot afford the drain of an unending confrontation with them. It's sapping our energy and it is destabilizing our societies. Now, that, given how some people in Europe feel about Russia, is going to be a very difficult thing for them to understand.

## **#Glenn**

This is the problem, though. There doesn't seem to be any imagination or willingness to essentially try to overcome this conflict, this obsession with having to defeat the Russians. It's quite extreme, because I've asked people as well, what exactly does this mean? How do you defeat the world's largest nuclear power that considers itself to be in a fight for its existence? This is a very dangerous thing to do. But what is the possible way, though, for Europe to break out of this? You said that the British might fear that they will go from being the center of the world, if you will, in economic activity, to suddenly becoming a backwater country.

And there's this interesting German strategy paper that came out in 2010. It warned, essentially, you know, we have to do something to make sure that we won't simply become, you know, the western peninsula of the Eurasian continent. And I actually thought that was a nice framing. I actually stole

that phrase and made a title out of it in my book, where I called it \*Europe as the Western Peninsula of Greater Eurasia\*. But I was kind of making the point that this would be a solution for the Europeans, because if you have a multipolar world emerging, the U.S. is not the only power left. Europe is no longer the center.

It could thrive if it would diversify its economic ties, that is, work with everyone, but also recognize the opposite choice for the Europeans, which is they can also, when they use their clients, bet everything, put all their eggs in the American basket, even though they don't want to be in Europe anymore, and hope that they can revive unipolarity and America will regain an interest in Europe. But that would just ensure their destruction. It just feels to me that we've gone with the second option here. But do you think there's any— is it too late? My last question, is it too late for Europe to make some fundamental changes to Europe? Because it's been decades of ignoring technological sovereignty, political autonomy. You know, we wasted 35 years after the Cold War, when we could have made peace with the Russians instead of building the new bloc politics. I mean, so many years have been wasted here. So do you see any...

## **#Alexander Mercouris**

I guess, a possibility of reversing this, or are we all doomed? Well, the first thing to say is that I must read your book because it sounds extremely prescient, if I may say so. It describes exactly the fork in the road where we took the wrong fork, we took the wrong road. So we do still have time. We remain a very rich continent. We are overall very educated. We have all of the enormous legacy of cultural and intellectual wealth. But we are living on borrowed time, and it would be much better if we'd made the right decisions 15 years ago.

And it is tragic, and in some way baffling, that we didn't. I think this is actually one of the great questions that need to be asked: why exactly did we decide to go down what was already the wrong direction? You know, it was possible to see that it would be the wrong direction, because, as you absolutely correctly say, becoming the western end of Eurasia is not actually a bad outcome at all. I mean, Eurasia is— we're not going to have a situation where Russia is going to remain indefinitely poor and, you know, whatever, or that China is going to remain indefinitely a third— what used to be called a third world country. These are dynamic places. Other parts of Eurasia are dynamic as well.

Involving ourselves in these things and coming together to them with what we have is a way not just of energizing them but energizing us and shaping the future, if you like, in our own interests. But of course, we haven't done that. And finding a way back is going to be much more difficult now than it was 15 years ago, because we've lost so much goodwill in Russia. Putin gave a press conference on Saturday after the victory parade, and I pointed out how bitter about Europe he seems to feel. And Putin was almost the most Europeanist figure within the Kremlin, basically. I

mean, the others are already now looking beyond Europe. They're thinking more about China. They're thinking more about India. They're thinking more about those things. And the entire conversation in Russia has been changing too.

And for Europe, getting it sorted out with Russia is essential because it is Russia that is the entry point for Europe into Eurasia. It's the Russians who control the gate, the gateway. They can open the door, or they can shut the door. So we absolutely do need to sort things out with the Russians. If we do sort these things out with the Russians, then things can start to turn around and things can begin to change. And over time, change would become sustained and we would notice visibly the difference. But the longer we leave it, the more difficult it becomes. And though I don't think we are at that point yet, there will come a point when it is the point of no return. And we become so impoverished, so marginalized, that it simply becomes uninteresting for others to involve themselves with us anymore.

## **#Glenn**

This reluctance to adjust to reality, I think this is what's so exhausting to watch, so suffocating. There's a slogan of "always more Europe." Everyone has to fall in line. For me, the most remarkable display of this recently was when the Slovakian prime minister went to Moscow for the 9th of May parade, and afterwards the German chancellor threatened that he should be punished because he went to Moscow to celebrate the defeat of Nazi Germany. Another German chancellor will punish him. And I thought it's extraordinary because they don't have any solutions for how to fix relations with Russia, but they did the same to Orbán when he went to Moscow for diplomacy.

They decided to punish him. And I always think that what you mentioned before, the vitality we have to regain, some of it often lies in decentralization. I mean, the Greek city-states, they competed with different economic systems, forms of governance, and they experimented and copied what worked. You can say the same was done with the U.S. state system. Europe, with all its different states, also to a large extent advanced like this. But now this mass conformity, even around ridiculous narratives and ideas, is quite destructive. And, well, let's see if we can break out of it.

## **#Alexander Mercouris**

Anyways, any final thoughts before we... Well, I mean, I think we shouldn't give way to despair about this. I mean, there is time. And I do feel that we are actually close to a tipping point. We have a crisis in Britain. We have a crisis in Germany. There are going to be new elections in France next year. So it may be that change is going to happen, and happen faster than we expect. But it must nonetheless be said that we are now on borrowed time. We don't have a huge amount of time to maneuver. Unless we adapt to basically a post-American world, then it won't just be a post-American world. It will be a post-Western world, and one in which we are just a small region that has been left behind and is no longer the great driver that we are all so accustomed to, you know, we must be.

## **#Glenn**

Well, that cautious optimism is usually better than how I usually end this podcast, so I'll take it. And thank you very much.

## **#Alexander Mercouris**

Thank you. Thank you, Glenn Diesen.