

Steve Jermy: Warning! NATO Can't Win a War with Russia

Royal Navy Commodore Steve Jermy commanded warships in the 5th Destroyer Squadron and Britain's Fleet Air Arm. He served in the Falklands War and in the Adriatic for the Bosnian and Kosovo campaigns. Then retired after an operational tour, in 2007, as Strategy Director in the British Embassy in Afghanistan. He is the author of the book: "Strategy for Action: Using Force Wisely in the 21st Century". Article discussed: <https://responsiblestatecraft.org/nato-war-with-russia/> Steve Jermy Substack: <https://stevejermy.substack.com/> Follow Prof. Glenn Diesen: Substack: <https://glennDiesen.substack.com/> X/Twitter: https://x.com/Glenn_Diesen Patreon: <https://www.patreon.com/glennDiesen> Support the research by Prof. Glenn Diesen: PayPal: <https://www.paypal.com/paypalme/glennDiesen> Buy me a Coffee: buymeacoffee.com/gdieseng Go Fund Me: <https://gofund.me/09ea012f> Books by Prof. Glenn Diesen: <https://www.amazon.com/stores/author/B09FPQ4MDL>

#Glenn

Welcome back to the program. We are joined today by retired Royal Navy Commodore Steve Jermy, who commanded warships in the 5th Destroyer Squadron and Britain's Fleet Air Arm. He also held many positions, such as Strategy Director at the British Embassy in Afghanistan, and he recently opened his own Substack. I've left a link in the description, so make sure to follow it and read. So thank you. It's been a few months since you were on the program.

#Steve Jermy

Good to be back, Glenn, but also good for us to have met in person in Tbilisi last month with so many colleagues from the alternative media. Great fun to meet in person.

#Glenn

Yeah, no, I was saying before we started recording, one gets used to all these digital conferences and interviews. It's very different to meet in person. So, yeah, as I said, great to see you again. I did want to talk to you today, though, about this article you recently published, which I'll also put in the description, which is about NATO heading towards war with Russia, where the title is *The Coming War with Russia.* So yes, the premise essentially is that what we're seeing now is European leaders making a lot of comments about preparing for war with Russia, even setting dates, stating the intent. They're also developing the capabilities, and again, if you're sitting in Moscow, you're doing a

threat assessment — you look at the intentions and capabilities, and a clear threat begins to emerge. And so I was wondering if you can unpack your argument, because it doesn't really seem as if the Europeans are ready for a war with Russia.

#Steve Jermy

No, I don't think they are, Glenn. I think the reason I wrote the article is because I don't think they have really thought through the potential costs and consequences of such a war. I think what they're essentially thinking is that Russia will sit quietly as they prepare for war, and then in 2030 they'll be ready to go. But before that, they can fire or provide as many missiles, cruise missiles, and drones to attack into Russia with no reaction from Russia. And both of those things go completely against what's being said and heard in Russia. And indeed, even Putin recently said to, I think it was to new graduates of the police and armed forces and things like that, that the Europeans were preparing for a war and that Russia would prepare as well.

I think what the Europeans fundamentally don't seem to understand, or I should say our European elites, Glenn, the leaders, don't seem to understand, is that as far as Russia is concerned, this is a defensive war. They are in a defensive posture, and everything that they are doing is to protect themselves from what they see as NATO expansion and getting closer and closer to the borders, about which they've argued for years and years and years. So it shouldn't be a surprise to us. But the Europeans seem to see it as something of a colonial ambition. I mean, I can't think why Russia would want to take over Europe.

But more fundamentally, what the European leaders also haven't done is actually think through what that war would be like. And as I say in the article, the first thing is that there's no guarantee—indeed, quite the opposite—that the Russians would wait until 2030. I think it's much more likely that they would respond early. Indeed, I have a strong suspicion, although I can't prove it, that one of the reasons the Russians went into the Donbass in 2022 was that the general staff had argued that the longer they left it, the more damaging it would be, because the greater the forces they would have to face.

So I suspect that was part of Putin's calculation. And I think the same calculation would transpire now. The thing that's most striking, of course, is that the E3—that's Germany, Britain, and France—are speaking loudly about the provision of weapons to strike deep into Russia, and the idea that the Russians are going to sit back and just let that happen is clearly a guess that the Russians won't respond. And yet the Russians have said explicitly that actually they have not taken off the table—which means that it's on the table—responses that actually target certain European facilities.

And the premise that I had in the article was that actually this war starts sooner than the Europeans planned because the Russians decide that, in the face of European bellicosity, they need to act now to deter future attacks against them. And so the way that I started the article, Glenn, was to suggest that actually Russia does indeed strike and decides to strike the production facilities in Europe, in

particular in Germany, in France, and in Britain—of the places where the drones and the cruise missiles are being developed to actually then send to Ukraine to attack Russia. And my next guess, and it is only a guess, Glenn, I should say, it's a scenario. It's not a forecast.

But the next guess is that the Europeans invoke Article 5. They then realize that Article 5 doesn't commit people to collective action; it commits them to do whatever they think is best. And I suspect that some nations will not want to go to war with Russia. So they will provide us with lots of warm words but no monetary support. And I think that's particularly likely to be the case, I suspect, for the United States—not least of all because actually they're now, you know, just suffering from a defeat in Ukraine and with depleted stocks. So I suspect that although they may have pivoted at the G7 towards supporting efforts against Russia, they'll now look at this and say, you know, I'm not so sure this is a good idea.

I'm not so sure that extending Russia is a good idea, because it now clearly carries the risk of a land war on the European continent. And the last thing that Americans will want to do is send American soldiers to fight and die in Europe against Russia. So I suspect that they too will stand back, and suddenly the E3 will find that they're on their own. But my next guess, and it is a guess, is that the E3 then decide to respond nevertheless with air attacks against Russia and find that they suffer from exactly the same problems that the Americans have found in their attacks against Iran, which is that there are effective, very effective air defense systems in place, which are well-practiced—the S-400 and S-500 systems.

And that, as well as actually taking down most of the offensive missiles, they also exact a heavy toll on our aircraft. And that, in parallel, because the Russians see that we're attacking them, they then decide to actually take the gloves off and go after our energy infrastructure in exactly the same way that they did in Ukraine. And, quick as a flash, on the back end of the consequences of our self-defeating sanctions on Russia, which have closed off our oil and gas supplies from Russia, and now under the pressure of the Strait of Hormuz reductions in supplies, we suddenly find that Europe is in an energy crisis, which quickly becomes an economic crisis. And so I suspect that the only thing we'll be able to do at that stage is sue for peace, because there are no other offensive options which would work.

So that's the nub of the argument, Glenn. And as I say, it is a scenario rather than a forecast. But the purpose of the scenario is to make people realize what the costs and consequences of war could be with Russia. Because I think that there's lots of talk in the West, particularly in the European capitals—in London, in Berlin, and in Paris—about being ready for war. But very few people have thought it through. And had this been thought through and broadcast to the European people, I think people would be much more worried than they currently are. But again, I'd be curious about your view, Glenn, on whether or not European people would be ready for a war with Russia along the lines that I've sketched out.

#Glenn

Well, that's a good question. I'm glad you compared it to Iran because I think part of the problem we have now in the unipolar moment—that is, the liberal hegemon over the past 30 years—is that war took on a very different meaning. That is, wars are something fought in other places. It's not on our own soil. It's something you see on the TV screens and, you know, you can complain about perhaps some collateral damage. But it's not the war that, you know, the generations before us experienced. And I think also the wars over the past 30 years, we've had complete—well, I mean, NATO had complete and total escalation control. That is, we can decide when the war begins. For example, you saw the war against Iraq—the US can decide, position all its troops surrounding Iraq, essentially shape the battlefield exactly the way they want it, because they know Iraq wouldn't dare to attack them before they choose to start the war.

So the Americans decide when to start the war. They decide essentially what is allowed, which parts should be part of this war. They isolate the target to make sure the war doesn't spread uncontrollably. And you can also see that if they want to end it, they decide when it ends as well. I think, like you compared it to Iran, this kind of shows that we're entering a very new era. That is, when the war began, especially in February, the Americans were saying, well, they're not supposed to strike our bases in the region—that wasn't part of the rules. Also, you can't attack the allied states or punish them by striking airports or energy facilities.

Also, you can't strike or close down the Strait of Hormuz, and it's assumed now that when the war is over, you have to reopen it, as if they get to decide. And again, I think this is the problem—this illusion of escalation control. I've said it many times. I think this is what's going to put us into war, because of the assumption that one can control the situation. And this is another thing: I think once those missiles from the European states begin to enter into Russia—and Russia actually decides to retaliate with conventional weapons, at first at least—at that point, no one will have any escalation control anymore. It's going to spin out of control immediately. But that's also why I want to ask you, how do you see this war being fought? Because it seems as if the Russians have been fairly restrained.

They've been very systematic. They have this gradual fighting along the front lines where they try to bleed out the adversary. But I often get the impression that this is the assumption the European leaders had when they joined the war with Russia. We will send our troops and our fighters into Ukraine, and this will be our battlefield. So the war will still be in Ukraine and in Russia. But again, we were not going to have war on our territory. This is kind of the assumption. I just don't think people understand what this war would actually look like. Again, I think the Russians would treat the Ukrainians much better than they would, especially the Western Europeans, if we get more involved in this war. But how do you see the war being fought, I guess?

#Steve Jermy

I think it's a really good question. I mean, I think you're right. I think there's a general assumption that the war could be contained in Ukraine. And I think that's a very dangerous assumption because I don't believe it. I mean, I think that I introduced the article by talking about a scholar who you and I know, General Karl von Clausewitz, who is war's greatest philosopher, and what he says is that the most important judgment that a statesman and a military man must make is the nature of the war. And I think that the Europeans have—and indeed the Americans have—completely misunderstood. I'm sure some do, but it's our leaders, and that's who matter, who misunderstood the nature of this war. They don't understand that for Russia, this is viewed as existential.

I mean, it's only recently that Josep Borrell said that we must seek to break up Russia. So what are the Russians to think if the European foreign policy chief says that we must break up Russia? So as far as Russia is concerned, this is existential, which means that Russia is fighting, as far as it's concerned, for its survival. And, you know, this probably extends back as far as the RAND article, Glenn, in 2018, I think, you know, "Extending Russia," which talked about a war or certainly this sort of process. But the way the war will be fought, I think, would be that the Russians would not seek any offensive operations other than those that they're committing in or undertaking in Ukraine. I think they would continue to seek to actually secure those parts of Ukraine.

But otherwise, they would sit back behind their lines, knowing that all they have to do, pretty much like the Iranians did, is to defeat any attacks. And if you think about it, that's pretty much what they did in the first year of the war when they did a strategic withdrawal in what I think is phase two of their strategy. They went and then were sitting behind the Surovikin Line whilst they developed and industrialized—or mobilized, I should say—because they realized that they had to conduct a war. And behind that line, they then conducted what I call a traditional defense, which is that actually whatever the Ukrainians threw at them, they destroyed. And they did destroy. They destroyed not one, but two army groups. So I suspect that this will not be a question of Russian tanks rolling westward because there's no desire for them to do so.

Rather, it's a question of the Russians seeking to defend themselves. I'm sure that there will be a reinforced Surovikin Line, which runs from the Black Sea all the way up to the border with Norway and Finland. So again, it's a defensive war. And the way that they would prosecute it is the same way that the Iranians have prosecuted their war against the US and Israel. And I think what we will quickly find is the same thing that the Americans have found, which is that land bases are vulnerable. And we know that the Americans have actually withdrawn from the Gulf, largely speaking, because they can't defend their land bases. And we in Europe in particular have very, very limited defense against ballistic missiles and no defense whatsoever against hypersonic missiles.

So we are essentially naked. And the war can be prosecuted, if you like, in that respect, in the way that Russia chooses to do so. Although I talked in the article about a sort of ramping up, I suspect that the Russians might be a little bit more—they might escalate in a way that suits them. So they may not go to destroy all of our energy infrastructure as a response to attacks on Russia, offensive

air attacks by the West, but rather actually do it in an escalated way, and all the time saying to us that if you keep going, this is what we will do, and we can take out the whole of your energy infrastructure. And I can tell you, having worked in the energy industry for the last 15 years, Europe won't survive that.

Europe won't survive a destruction of its energy infrastructure because no industrial nation can. We're already seeing it on a small scale in Germany, but the consequences would be profound. I talked in the article as well about the possibility of the Russians announcing a blockade, which they're quite capable of doing because we don't have the anti-submarine warfare forces available to defend against Russian submarines at the moment. So even the threat of a blockade would probably turn the shipping companies off and the insurance companies off from delivering fuels, oil, and refined products to our nations.

I mean, the only two countries which would be not sort of immune from this, but more immune than others, are your country and mine—yours in particular, because Norway is independent for oil and gas, and to a lesser extent the UK, because we get about 47 or 48% of our oil and gas from the North Sea. But other than that, you know, imagine what it's like when the lorries stop running, when the tractors, which rely critically on diesel, stop farming, when the fishing vessels, which rely critically on diesel, stop fishing. You know, you can see it doesn't take long for us to get into a perilous economic situation. And at that stage, I would expect us to sue for peace. I would expect as well the Americans to be doing the very best they can to talk to both sides and bring this to a peace.

But even after the peace is declared, Glenn, if the war plays out in this way, then I think the consequences for Europe will be profound. Again, it depends how long it goes on. I mean, the only open question, Glenn, and it's a really, really important open question, is what the British and the French do, both with nuclear deterrents. And that's a sort of binary decision, isn't it? Because actually, either the British or the French, one or the other or both, can use those deterrents, but that's suicidal. That's the end of Britain, and it's the end of France, and probably the end of a lot of Europe. So is Prime Minister Burnham or President Macron going to take suicidal action?

It's not beyond comprehension, Glenn, because we've seen such irrational actions from the Europeans so far. But it's a very, very scary thing. More likely, though, I would think, is that they will sue for peace, but still then have to pick up the consequences of the war after that peace happens. Now, those consequences could well play out over years, Glenn. So it's a long answer to your question. But I think the war, I would guess, if it doesn't escalate to a nuclear situation, would be fairly quick because the Europeans are unable to defend themselves against attacks on their military facilities on the European mainland. And that's where I would expect Russia's focus to be—the military facilities, industrial facilities that support the military, and the energy facilities, Glenn.

#Glenn

I think it's important what you said, though, that earlier you made the point that for the Russians, this is a defensive war. They've been warning since the 90s: you can't simply redivide the continent and then gradually remove those dividing lines and move the NATO military infrastructure closer and closer to our borders. The problem is, within the acceptable analysis we have in Europe, you're not allowed to say this—that the Russians see this as a defensive war—because then it's justifying all this nonsense. But I think this is the problem, because in Europe, when we all had to commit to the narrative, "Oh, this was unprovoked, it came out of nowhere," well, then you have to argue, well, why did the Russians decide to go to war? And the only answer then is, you know, imperialism—they just want territory.

And I think this also shapes how we will—what we expect from a war with Russia, because if we believe that this is just Russia waking up one day wanting new territory, then a war with Russia means this will be the objective. The Russians, for some reason, really want to rule over Poland or Germany, you know—yeah, nonsense. But this is essentially what the Europeans will then imagine a war being, which is why the Dutch did exercises for how they could set up POW camps for Russian soldiers they would capture in Europe. And I was a bit amazed, because why would the Russians enter Europe? I mean, why would they? This is not an imperial war for territory. What the Russians want is to restore their deterrence—that is, for the Europeans to back off, stop launching drones and missiles into Russia, stop doing it through Ukraine.

It doesn't matter. This is the war. So the purpose of the Russian war then would be that it needs to restore its deterrence, and also it would strike Europe before Europe is ready to strike Russia again. But none of this requires any Russian boots on the ground in any EU country. All it means is bombing out all the critical infrastructure across the European continent, creating as much pain as possible, and, of course, the military-industrial facilities, and that's it. But this should be obvious—but it's only obvious if you recognize that the Russians see this as an existential threat. We can't even plan for a proper war because we don't actually allow the analysis. Sorry, you were going to say something.

#Steve Jermy

No, and I completely agree, Glenn. I think this is why I come back to the quote of the class, which I'll read in a bit, Glenn. But I think that understanding the nature of war is, as the classic said, the most supreme judgment that a statesman or a military man can make. And I think what it also points to is a failure of strategic thinking. I often quote General André Beaufre, a French general who wrote a book in 1956 called—I can't remember. It's about strategy anyway, and I can send the details to you, Glenn.

But he said, in war, the loser deserved—I'll paraphrase—in war, the loser deserved to lose because his defeat will be a consequence of failures of thinking either before or during the war. And, you know, we've got a very good track record in the West in particular, and Europe especially, of failures

of thinking. We've got Afghanistan, Iraq, Libya, Syria, now Ukraine and Iran. You know, all, I would say, defeats because of failures of thinking before the war. I mean, if we had done the thinking properly, I think it's likely that, with one possible exception, we would have entered none of those wars because we would have realized that they were unwinnable.

But I think at the moment, though, you have—and I've said this before as well, Glenn—that you have the Europeans in particular fighting or supporting Ukraine according to a political narrative that they've constructed for themselves, whereas the Russians are fighting the war according to a military strategy. And surprise, surprise, the Russians are winning. And I think at the moment, the political narrative is that these strikes into Russia are working, that Russia is now weak, that the Russian economy is failing. There's no evidence for that, but that's what the political narrative is.

And so you get into this circular cult thinking, and I can best describe it by the way they seem to be operating. The leaders of Britain, France, Germany, the EU, and NATO are, to a lesser extent, I think, the White House. I think Trump can go either way, and I suspect Vance will be thinking along the lines of you and I, and Hegseth and Rubio, along the lines of "let's reinforce Europe and support this war." But actually, those who are thinking strategically—and I mean properly strategically—will surely come to the same conclusions as us, because they're obvious. They're strategically obvious. I think the open question is how it now plays out, and I think it will play out according to three timelines. I think the first timeline is how quickly the E3 weapons will be provided to Ukraine.

Because these weapons are not insignificant. And I'm talking about British weapons with warheads of 250 kilograms. And that's a significant warhead. And that's the sort of warhead which I suspect the Russians will be prepared to actually take action to prevent from being fired into Russia. I think the second question is, how long is it before the White House realizes that, notwithstanding what Trump's been told in the G7, the Russians aren't losing and the Russian economy isn't failing, and that any effort he puts into supporting this war is likely to lead to another defeat. I suspect that will make him want to step back, especially as he's running into the midterms on the back of a first defeat.

And the last thing, I think, will be for Putin, and Putin will be asking the question. He can see, no doubt, that because of the economic consequences of the self-defeating sanctions that the EU has placed on Russia, and now the accelerating problems in our energy networks because of the Straits of Hormuz, how long is it before the Europeans tip into a significant, severe recession? And at that stage, how long is it before they actually say, we can't afford this war, so we better find a way out of this? That's an open question. But I think somewhere within those three timelines, we'll find there is the answer to how the war will play out strategically, Glenn. I'm not sure if I've answered your question, but I'd be curious about what you think also about the timelines and how much it could play out.

#Glenn

Well, it's hard to imagine how this will play out. And again, in many areas you can look at the different variables and try to make some predictions. But with how this war would work, it would be very difficult because it would spiral out of control so quickly, I think. But no, if you look at the capabilities, then I don't think the Europeans would do very well at all. And I'm also suspecting that the Russians, while they do not have the same rhetoric of threatening dates of war with Russia, announcing this in advance, I assume that they're making preparations now. So the Oreshnik, for example, I assume that this is already in mass production.

And this isn't necessarily aimed primarily at the Ukrainians. I think this is for the possibility of a war with NATO. And they've seen this over the past four-plus years. This is gradual incrementalism, escalation from NATO, where they just do longer-range missiles, more powerful ones. And at some point, they know what's going to happen. So I think they're already preparing for this. So no, I don't think we're ready for war at all. But I was curious, though, about what the U.S. involvement would be. I think many assume that if there's a fight, then the Americans would rush back in and go back to the glory days of the Cold War. We would be joined at the hips again.

But I suspect that the Europeans, you know, we're no longer the center of the world. And, you know, as I say, if you don't have a seat at the table, you might be on the menu. And I think this might be the case. If a war breaks out, what would the Americans do? I keep thinking that perhaps they would treat the Europeans like we've treated the Ukrainians. That is, yes, you go fight the Russians. You know, good boys, they continue to do it. We'll send you the weapons. That's how we stand by you and support you. And, you know, you will have essentially your proxies bleeding themselves white, weakening an adversary. And I think the Europeans will become the new Ukrainians.

But yeah, this time, of course, the Americans might even be more apprehensive because this can very quickly spiral into a nuclear exchange. I mean, just to add, I think one of the most dangerous things of all is we're talking about a war with Russia. You know, you usually would have a strategy then—okay, what does victory look like? How is it achieved? We have none of this. At least the first question: what does victory look like? If you're fighting the world's largest nuclear power, which considers itself to be in a fight for its existence, what does defeating it entail? What exactly do you want to achieve here? I mean, it's quite wild that this is not even a topic for discussion. It's just this emotional sloganeering.

#Steve Jermy

I think this is a strategy, a subject close to my heart. I'm sort of getting my second edition of **Strategy for Action** prepared. But actually, as you say, there is no evidence anywhere of any strategic thinking. What are the objectives? At the moment, I would think that the implicit objectives, although they're not stated, of the actions that the Europeans are taking with escalation through more weapons to Ukraine and supported by the United States—the implicit objective is to bring the Russians back to the negotiating table. But actually, the Russians have already now made

clear that Alaska has failed and that all the other peace initiatives from which they were excluded were dead on arrival.

I think the Russians have concluded that they can only achieve their objectives in Ukraine, which is what they will continue to go on and do militarily. I thought it was interesting that Putin has actually talked about Novorossiya as well, which doesn't surprise me. It's something I've been speculating about for about a year—that that might be the Russians' ultimate objective. But I think with unclear objectives and no obvious route to achieve them, that stops us from getting into some escalatory situation. I can't think of a single strategy or any sort of plausible strategy that would allow us to achieve our objectives, whatever they are. You know, militarily, the Europeans don't have the power to achieve what they're seeking to achieve.

I think, coming back to the United States and what the United States would do, I think the United States, although initially there will be those who will be saying, let's support the Europeans, they will be very worried, I would think, about the risks of nuclear escalation. And they would be right to be worried as well. I mean, I don't think the Russians would be the first people to pull the trigger. The worry would be that France or Britain, one or the other, actually decides to do so. I think that's unlikely. Nevertheless, the consequences, were it to happen, would be profound. So I think that the American situation might be initially to, you know, sort of say, yes, we'll please now be the new Ukrainians.

We want you to fight Russia. But after a bit, when they see the destruction that's being wrought on the European economy and the breakdown of European society, I think they would have rapid second thoughts. I think a lot of people in the United States, possibly apart from neocons, would be horrified at seeing what was happening to Europe. So I would like to think that the Americans stand fast; the neocons would be pretty reluctant after a bit. I think one of the things that also strikes me, Glenn, is that when you think about scenarios like this, people often say, well, of course, the Russians wouldn't do this because we've passed all their red lines and they just ignore them.

I simply don't agree with that. I mean, they had two critical red lines, which have been said repeatedly to us for the past 20 years, which are that if NATO expands into Georgia and/or Ukraine, then they will respond. And both times, when there's been the threat of NATO expanding—first into Georgia, the Russians responded, and then into Ukraine, the Russians responded. So actually, I think, you know, on these red lines, don't for one moment think that the Russians wouldn't respond a third time, because I think they would. So I think we need to be cognizant of that. And it does, to me, bring up the alternative pathway, which is the issue of diplomacy.

I mean, it's clear to me that NATO, which I've said before, is not the omnipotent force, even with America on board, that so many people think. I mean, again, as I've said before, if NATO couldn't defeat the Taliban, why do we think it could defeat Russia? So to me, the bit of the jigsaw that's missing is diplomacy. Can we not get back to diplomacy? And I'm not saying it's going to be an easy diplomacy, but surely diplomacy. In light of these plausible risks to Europe and to Europeans, ought

the Europeans not to be the ones who are actually starting to think about talking to Russia as opposed to the United States? Is this not something that the E3 could do?

Is this not something that the European Union could do, difficult though it would be? I mean, there's no sense of this at the moment, but there should be a sense. And I think one of the key things that we should be doing is we, the people—because it's we, the people, who will be asked to fight this war and to bear its consequences—we should be having a national debate about this. Your point is that any debate is closed off because it's seen as sort of supporting Russia or being a Putin supporter. Whereas I see it as having a critical debate about something which is strategically, and has the potential to be strategically, existential to Europeans. We don't want to destroy European society.

So why can we not think of, or at least talk about, a plan B where we can start to talk to the Russians about what they want and start to talk about the possibility of an alternative strategic architecture in Europe? Again, it's not easy at the moment, but surely we should be having these conversations, Glenn. And surely we should be inviting, or at least asking, our leaders to actually talk about why it is that they won't have discussions with Russia, and why we, the people, are not being asked for our views on whether we are happy to go to war with Russia. Because I suspect the vast majority of the people in Europe won't be happy. But over to you, Glenn, I don't know what you think from your part of Europe.

#Glenn

I find this shocking as well, that they are taking us to war with Russia now. And again, no discussion, no debate, anything. And I think, yeah, this is... But let me just go back to what you said before about the escalation on the Russian side, that they don't uphold the red lines. I think perhaps Russia escalates in a different way than NATO. As I said before, NATO does these slow salami tactics, this incrementalism.

That is, okay, we're only going to do short-range missiles, only defensive. Okay, we're going to do long-range, but we're going to have limitations — you can't strike into Russian territory. And then, okay, we're going to slowly remove those restraints. And then you've seen this over four years, just gradually, you know, we went from F-16s, our World War Three on, you know, until advertising, "Hey, let's figure out how to take out the Russian air bases and attack their nuclear deterrent." I mean, this is how we escalate. And I think the Russians, some indications, they do it differently. You mentioned Georgia in 2008. Yeah, they warned against this.

But in 2014, when the Russians annexed Crimea as a response to the coup, in Putin's speech, he made an analogy that you can only push a spring so far back before it just jumps forward. And I think this is essentially how their escalation will be, because they did the same from 2014 to 2022. That's eight years when they were essentially saying, you know, implement the Minsk agreement, let's put an end to this, let's normalize relations. And they saw the Minsk agreement being

sabotaged, and instead the NATO countries just buying time and building up a large Ukrainian proxy army. And yeah, so then by 2022, they went to war.

And then, of course, they tried to negotiate from the first day. Zelensky said that the Russians contacted him to start negotiating, restoring Ukraine's neutrality. And then, of course, once they figured out that the US and UK sabotaged the Istanbul agreement and instead began to pump weapons into Ukraine and put a boycott on diplomacy, then they realized what this was. And then they annexed four territories, four oblasts. I mean, how is this not responding? And of course, now with the new involvement, Putin is now talking about getting all of Novorossiia, which would include Nikolaev and Odessa, which would make Ukraine into a landlocked rump state. How is this not responding to escalation?

And also, in that interview you referred to, he brought up Operation Barbarossa, which is interesting because, you know, why would Russia sit back and wait for the Europeans to get all their pieces in place and then strike Russia when it's favorable to them? As Putin has said, you know, if you know you're going to be in a fight, just make sure you throw the first punch. And I think that's a danger, you know, with all this war talk against the Russians. But no, I just find it fascinating that you say there's no strategic thinking, there's no strategic context. I mean, we have all the data in the world.

We know in the 1990s you had American ambassadors, intelligence chiefs, military leaders, all warning, "Well, actually, expanding NATO would re-divide the continent. It would be a betrayal." I mean, you had Clinton's own Secretary of Defense considering quitting because this was a stab in the back of the Russians, as George Kennan also said. Then you go to 2008, you have the CIA director warning this is going to trigger a civil war, and the Russians will reluctantly intervene. You have Angela Merkel calling it a declaration of war if we offer NATO membership to Ukraine.

And then we come to 2014, topple the government to pull it into NATO, and suddenly it's all unprovoked. It comes out of nowhere. Russia's just imperialist. I mean, it's very dishonest. And I think this is a weakness we have in NATO, though, that if you're going to get all these countries together, how are you going to get consensus around fighting Russia, I think? You have to capture people—the politicians, the journalists—in these narratives. That is, everyone has to repeat these slogans; otherwise, you're pro-Russian or, you know, you're justifying the invasion. Anyway, do you have any final thoughts before we finish off the video?

#Steve Jermy

Yeah, I think that we in the alternative media are starting to make a difference. And, you know, I routinely—and I'm sure you're the same—see comments where I would say 90% of them are, "Thank goodness for the alternative media. It's the only place we get our good information from." I do think, though, that the risks that I've talked about are real, and I think they're the ones we need to be able to talk about, Glenn. I do think, though, that diplomacy is also possible. You've got to be brave, but it's possible. I mean, we in Britain brought our war with the IRA, the Irish Republican

Army, to a close after 38 years through talking to each other, and diplomacy was—and to me, that's the most important—the way out of it.

But I think that the sooner we can actually spread the word—and let's hope that listeners to this podcast can do it—that the risks of escalation, especially in Europe, where we are escalating against an enemy, or what would be an enemy, against whom we cannot defend ourselves against attacks anymore, seems to me to be mindless. So let's hope we can get this debate out there, Glenn, and have a proper public debate in Europe about the risks our leaders are taking us towards, and a proper public debate about whether we can actually get back on the road to diplomacy, because diplomacy is surely the answer to this.

#Glenn

I agree. And, uh, well, it's not just our diplomats and politicians who have boycotted diplomacy. They're essentially pressuring the public to do the same. Uh, I noticed academics as well. If you travel to Russia as an academic, they essentially try to impose their ridiculous, uh, you know, ban on contact with the Russians by, you know, arguing, "Well, is it appropriate to go?" I mean, as if, you know, they are the ones who have done something insane—that is, to refuse to talk to the other side—and they're pushing it on others. And also, the discourse, I noticed, whether it's the war on Russia or the war against Iran, I noticed a very strange development early on, that it was as if I say, you know, "The Russians are winning," or "The Ukrainian counteroffensive is failing," you know, "Invading Kursk is a horrible idea."

They're going to take mass casualties. It doesn't matter. If you say that Ukraine is not winning, then it's pro-Russian. That means you're cheering for Russia. If you argue that Ukraine is winning, then you're cheering for Ukraine. Same with the Iran war. I said, well, this isn't going to work because, you know, there's nothing the Americans can do to prevent the Iranians from striking their bases and shutting down the Strait of Hormuz. So the Iranians are going to win this. Oh, that's pro-Iranian. So apparently the only way you can be patriotic these days is to embrace delusion and pretend you're winning, even if you're not. I mean, I mentioned this before on this podcast, but it's worth saying again.

I even saw an article referring to me in a newspaper here that, oh, well, that I have said that the world is multipolar, but that's what Putin wants people to think. Because then, you know, Russia is a key central power in the world. So we shouldn't give this gift to Russia. So we should stop saying the world is multipolar. I mean, this is the European mindset for me. This is, you know, we don't need to address reality; we'll socially construct our own reality. And somehow, uh, yeah, we're surprised when, you know, you don't deal with the world as it is but how you wish it was. And somehow there is no strategic thinking, and eventually its defeat should be predictable. But no. Yeah, I think, um, I mean, I'm not, um, I'm not arguing for or against Russia. I'm arguing—and I think I'm sure you are as well—I'm arguing for clear strategic thinking.

#Steve Jermy

Free speech and public debate about the issues that matter. And I thought that's what European values were about in the first place. That's what I'm arguing for. And I think if we can have clear strategic thinking, we're going to have a chance of getting through this. But if we can't and they keep taking us on the pathway to war, then I think we might get the war that we didn't ask for sooner than we thought, because they couldn't be bothered to actually look at the nature of the war into which they were leading us. Anyway, Glenn, let's keep doing our best. And thanks for all you do. Looking forward to the next one.

#Glenn

Well, thank you for hopping on, and yeah, see you next time.

#Steve Jermy

Okay, thanks.