

The Next ESCALATION Against Russia | Dr. Jeff Rich

Jeff Rich, Australian historian and creator of The Burning Archive, joins Pascal Lottaz to discuss NATO's changing role, Europe's growing military stance toward Russia, and the limits of the "US vassal" view. They trace the history and emotion behind anti-Russian feeling, question "civilization" as a political lens, and examine Australia's ties to Russia, migration, and the US-led order. Jeff's great Interview with Richard Sakwa: <https://youtu.be/3KZNua1O4rY> Links: The Burning Archive Substack: <https://jeffrich.substack.com> The Burning Archive YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/@theburningarchive> Neutrality Studies substack: <https://pascallottaz.substack.com> Merch: <https://neutralitystudies.com/shop> Donation: <https://neutralitystudies.com/donate> Timestamps: 00:00 Introduction and NATO 3.0 09:22 NATO, Europe, and US power 21:02 The long roots of anti-Russianism 36:00 Civilization, realism, and fear 50:28 Australia, Russia, and migration

#Pascal

Welcome back, everybody, to Neutrality Studies. Today again for an update with Jeff Rich, the always brilliant historian from Australia, who's running the Burning Archive Substack and YouTube channel. Jeff, welcome back. Thanks for having me, Pascal. Well, thank you for your wonderful contributions. And it's great getting to pick your brain again, because you've also been writing a lot and publishing a lot about what is happening from your perspective on the other side of the globe, in Europe. The Russia–Europe affair — what does that look like from Australia? A lot of us are very worried that we might be headed straight into a much bigger war between Russia and NATO, and you even call them NATO 3.0. Can you maybe explain that a little bit and what it looks like to you?

#Jeff Rich

Yeah, it's quite concerning, really, to me, about the risk of war, and quite a few people are comparing the situation to, like, the eve of World War I. The historian Odd Arne Westad published a book called **The Coming Storm**, which makes similar comparisons with the environment of fear and distrust and competition, I guess, between major powers that preceded World War I and led to that catastrophe, and a real concern that a similar thing might happen. And I've recently spoken also with Richard Sakwa, who's also very, very concerned about the prospect of the current war in Ukraine metastasizing, I guess, into a broader Russia–Europe war. And some of the reactions, I think, to the recent Ankara summit in NATO and in Russia would seem to say that what NATO itself is describing as NATO 3.0, the sort of new incarnation of a more Europeanized NATO, is itself almost a declaration of war against Russia.

So the Russian international affairs specialist Dmitry Trenin has published an article called *The Dangerous Logic of NATO 3.0*, where he says NATO 3.0 means war, and that for the first time since 1945, Europe has declared itself an enemy of Russia, an implacable enemy of Russia. So it's very, very concerning, I guess, both the rhetoric from Europe, some of the rhetoric from Russia, and also, from my perspective too, the apparent forgetting that the United States of America started all of this, and the United States of America is still very much the dominant military contributor and military power and architect of NATO. So if NATO 3.0 is a declaration of war between Europe and Russia, then it's also, I think, really a de facto declaration of war from the USA towards Russia. And too many people, I feel, are kind of forgetting that.

#Pascal

Yeah, the thing that worries me very much is that you see at the moment in Europe how all the people you talk to who are not basically in our part of the bubble, in our part of the commentariat, absolutely reject the notion that this entire Ukraine war was basically provoked by the United States. For them, it's absolutely clear that we have a war in Ukraine because Russia is an expansionist, fascist dictatorship that wants to expand its land. And therefore, once it's done with Ukraine, it will necessarily go to Europe. And even in Switzerland, when I talk to people and journalists, they ask me, well, is it possible for smaller states to live without security guarantees by larger states? I mean, somehow we need to deter the Russians, right?

If we don't deter them, they will attack. And even to the Swiss, I have to explain that, look, if you make friends with the Russians, if you make friends with everybody, you don't need to deter them, right? Deterrence is something that you only actually need toward enemies. But if you build your security strategy around the logic of making friendships, then you end up with something that's more similar to what Oman has, which is, you know, partnerships on all sides, including Iran. But this idea has completely, utterly left the European continent. How do you think this is now impacting the way that the Europeans are approaching their, well, not the far future, but the immediate future of the next couple of years? How are you reading the signs that are coming out of Europe?

#Jeff Rich

Well, the signs that came out of the Ankara summit with the NATO declaration, which was like, it was far—well, apart from the thank you to the host—it was five paragraphs, less than 500 words, compared to, I think, the Vilnius summit from a couple of years ago. They produced a 40-page communique, very wide-ranging, talking about the Indo-Pacific and, you know, NATO's domination of the world. Whereas this Ankara summit has produced, you know, a communique that I guess matches the attention span of the United States president at the moment. So I think one of the things coming out of the NATO summit is there's the theatrical and the rhetorical display that's evident there in the communique, but it's a little bit harder to discern what the real processes underneath—the real levels of agreement and disagreement underneath—are.

And there's clearly some... even though there's clearly a pretty militant party. But the key outcomes I saw that Europe wanted to emphasize out of this NATO summit were, first of all, that it is, if you like, declaring a preemptive victory in Ukraine. Alexander Stubb has basically said Ukraine is winning the war. All it needs to win the war is to survive, because Putin's aim was to destroy Ukraine. Therefore, if Ukraine survives, it wins. Now, that's a pretty low bar, but I also interpret that as sort of locking the United States in behind keeping up the fight with Ukraine.

And then the second big outcome is to rearm Europe, and this is the whole militarization process, which in some senses meets US objectives of increased defense spending, increased military industries in the United States. But the Europeans have also said that at the previous summit in The Hague, they'd made the 5% defense spending commitment, and this summit was all about showing that they could implement it. And between the lines, I wonder whether that also means that at the next summit, after the midterm elections in the United States, there'll be a little bit of backsliding and a little bit of saying, well, we said we would implement this commitment, but I'm not entirely convinced it will be implemented in quite the same way.

But nonetheless, this whole rearming and militarization thing, based on the Ukraine model of drones, you know, conducting war without people losses from Europe's point of view, is very much an essential component of it. And then the third—another element—is to lock in the United States into the permanent war against Russia. NATO and most of the European states are really saying Russia is the enemy, and that we will not allow the United States to backslide out, as Trump has tried to do over the last 18 months, to sort of unilaterally withdraw from the Ukraine war. So that seems to be the positioning. I just don't know whether all of that is all that sustainable.

#Pascal

Hey, just a very quick note. The best way to support this channel is by signing up for my free Substack. You can also help with a paid subscription there, or you can get some of our new merch on neutralitystudies.com. Links below. See you there. What do you make of Brian Berletic's argument that, you know, overall, the entire US is kind of withdrawing from NATO—the story about the US putting pressure on the Europeans and wanting to take itself out—that all of that is actually just basically a camouflage for this other strategy that they also actually spoke about, the division of labor? Europe has to fight for the American empire against Russia, while the US then takes its forces and starts another front.

I mean, they started another front with Iran, obviously, but the big one that they're dreaming about is, of course, China, which is absolutely lunatic, but these people are psychopaths. And we can be absolutely sure because they still produce these kinds of think tank papers and white papers and whatnot about a third front, about a war with China. And Brian Berletic's argument, of course, is that

this is all just show, and the entire point of the US saying that it withdraws is just a way to make the Europeans think, invest, or spend more money on weaponry, which they're mainly going to order in the United States, all under the guise of needing to do more yourself.

Strategic autonomy, right? And then a few years down the road, we're going to read about how the relationship between NATO and Europe got much better again, and everything is rosy again. And whenever they want them to go from 5% to 6% or 7%, they just pretend again to be walking away, so that this is a constant game. On the other hand, we do have people who seriously interpret Donald Trump as somebody who wants to take the United States basically out of NATO and onto the North American continent. On which side does your interpretation fall?

#Jeff Rich

Well, I think both sorts of arguments are really based on a false understanding of the nature of NATO as an alliance and the US–European relationship. I mean, the continuity of agenda, this whole “it’s all just pretense” argument, I think, overstates American dominance. You know, there’s this whole “Europe’s vassals” and all that kind of stuff. Well, if Europe were vassals, then they’ve cleverly outplayed their sort of domineering master over the last 18 months and basically ended up getting the United States into the position that they want them to be in, which is to remain committed to the war in Ukraine in order to secure what they perceive as European defense and strategic interests. And I also think that the history of the NATO alliance has been a constant tug of war, if you like, between the European powers and the American powers.

And that's often underappreciated, that it's actually been a long history of tension and a long history of partnership in which the United States has needed Europe as much as the United States has vassalized Europe. And in many ways, for me, the great lie about NATO is that Europe has become dependent on the United States for its defense. That is true in some ways. I'd say in some ways the European Union has largely—European states have largely, if you like, outsourced their defense and large parts of their foreign policy to NATO. And that's a chronic issue for Europe. But the other thing is that the United States is very dependent on NATO for its offensive actions around the world.

I mean, the Ramstein bases, you know, all those German bases are absolutely critical to all the sort of, you know, West Asia sort of aggressive actions of the United States, as are the Britain–Cyprus bases and all the rest. The great complaint Trump had about NATO at this last summit was that he was not able to use NATO, the European bases, as the platform for an aggressive action by the United States against Iran, because certain states said, you know, we don't want you to use our base, our country, as a platform for your aggressive war. And that was his complaint. It wasn't that the Europeans were relying on the United States for defense; it was that the Europeans were obstructing the American offense. It's a very good point.

#Pascal

That's a very good point that you are making, that, you know, overall, the vassalization of Europe narrative is maybe overstating that part of the relationship a bit, because what we see is that the Europeans are, in a sense, vassalized where they want to be, which is as long as they can maintain this relationship, pressure, and this tug of war against Russia by also keeping the United States in the game, fully, wholeheartedly committed, then they're happy to go along and lick the boot of the US president, as especially NATO General Secretary Mark Rutte constantly does, very, very obviously. But on the other hand, they do have their limits.

So Iran, nobody, not even the Germans, not even the Baltic states, did much more than rhetorical support, right? I mean, there's zero military commitment in any way, shape, or form. And yes, you can argue that the NATO treaty and so on prevents that, which is true. On the other hand, these are the states that have a history of breaking their own treaties in order to implement their foreign wars—against Serbia, against sending NATO troops to Afghanistan. It's completely possible to do that once you have the political agreement. But what we need to judge is that there is no agreement for that one.

And that, in this sense, this vassalization narrative is a bit overstating the relationship. What is it then—and you've also written about that, you've also had guests on your shows about this—that makes the Europeans so insanely hostile toward Russia that they want to implement a policy that they are not willing to implement, let's say, against Iran, and I would argue would not be willing to implement against China because it's just so far away that it makes even less sense? What is it, in your view, that fuels this intense, interested hate toward anything east of Ukraine?

#Jeff Rich

Yeah, absolutely. Well, I think there are lots of components to it. And one is, we should never forget, part of it is the USA's role in it. You know, some people have argued there's been a long war against the Soviet Union and Russia really since 1917, right? And often a highly ideological war, a war that has built up over decades—institutions, et cetera—which have their own inertia, which is perhaps a better way of thinking about the continuity of agenda once you deploy military forces all around the world.

Your agenda is, you know, domination of the whole world. It's not surprising that it doesn't change all that much. So one should never forget the very powerful role of the United States, you know, to be blunt about it—the continued military occupation of Europe 80 years after World War II. And especially since the Iraq War in the early 2000s, and especially after the global financial crisis, the increased ratcheting up of American pressure on European elites to conform with an American-defined transatlantic agenda.

And you can see that, and that's the second component, which is, you know, the stuff that Neil Benila refers to, which is the interpenetration of the transatlantic elites by, you know, a common group of career politicians, career bureaucrats, career military officers, career media people. The

journalistic element is a key part of it as well. So there's, if you like, an elite core which pursues those agendas. But then there's also clearly a component of journalistic aggressive sentiment, let's say, towards Russia from Europe. And I think that has quite a deep and long history, which, you know, maybe I should talk about.

#Pascal

Yeah, no, absolutely. But we also... I'm very glad that you're bringing up Neil Benila and her Worldliness Substack and her analysis, because I think she's one of the most brilliant people who looked at these elite networks. And, you know, it's a fascinating part because you can make a good argument that the populations of these places, North America and Europe, are not at all Russophobic in the classic sense, but that these elite networks are. And thanks actually to recent revelations in the US, and also partially to the Iraq War and how Iran messaged about it, we now have an even better, catchier term for these elite networks. We can just call them the Epstein class—all of the people who show up in these Epstein files—and you see how these networks are connected to each other and how even, you know, Norwegian princess blah, blah, blah is like deeply intertwined, make themselves bribeable and extortable.

At the same time, they participate, right, and put pressure on each other, but also put a lot of opportunities up for each other so that... if you're a prime minister of a small Baltic state, I mean, you can anytime graduate into, you know, the big league, into the European Union or even into NATO, right? And thereby up your standing. So you make sure that these elites have less allegiance to their own countries and much more to the group through Bilderberg and through the Munich Security Conference fostered, you know, not centrally controlled, but they coordinate with each other, and they are their own kind of epistemic bubble, separate from a big part of the rest of Europe. But it still begs the question, why is that part so extremely Russophobic and so extremely hostile towards the East?

#Jeff Rich

Well, I think there are some near-term historical issues that play a part. And I think the mobilization of the Eastern European states, particularly by both American émigré networks—like, you know, think Zbigniew Brzezinski, etc.—but also particularly by Britain. Britain has actively pursued a role of increasing its influence in Europe by increasing its security and defense role within Eastern Europe and by mobilizing the Baltic and East European states like Poland, etc., into the anti-Russia kind of thing. And, you know, Britain still has colonies—non-self-governing territories—on the European continent in Cyprus and Gibraltar.

So maybe the countries around them should raise that issue at the United Nations and kick Britain out. But I think there's a deeper history, which I have a slightly different perspective on than many of the sort of accounts of Russia versus the West, and also in a way of Russophobia, which really goes back to the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Sorry, the early 18th century. So the sort of

period, you know, the age of revolutions, the period from 1750, 1770 to 1830, 1870. We just celebrated the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. This is actually a key event in this process.

And what the historian John Darwin, who's broadly seen as the doyen of the history of empires and is largely ignored by the geopolitical podcast universe, basically argues is that what occurs in that time is the formation of a greater Europe, which is Europe as such, the United States as the western extension of Europe, and Russia as, if you like, the eastern extension of Europe. And that through those series of events, they sort of come together with, you know, clearly significant differences—national differences, political differences, and all that sort of stuff—but a broadly common zone that shares both geopolitical interests, cultural identities, and political values within a broad sense, a form of liberal identity.

And this period, 1750 to 1830, is really the crucial time in which, you know, we talk about 500 years of Western European colonialism, but it's really this point, 1750 to 1830, where Europe, Greater Europe, separates itself from the rest of the world and becomes so much more powerful and so much more confident, let's say, in its own power that it really forces itself upon the rest of the world. So we see it moving into Asia. This period is also the British capture of India, which is as crucial as anything in this story. And later in the 19th century, it goes into Africa. And until this period, the sort of European dominance in the world is actually quite small.

So it's at this point that there's really a common sense of those three zones being part of the West, and the West having a civilizing mission, an imperial mission, that also projects itself in the world. But underpinning that, there are huge tensions about how much each of those parts sees themselves as belonging together. So, you know, America defines itself as the new world, that frontier spirit and all that kind of stuff, which, you know, John Darwin really just describes as the classic settler myth, the American exceptionalism story, which, I mean, that is the historical grounding of American exceptionalism—it's really just a myth.

But, you know, Russia's part of this story too, and Russia is a country that has colonial expansion and civilizing missions and all the rest of it. But, you know, Western Europe sees Russia as, you know, a compromised Asiatic power that it also has conflict with, that hasn't escaped its, you know, Mongol past, its Eurasian past, and is still, you know, relatively speaking, a more autocratic society. So there's both a sense of belonging, but also a sense that these near-strangers are strangers. They're different from us. And I think that is one of the driving forces of the sort of Russophobia that emerges over time, I think.

So it's this sort of sense of belonging with a lot of tension around it, and that sort of drives the growing—or the waves of—fear and loathing. And it's important to emphasize it's not consistent over time. It varies, you know, and it varies in its character. So some of the anti-Russian, anti-Slavic sentiment of the late 19th century before World War I is as racist as anything, you know. It's explicitly racist. As you were saying in your recent interview with Yakov Rubkin, it's very similar to

the sort of anti-Semitism that emerges at the same time. So there are all sorts of major cultural, political, ideological figures who express fundamentally either civilizational or explicitly racist sentiments of the inferiority of the Slavs, the inferiority of the Russians.

I mean, my classic example of this is Thomas Mann's **The Magic Mountain**, one of the great novels of the 20th century, published in 1924 and, you know, portraying pre-war Europe on the cusp of World War I. And it has several Russian characters who are all presented as semi-Asiatic, vaguely barbaric, you know, not pursuing civilized customs. So you have that kind of Russophobia. But then in 1917, obviously, there's the Russian Revolution, and then that becomes—that's the sort of great break of Russia and the Russian world, the Soviet Union, from the West. It then is not just, you know, it's the great divorce, if you like, of Russia and the Soviet Union from the West. And from that point on, also, the United States is playing a huge role in pushing the sort of stereotypes about Russia and the Reds, the Judeo-Bolshevism, you know, all the rest of it that has sort of evolved and adapted over time.

#Pascal

Did they ever call it "Judeo-Bolshevism"? Was that a term that was used?

#Jeff Rich

Yeah, yeah, no, that was absolutely a term. Yeah, it was a very common term. Yeah, very common term. Even in the United States, I mean, there's been this wonderful book published recently by Mark Mazower, who's a British historian based in the United States, called **On Antisemitism: A Word in History**, which sort of explores the history of antisemitism, which emerges as a word in about the 1870s, and is originally a battle cry saying, "We're proud to be anti-Semites." And it's also based on a very late 19th-century idea of race nations, which has no real scientific basis but was perceived at the time as scientific racism—that the Irish were a separate race and the Slavs were a separate, you know, all these sort of invented categories of different types of humanity. And, yeah, so it was a term that was developed then, and Judeo-Bolshevism was absolutely used explicitly at that time.

#Pascal

Maybe a topic for another time, looking at how this idea of Judeo-something has been used over time in order to justify or to delegitimize whatever it is that you wanted to politically do, which brings us actually again back to this discussion with Yakov Rapkin and a couple of other talks I had on this channel on Russophobia, which was also the topic of the conference in Russia that I recently attended and really got me thinking about the politicized nature of a couple of these claims about people. And while I really like going into details about how certain foreign policies evolve over time, there you need to look at the utterances of individual foreign ministers and presidents and whatnot, and then look at how this is different from like four years ago and stuff like that.

Right. That's kind of, you can do this on the micro level. On the other hand, we can also do the macro analysis that you alluded to earlier and wonder whether it is these kinds of civilizational movements of societies that then predetermine the spectrum of the possible in future foreign policies. And what you alluded to earlier is, of course, that you had on the one hand the Europeans' drive to the West. And that drive is inherently also genocidal because it depended upon the eradication of the native populations of the North American continent, of Australia as well. But let's focus on the Atlantic kind of world, right?

So we had this drive on the one hand, and the war between Britain and the United States, right, the War of Independence, was really more of a war over which of the whites gets to call the shots, not whether the whites get to call the shots, right? It was clear whoever would win would then probably continue the project, which is further expansion into North America. On the other hand, you have Russia and the eastern expansion. And one point that Yakov Rabkin was making is that Russia's way of expanding was always an integrative one. You integrate whoever is already on these lands and make them part of you, and that's part and parcel of being Russian.

And then that is now something that clashes with the much more racist approach of Western Europe, which is like, we need to make these people go away, replace them with ourselves. And if they're not replaced, then, well, look at what the Russians are doing. They are the hordes, the Golden Horde. They are the Asiatics, right? They are the other. And that is something that this Western European way of colonialism seems to be inherently hostile toward, and that's where we can maybe boil it down again to racism. I don't know if that's an oversimplification. It probably is an oversimplification. But what do you make of that kind of thing?

#Jeff Rich

Well, look, it's a really interesting idea. I mean, again, coming back to that idea that there emerges in the early part of the 19th century a kind of common cultural zone with differences but shared characteristics—that is, greater Europe—that includes North America, including Canada, the United States, and Russia. We often refer to European racism, but of those three zones, North America was the one with the most systematic, long-lasting, and explicit racist institutions, systems, policies, legislation, labor practices, the works—migration policies, blah, blah, blah—that was in there. So while we refer to European racism, one should always, I think, maybe qualify that by saying Euro-American racism and not give the United States a pass.

Because even in the 19th century, America was exceptional in its use of slavery and its justification of explicit racist policies within its own state, within its own national borders. And similarly, you know, the genocidal dimension of it—the war of American independence was both a war for local autonomy, but it was also a war against restraint on the American colonists capturing, you know, stealing the land of the Native Nations. The Monroe Doctrine was similarly, as much as anything,

saying don't interfere with our sort of wars, which became genocidal wars in the 1820s and 1830s with the Native Nations of America as well. So I've got that off my chest, and I've lost track of the question, Pascal. Sorry. Oh, you were talking about the sort of civilizational dimension of it.

#Pascal

Yes, yes. Is civilization a concept that can help us grasp what is currently happening? Or if we apply it, is it only going to be, you know, this kind of useless blanket on top of, you know, the actual machinery that we should understand? So, you know, sometimes the big concepts hide much more than they help to uncover. Is civilization something that you think can help us? Yeah.

#Jeff Rich

I think civilization is generally not a very helpful way of framing the sort of geopolitical-type struggles that we have today. I mean, civilization is one of the big complex concepts in history. It's got a long history of study, but it has been more abused than used well. And I've written about various concepts around that. And it's been revived very much lately with this idea of a civilization state. And, you know, it is a sort of long-term effect of Samuel Huntington's book about the clash of civilizations. And in effect, Huntington really defined civilizations as clashes.

Well, if you look at the detail of his book, the way in which he classifies the various civilizations, there are about eight or so that he defines around the world, which in itself is—well, really, are there eight civilizations?—is fundamentally religious, and a sort of rationalization of the post-Cold War conflicts for America. So, you know, Japan's defined in a certain way that's different from China. You know, he has this concept of the Orthodox world, which, you know, doesn't include Greece and all the rest of it.

And I feel that civilizational—thinking about civilizations—it's best to think of it as a kind of process of... there's a historian who defines civilization as a process for adapting the environment to human needs, rather than a sort of progress or a particular characteristic kind of society. But I do think major states that form over time develop their own cultures and their own patterns of statecraft, and I think often when people are talking about these civilizational differences, they're boiling down very complex history into these simplistic, sort of essential characteristics. Like, you know, Iran being a 5,000-year civilization state—how does that really adequately represent the complexity and the conflicts within 5,000 years of Persian history?

But they're sort of boiling down some of the patterns and styles of statecraft that are different between, you know, Russia, China, Europe, North America, etc. And I think there is some truth to those, you know, ways of going about conducting relationships between states, conducting diplomacy, etc., that have been really quite important. But I also think some of the more broad global trends that have occurred over the last 200 years have provided a much more—there's been so much, as well as civilizations, if you like, developing in separate ways—there's been as much

dialogue or exchange and also intermingling of cultures and civilizations, especially over the last 200 years with the broad trends of what one can call different phases of globalization, so that all these separate civilizations that we're talking about are actually amalgams of different cultures.

There's a French Martinican writer, Édouard Glissant, who talks about a concept called creolization, which he originally developed to describe the sort of Caribbean culture. But I think that should be applied also to some of these concepts of clashes of civilizations. If you look at Russian civilizational culture, it's been shaped by the Mongol inheritance very profoundly. It's been shaped by the experience of the Russian Empire. It's been shaped by the experience of the Soviet Union. It's been shaped by its long sense of belonging for hundreds of years—both belonging and also the sense of being rejected by the West.

And it's developed a whole series of institutions and cultures along that sort of way, which do shape foreign policy. And so I do think that awareness of that different kind of culture, institutions, ways of going about things, framing issues, is actually quite important, and it's something that is never really adequately addressed by, you know, realist analysis that just turns everything into, you know, like a game theory sort of model of a few great powers rationally maximizing their national interest against each other.

#Pascal

Yeah, right. This is also one of my largest criticisms of the school of realism, which I do think is probably the most important school of IR, but it unfortunately does not leave enough space for issues like proper, profound differences between different cultural approaches and whatnot. Basically, the realist school assumes that every single country on Earth will behave like the Euro-Americans. The way the Euro-Americans build their states is how everybody builds their states, and therefore they are in constant competition because they are constantly a threat to each other, which is a very typical European thing to do—to constantly go out and try to eradicate everybody else.

Also, the duplicitous language and so on—one set of rules for us, another set of rules for you guys—which is also inherently one of these racist things, right? The classification, stratification of society, and treating them according to different rule books. We see that being repeated time and again. But all of this is kind of left out, of course, of the power analysis that rests purely upon what is the power differential between the different state actors.

#Jeff Rich

I think it comes out, too, in the sort of realist analysis of Russophobia, if you like. Which, I mean, maybe we should rename it anti-Russianism or something simpler. But the value of calling it Russophobia is it does draw attention to one of the key qualities of the phenomenon, which is it's an emotion. It's fear and loathing, you know. And I think the realists have great trouble dealing with that. So, you know, Glenn Diesen's analysis of Russophobia is essentially it's propaganda driven by

great power conflicts or by geopolitics that exploits the fact that people have feelings and don't always act rationally.

But in truth, most of us, you know, all of us have feelings, all of our behavior is driven in part by emotions, very much. And I actually don't think you can really fully understand the phenomenon of Russophobia without actually understanding and dealing with the emotional side of it—to treat it as something that occurs within, you know, an emotional response, a socially structured emotional response to a history of wars, a history of both alienation from a different society and culture, but also interdependence with that culture, and also dealing with the ambivalence of actually being both dependent upon but also feeling alienated from that culture.

And you can see that, I think, in the contemporary European response to Russia. So one of the key things about the Europe-Russia-American conflict in recent years has been dependence on Russia for energy supplies. And this has provoked ambivalent reactions by European leaders. It's provoked rage and resentment from Americans who've long sought to make Europe dependent on America for its energy supplies. But it has created this fear and loathing of, yes, we do have this interdependence on Russia, but we're not very comfortable with that because they're also strangers to us.

So this dependence upon but fear of strangers, I think, is one of the underpinning drivers of Russophobia, as it is with lots of other experiences of anti-Semitism. I think you can potentially interpret some of the waves of anti-Semitism over time as a similar kind of reaction to this interdependence on a group within the society, as in Germany and Eastern Europe in the 18th century. In the 17th century, in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, there was a huge outburst of anti-Semitic violence, which was in part a backlash against what was partly, if you like, driven by outgroup hatred.

But it was also a backlash against the stronger role of Jewish communities who'd fled the expulsions from Western Europe, moved into Poland over a couple of centuries, and developed a significant social role in the cities, commerce, all that sort of thing that other social groups resented. And it broke out in this wave of terrible violence, really based in current Ukraine. And so this pattern of interdependence on and yet fear of strangers is also an idea that another historian, Jeremy Adelman, is developing as a way of retelling the story over the last 200 years or so of globalization.

He redefines globalization as interdependence. You know, commodities moving all around the world, and people also being faced with, you know, from the mid-19th century, you get photographic images of people from all around the world, relatively instantaneous presentation of news from people all around the world. So the world becomes a more intimate place where people are also dealing with their reactions to strangers who they are interdependent upon, and that can provoke a collaborative, helpful, friendly, altruistic response, but it also can provoke a resentful, predatory, competitive response.

And the history, you know, he sort of interprets the history of the last 200 years as, you know, oscillating, I guess, if you like, between those kinds of responses. And, you know, at the moment, I think now we're in a bit of a phase of, you know, a predatory response from the United States — make America great again by making everyone else weaker. You know, Europe wanting to, you know, shut out the migrants and shut out the sort of European energy supplies that they are dependent upon. And a weakening of so many of the sort of multilateral, cross-cultural dialogues and the sort of institutions of the United Nations that would promote a more cooperative, altruistic response.

#Pascal

Can we spend the last couple of minutes talking a little bit about what this entire environment does to Australia, you know, since you're there? And is there Russophobia there as well? I mean, Australia is also one of the settler colonies of Europe, right? And the outcome of such. How is the Russia affair connected, influencing Australia? Because on the one hand, yes, you're an integral part of that European project. On the other hand, it is far away. And there are now several decades, centuries of independent development as well, plus the setup of the ethnic mix of Australia is changing. How is the public discourse now happening over there in regard to Russia?

#Jeff Rich

Well, Australia's public culture is very unfriendly towards Russia. It's been politically very, you know, very strongly standing with Ukraine. You know, there were various actions by the Australian government against the Russian embassy in Canberra. It's been quite, at a sort of political media elite level, really quite strong. I mean, when the war broke out — the Ukraine war broke out — I was studying Russian language, you know, doing a Russian language class with an émigré Russian teacher, and, you know, the Russian community had to basically, you know, go underground to some degree.

They couldn't organize community festivals. There were attempts to ban community festivals. And there's been, for quite some time, a quite significant Ukrainian ex-Soviet sort of émigré community in Australia that was also quite strongly pushing that sort of thing. So it's really been quite a powerful element of it. But I feel, in part, it's also broadly popular-based. I mean, I don't entirely agree with the view that the people are fine, it's just the elites who drive the Russophobia. I think, again, it goes back to that sort of fear of interdependence on strangers.

People are having, people see a selective presentation of news, and they see a terrible thing happen, and they have an understandable, humane response that drives fear and loathing. And I think, to some degree also, you know, that is often connected to groups that carry historical

grievances against Russia of one sort or another. So, you know, the sort of ex-Soviet émigrés, you know, the Ukrainian émigrés, etc. So Russophobia or anti-Russianism is very much alive and well in Australia, as is pro-Americanism. But, you know, Australia is a great missed opportunity. Why?

Because, you know, Australia is this extraordinary multicultural society, which, when people say that, like in Europe and in America, people go, oh, multicultural, that's a funny word. But it's pretty much an orthodoxly accepted word in Australia, or at least has been until quite recently. Right. I think it's roughly half of the country that has at least one parent born overseas. It's roughly 30% of the country that has come to Australia from overseas. And currently, the largest overseas-born population in Australia is now from India. For the longest time, it was Britain, but it is now from India. And if you include the other South Asian states, it's by a long way from South Asia. There's also a very large Chinese-born population in Australia as well.

So the character of Australian society is deeply multicultural. I mean, there's a Russian woman across the road, there are Chinese people here, there are Americans there, you know, it's just in that basic fabric of everyday life. But there has been this response in Australia too that is a bit of a reaction against that because, you know, the issues of managing borders, of migration, all those kinds of things, distributing the economic risks and benefits of migration. And so in Australia today, the leading Conservative Party, the leading sort of right-wing party—I think it might even now be the leading political party in the polls—is this party called One Nation, which dates back to the 1990s. And its emotional base has basically been an anti-migrant party.

And it's partly been fueled in recent times by the sort of American-European right-wing rhetoric that we get piped down through our airwaves by the Murdoch press and by the ABC. And it's also been fueled by the institutional weakness of the establishment Conservative Party in Australia, the Liberal Party, which has lost government after a long time and has been in constant leadership succession and is unclear about where it's going. But for people like me who've grown up with just an assumption that everyone in Australia accepts multiculturalism, it's deeply shocking and quite perplexing to suddenly see this sort of, like, if you like, an AfD-type party emerge as quite a significant political force in Australia. But within that, Russophobia is not a big part. That's much more directed at the significant growth of South Asian migration in Australia over recent times.

#Pascal

Interesting. We need to dedicate another couple of episodes in the near future to Australia because it's a microcosm that deserves better studying. It's also an interesting case for testing a couple of assumptions about the Europeans and the Euro-Atlantic kind of relationship. It's kind of a— it sits there and just offers itself for analysis, right? It's like, oh, by the way, if you want to study another one of the overseas colonies, here would be one.

#Jeff Rich

It's also an interesting entry or window into the sort of India-China relationship as well. Narendra Modi has just been to Australia and also to Japan as well. So, yeah, I think that would be really interesting.

#Pascal

Okay, we'll do that. We'll do that. In that case, let's wind it down here. People who want to follow you, of course—everybody—you should go to the Burning Archive Substack and YouTube channel. The YouTube channel is the same name, right? Burning Archive.

#Jeff Rich

Yeah, it's called The Burning Archive, and the Substack is at jeffrich.substack.com, and you'll include some links down below.

#Pascal

I will include the links down below. Everybody, check out Jeff's work. It is fantastic. Jeff Rich, thank you so much for your time today.

#Jeff Rich

Thanks, Pascal.