



Europe Is Going INSANE After Trump/Zelensky Clash

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Glenn Greenwald (GG): The Europeans seem to be going completely and utterly insane, and I don't even mean that in an exaggerated way, I just actually spent the last week or so in Western Europe and parts of Eastern Europe, as you know, I was in Moscow as well for those interviews, and I really can't express in a way that would overstate the case just how maniacal their war rhetoric has become, especially ever since that drama with President Zelensky and Donald Trump in the Oval Office, the European elites acted as though it was one of the most despicable and horrific events, one of the world's worst atrocities they had ever seen. But obviously Trump has been speaking quite substantively, and I believe this is one of the things that most quickly and in the earliest stages of Trump's 2016 campaign turned the establishment against him when he began questioning the viability of NATO and specifically why do we spend so much money to protect Western Europe when the idea originally was we protect them from a Soviet Union that no longer exists and we spend huge amounts of money on their defence while they don't spend that much on their own defence and they enjoy all sorts of social programmes that our citizens don't. And so ever since Trump became much more aggressive, along with J.D. Vance and others, and making clear that they no longer consider Europe to be the epicentre of the U.S. relationship, and just to give you a sense for how long this has been going on, let me show you Trump in 2017 when he went as one of his first foreign trips – this is May of 2017 – he went to the NATO summit, and here is part of what he had to say.

Donald Trump: I have been very, very direct with Secretary Stoltenberg and members of the Alliance in saying that NATO members must finally contribute their fair share and meet their financial obligations. But 23 of the 28 member nations are still not paying what they should be paying and what they're supposed to be paying for their defence. This is not fair to the people and taxpayers of the United States, and many of these nations owe massive amounts of money from past years and not paying in those past years. Over the last eight years, the United States spent more on defence than all other Nato countries combined. If all NATO

members had spent just 2% of their GDP on defence last year, we would have had another \$119 billion for our collective defence and for the financing of additional NATO reserves.

GG: I'm sure you've heard that before, and the funniest part is you see there all these European leaders like Merkel back then, this was 2017, and Macron and David Cameron all standing there just kind of having to be chided and being uncomfortable trying to gig with one another, but this has been a theme that I think Trump is absolutely right about for a long time now, but in the first term, as we know, there were certain things that Trump wanted to do that he just didn't have the discipline for, I don't think he had the know how to do it, he was surrounded by snakes who were trying to sabotage him, whereas this administration is a much different story. And as a result, there is now a really substantial movement that is picking up steam constantly. It's a war mentality. You see these European leaders who have been so meak, and so kind of irrelevant. They've turned themselves into these lapdogs of the United States. They like to talk tough, but they know that they can't accomplish anything on their own. They don't intimidate anybody. They just have the United States behind them. And now for the first time, there's a possibility that they won't and they don't know what to do because on the one hand, they can't be left defenceless and want to build up a defence, but on the other hand, their economics is such and their politics are such that they simply can't be doing so. And here from the Financial Times, which always has been a neoliberal newspaper that encourages austerity and cuts to spending for the ordinary people, you see the headline: EU abandons welfare for warfare. Quote, *Europe must trim its welfare state to build a warfare state*. "There is no way of defending the continent without cuts to social spending". And this has long been part of European life. This is part of the expectation of the European population. 30-hour work weeks, 35-hour work weeks, retirement at 62, paid family leave, all kinds of health care, one-month vacations, things that I'm not mocking, things that, as Americans, we often look at and think, oh, that's lazy, but you can really make a case that it actually is an important part of the quality of life. Not to have our lives consumed with running to work every single day from 8:30 in the morning until 7 o'clock at night and working on Saturday, having two weeks maximum per year for vacation, no family time when your children are born. You can see it both ways. The American perspective is we want a strong capitalist society that produces innovation and creativity and we can't have workers constantly taking off, and the European perspective is there's more to life than GDP.

And I just want to, without taking it aside, recommend to you, I saw a speech once, maybe two years ago, two and a half years ago, when there were major riots in France. And I know that doesn't narrow it down, since there are always street riots in France. But Macron was trying to increase the retirement age in Europe, because one of the problems at European houses is a demographic one. Their population is just ageing. Their fertility rates don't nearly match replacement. They're just literally dying out as a population. Their older population is getting older and dying, and their younger population is not reproducing. And like in the United States, it becomes difficult when you have fewer and fewer people paying into social security for huge numbers of elderly people who now need it, the system stops working. And it's part of why Europe has to import so many migrants into their country, because their own citizens aren't having children. And they need those people to come and be workers, but then

it creates these resentments culturally that drive people into right-wing parties. It's the cycle that's happening all throughout the democratic world. But it's a financial issue above all else. And when Macron wanted to increase the retirement age in France from 62 to 64, and he lacked the votes to do it because the French were rioting. There's a left-wing leader, Jean-Luc Mélenchon, who gave a speech, and you may not agree with it, he was very vehemently opposed to the increase of the retirement age from 62 to 64/65, and instead of giving a kind of Bernie Sanders socialist left wing speech about the burdens of the worker and the labourer and how the billionaires are taking everything – there might have been a part of that, too – instead, he made it very philosophical in a kind of French way. And he talked about the importance in life of inaction, of being able to just wake up and do nothing, of sit around and reflect on things, look at nature, just be able to spend time with your grandchildren, how this is a crucial, vital part of the value of life. And when you have these people who work in blue collar jobs that are back breaking and physically demanding, and obviously people who work in those jobs have a lower life expectancy, and you're talking about not just now making them work until 62, but until 65, you're taking away a very important part of, they've worked their entire lives, and now they have these years at the end of their lives, who knows how many, maybe a decade, maybe a little bit more, of just freedom for the first time in their life, they don't have to be enslaved to corporations, working every day. Some people wanna work, obviously, but a lot of people don't. It was a very thoughtful, humanistic speech about what human life is about and the value of it. But anyway, I digress, but I recommended that. But this is the culture expectation in Europe, is they don't have the American system of employees being completely enslaved with very few rights to their employers. And this takes a big social net, obviously. It takes a lot of support from the state. It takes redistribution through taxes. And these European economies, by and large, are already strained for a lot of different reasons, including this demographic one. And now European leaders are talking about somehow becoming a world superpower, military superpower, by spending the kinds of money that China or the United States is spending on their military based on their view that with Trump they no longer can rely upon American protection. And they're trying to beat their chest and talk about how they're going to protect Ukraine without the United States, knowing in reality they can't really do it. How long are their citizens going to tolerate being told that they have to lose benefits that they've come to not only expect for decades, but that are a central part of the European identity in order to help Ukraine or pour money into European coffers? But the way they're talking is very dangerous as well. It is an intoxicated war fever. You have Germany talking about the need to nuclearize in order to confront Russia. And if you think about 20th century history, the last thing as a human being on this planet you want is the Germans getting riled up again about fighting Russia. That's when things really go wrong, historically when that happens. And I once had the person I consider one of the most interesting European politicians, Sahra Wagenknecht, on our show; lifelong leftist, she's left the Left over issues like social issues and woke-ism that she thinks alienates the working class from left-wing parties, which it does. But also the war in Ukraine. And one of the things she talked about was how insane it is for German leaders to be talking about sending German tanks eastward toward the Russian border through Ukraine given the history of World War I and World War II and what that does to Russian leaders. I was listening to a

lot of people, I talked to a lot of people and they mean it. They sound like characters out of Dr. Strangelove.

Here from CNN, March 6th: *European leaders agree on defence spending surge at crucial EU summit on Ukraine*. Quote: "[All] 27 leaders of Europe greenlit proposals that could free up billions of euros to boost defence spending calling on the European Commission to find new ways to, quote, 'facilitate significant defence spending at national levels in all Member States'. Leaders noted a proposal from Commission President Ursula von der Leyen that would provide countries with loans totaling up to 150 billion euros". By the way, this Ursula von der Leyen, to me, is the living, breathing embodiment of everything rotted about the Western establishment, kind of like a Hillary Clinton figure in that way. Nobody elected her. She has that air of like unelected, elite entitlement. She goes around constantly talking about the need to fund the war in Ukraine, never talking about the needs of ordinary Europeans. And you see these Europeans have lost exactly the kind of faith and trust in the establishment as the British did when they enacted Brexit, as the Americans did when they enacted Trump, as the Brazilians did when they voted for Bolsonaro, as the French did when they put Marine Le Pen's party first. And they're going to play with fire, these EU elites, these Brussels elites, if they're going to talk about pouring all these money into European defence contractors to build up in order to protect Ukraine. It's even worse than that.

Here from the New York Times, March 5th: *France Open to Discussing an Extension of the Nuclear Deterrence, Macron Says*. "In a televised address, President Emmanuel Macron warned that Europe needed to deal with a retreating America and a bellicose Russia". And there are videos of Macron on Sky News, in fact, saying the same thing in a way that really is kind of unhinged. Now you have here the new German chancellor from Reuters: *Germany's Merz wants European nuclear weapons to boost the US shield*. Quote, "Sharing nuclear weapons is an issue that we need to talk about... 'We have to become stronger together in nuclear deterrence', he said [...] a day after agreeing the cornerstones of a coalition deal between his conservative party and the social democratic SPD party. Quote, 'We should talk with both countries (France and Britain), always also from the perspective of supplementing the American nuclear shield, which we of course want to see maintained'". And now the AfD also believes that Germany needs to have nuclear weapons, which is unsurprising given that they're a very nationalist party.

Here in the New York Times today, the Polish Prime Minister, Donald Tusk, is also talking about the need for Poland to now start seeking nuclear weapons. I just want to show you this one clip because so much of Europe is run by these EU/Brussels bureaucrats who haven't really been elected. They love to use all kinds of unhinged, war-mongering rhetoric. My least favourite example are the German Greens, who constantly talk about the need to –There's just everything bad about Western liberalism and interventionism. Here is Kaja Kallas. She was the Prime Minister of Estonia. Her husband has made many millions of dollars in Russia, even while she was calling for sanctions, while she was the prime minister of Estonia. And she left that position in scandal in order to become the foreign affairs minister of the EU – whatever that is, she's unelected. And I want you to listen to what she said at a Hudson

Institute conference last week, about the reasons why Europe has to continue to confront Russia and fight Russia over Ukraine, even if the United States decides it's not going to.

Kaja Kallas: I hear the statements by some American officials saying that you can't possibly beat Russia. Russia is so much bigger and you need to give in to Russia because it's not beatable, which is not true, by the way. But then you're trying to signal to your Asian counterparts that if China is attacking them, then you are there. But China is a much bigger economy than Russia is, with a much bigger military than Russia is. So if you're saying that we collectively are not able to really pressure Russia so much that it would have an effect, because then how do you say that you're able to take on China?

GG: I mean, in what world are these people living in? We're gonna take on Russia first, and we're gonna go defeat Russia so that way we can show China we're gonna take on China as well. I think one of the most important things Trump has done is completely re-scrambled and upended this 80-year-old ossified system of international order that a lot of them like to call very self glorifying the rules-based international order, which is anything but. And instead start questioning the core pieties of it that have been so destructive for the world. And if Europe wants to go off on its own and devote all of its resources to sending to European arms manufacturers that already their stock prices have been skyrocketing, they're obviously free to do that. I'll be interested to see whether their citizenry actually supports that or starts voting for the anti-establishment parties even more than they already are doing so. But this entire system where we pour huge amounts of resources into defence contractors, where we constantly pursue new wars, proxy wars, wars of all kinds, while the centre of the country, the vast majority of the population, the industrialised base continues to decay is a recipe for disaster. And the Europeans are even worse than the American elites when it comes to a dependency on and an addiction to, and especially this sanctimonious belief in the nobility of this order. And they're finally faced with the reality that this order is crumbling because the whole time it depended not on them but on the United States. And Trump is essentially saying this game is over. And like any radical changes, you never know what outcomes could be produced. It could be bad outcomes. But nothing is more dangerous than this escalating war between Russia and Ukraine. We are very lucky that it hasn't escalated so far. I believe it's primarily due to the restraint of Moscow, but whatever Trump can do, and I believe he's doing a lot to try and end this conflict the better, but to watch the Europeans just go off into this maniacal warmongering rage would be alarming if not for the fact that they're living in a fairy-tale land where their countries are nowhere near equipped in order to fulfil that chest beating that they're doing. And if they try, they're going to be faced with a civilian uprising and a kind of contempt for their establishment far, far greater than the very serious one that they're already facing. '

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