



Ukraine: The Story You're Not Meant to Hear — Scott Horton

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Zain Raza (ZR): Thank you for tuning in today and welcome back to another episode of The Source. I'm your host, Zain Raza. Before we begin this interview, I would like to remind you to join our alternative channels on Rumble and Telegram. YouTube owned by Google can shadowban and censor us at any time and if that day ever comes, we won't be able to reach you even with an announcement, let alone with our information. Furthermore, if you're watching our videos regularly, make sure to donate to our journalism. We don't take any money from corporations or governments and don't even allow advertisement, all with the goal of providing you with information that is free from external influence. Hence, we only depend on you, our viewers, to continue. And even though our channel has grown over the summer over 161,000 subscribers, our donations have dipped considerably. How you can join our alternative channels or donate to us, you will find out in the description of this video below.

Today I'll be talking to Scott Horton, Director of the Libertarian Institute, co-host of the Scott Horton Show, and is considered one of America's leading non-interventionist voices. Scott has written several books, the latest being: *Provoked – How Washington Started the New Cold War with Russia and the Catastrophe in Ukraine*. Scott, welcome to the show.

Scott Horton (SH): Thank you very much for having me. Good to be here.

ZR: Scott, I'd like to begin with your book, *Provoked – How Washington started the New Cold War with Russia and the Catastrophe in Ukraine*. The title itself challenges the mainstream media narrative we hear in Germany that Russia's invasion of Ukraine in [2022] was unprovoked and that Russia had absolutely no reason, let alone a justification, to invade. And the same applies to Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014. The core argument presented in the public here in Germany is that Russian President Vladimir Putin harbors expansionist ambitions that he wants to restore the former Soviet Union and carve up Europe. To support this, they often quote his remarks, such as in a 2005 interview with the Russian news agency RIA Novosti where he said, quote, "The collapse of the Soviet Union was the greatest geopolitical catastrophe of the century", unquote. Yet in your book you offer another

perspective and argue that this was, in fact, a provoked conflict. Can you provide our viewers with some context for your argument and also respond to this core claim about Putin's supposed vision of an empire?

SC: Well, first of all, I mean, even going back to that quote, there are some quotes of Vladimir Putin talking about how he regretted the fall of the Soviet Union for very specific reasons. Not that he lamented the loss of the entire Warsaw Pact or not that he even lamented the loss of the USSR itself. But he's talking about one severe consequence of the collapse of the USSR is that many millions of Russians were so-called left behind in what they call a beached diaspora, is this term that this one academic used for them. Because the Russian Empire receded, but it left all these Russian peoples behind, for example, in Ukraine, in Estonia, in Kazakhstan and in other places, where then the question is, do these people still need "protection", quote unquote, from the Russian state? That's what every state claims to be, is a security force, right? Protecting its own people, they claim. And so what Putin was saying was, yeah, it's really unfortunate that all these Russians got left behind when the Soviet Union collapsed. He did not finish that thought by saying, and now I'm on a crusade to reestablish our borders, to surround all these people and I won't stop until I'm done or anything like that. He didn't say that at all. And in fact, he at one point had said, anyone who does not miss the USSR has no heart. Anyone who wants it back has no brain. So he's not saying that he's threatening Europe and he's coming for Europe.

What he's talking about is that the United States of America had put the ethnic Russian and Russian speaking population of far Eastern Ukraine in a very difficult position and therefore put him in a very difficult position in order to decide what to do about it. So there's a city in eastern Estonia, I always say it wrong, it's Narva or something like that in Eastern Estonia is virtually an entirely Russian city. It used to be a Russian city the way the borders are now, it's inside Estonia. Now, there is a potential flashpoint there, right? The Russian state could say, oh, those people need our protection now and we're coming for them. As long as they're free, and as long as they're not being persecuted by the central state in Estonia, but have first class citizenship like everyone else and their rights are respected under the law like everyone else, then there's no pretext for intervention there. And we don't see the Russians making any moves to go there. Now, there have been some questions of second class status and this kind of thing, and the Russians have said, say over the past 20 years, hey, Estonia, we're watching you, you better be nice to your Russians. So there is like an implicit threat there, but there's no pre-text and so there's no movement. The Russians of Eastern Estonia are in fact not persecuted and are in fact not in desperate need of the Russian Federation to readjust its borders to encompass them.

We have an entirely different situation in far Eastern Ukraine. And so, fast forward to the crucial issue that we're talking about here is in the aftermath of the overthrow of the government there in 2014, the Russians then reacted by seizing the Crimean peninsula where they had their all important Sevastopol naval base, the home of the Black Sea fleet and which had belonged to Russia for 300 years, except a small period of time from 1954 when – was it 56? – When Nikita Khrushchev gifted – I believe 54 – gifted the Crimeans peninsula to

Ukraine because he needed the Ukrainian communist party support to succeed Joseph Stalin after he died. He was from Ukraine and this was, you know – but he's the general Secretary of the communist party of the Soviet Union, so who cares what he says? It's not like it's wholly written that he decided to give Crimea to Ukraine. It's obviously a very complicated issue and extremely like a predominantly ethnic Russian population and pro-Russian population there. But when Russia did seize the peninsula in 14, Kiev and Washington both overreacted. And by Kiev, I mean the brand new coup d'etat junta that had just illegally overthrown the democratically elected government there with American support and the American government that immediately recognized the new junta. They freaked out when rebels in the East said, well, if you guys can occupy government buildings and overthrow the government, we can occupy government buildings, and refuse to accept your authority. And in fact, it was just a coincidence. They already had scheduled for February 22nd, a giant meeting of the governors and leaders of the Eastern provinces, was already scheduled.

So it wasn't just like an ad hoc thing. It was their duly elected representatives at a legal convention of their power, right, who demanded that they withdrew their representatives from the Rada and denounced the new junta and said they wanted their concerns addressed and all that. So America's response to that, Barack Obama's response, that was to send John Brennan to tell the new acting president of Ukraine, a guy named Turchynov, to start a war, to launch a civil war against the people of the East, which is exactly what he did. And they thought as always, it'd be short and sweet. And it wasn't; half the army or some major proportion of the military switched sides. They just defected and went and fought, you know, they were from the East and went ahead and took their side. Same for, it was all the policemen of the East that rose up to lead the militias of miners and whatever. They all said that this was a Russian invasion. It really wasn't true. There were some small numbers of deniable Russian forces here and there. There are only real incursions in August of 14, and then there was another major advance in February of 15 in order to force the Ukrainians to the table, right? Not even to defeat them, but to force them to negotiate and end the war. But otherwise it was the people of the East, some people of the East who were being attacked. And in fact, with airstrikes and indiscriminate shelling and all of this kind of thing too, from the very beginning was what started the horrible war there. And then, as I said, the Russians did intervene directly in August of 14 and February of 15. In both cases forcing the Europeans, particularly the Germans to come to the table and say, no, let's negotiate an end to this thing. And this is the origin of the Minsk I and then the Minsk II peace deals. America and Barack Obama didn't negotiate that deal, but the Germans and the French are closest allies did, and Barack Obama put the rubber stamp on it and then so did the UN security council put the rubber stamp on Minsk II. So this was supposed to end the war. But the American government under Barack Obama, under Donald Trump's first term, and under the first year of Joe Biden, they refused to implement Minsk II and they refused to put pressure on Kiev to go ahead and implement the deal. So what they had was this kind of ongoing low level civil war. It was something like 9,000 people died the first year and about another 4,000 people were killed in the next seven years. So you see what I mean that the fighting was still going on, but they had called off the airstrikes and the heavy artillery and the major missions across enemy lines, but

they're still lobbing artillery shells back and forth essentially for seven years and this issue was not being resolved whatsoever.

So we can go back, we'll talk all about NATO expansion and the rest of the American empire in Eastern Europe, but here what we're talking about is the regime, the illegal coup d'etat regime that took over the country in 2014, launching a war in which thousands and thousands of ethnic Russians in the far east of the country are being killed. And then when those rebels asked Putin to annex their territory in 2014, he told them no and demanded that they stop flying the Russian flag and told them, I'm not coming for you. I'm going to sit down and deal with Angela Merkel is what I'm going to do. I do not want to reabsorb the Donbas, was what he had said then. And so all this stuff, it obviously puts the lie to his territorial ambition. He had all the pretext he needed to roll tanks all the way to Kiev then. In fact, he had threatened an Italian diplomat in 2014 and said, you know, I could be in Kiev in two weeks, which turned out to be wrong, although actually not because at that time he absolutely could have been in Kiev in two weeks, right? It was years and years worth of America arming Ukrainians up, especially with those shoulder fire Javelin anti-tank missiles that were so effective at halting the Russian advance in the early stages of the fuller scale war beginning in 22. In 2014, the Russians absolutely could have just completely smashed the Ukrainian military and taken what they wanted. They did not do that because Russia was prioritizing relations with Germany and relations with the West. He didn't want to screw everything up. He wasn't getting along that famously with Barack Obama at that time.

But then again, they were working together on some things like when Obama decided to finally turn on ISIS and the caliphate that he had created for them in Syria and Iraq. He was willing to work with Russia against ISIS, although not against al-Qaeda and al-Nusra, but at least against the Islamic state. You might remember a case in his last year in power in the summer of 16, Obama had ordered John Kerry to make a deal with Putin to work together to kill ISIS in Eastern Syria and what happened? The department of defense bombed Syrian army positions near Deir ez-Zur, which completely ruined that compromise and that deal, and in fact, in specific allowed ISIS to advance on Deir ez-Zur and kill a bunch of innocent people. I mean, it was, this was in all the papers at the time, I mean it was understood in no other way than insubordination by the Secretary of Defense who was overruling the foreign policy of the president and the Secretary of State who had decided to make this new compromise with the Russian.

Same thing, remember they had made the deal to get rid of Syria's chemical weapons to avoid war in 2013. You know, the great reporter, Robert Perry thought that this was part of the reason for the Maidan phony revolution and why America stepped up their pressure, why the neo conservatives, especially Robert Kagan's wife, Victoria Nuland and all them ratchet up the pressure in Ukraine was because they were terrified that Barack Obama was starting to strike up a friendship with Putin and that they were getting along and if they were getting along on Syria, then they could finish the job on Syria. They could abandon al-Qaeda and tilt back toward Assad, right? They don't want that. And they didn't want any more compromises with the Russians or the Shiites. And so Robert Perry thought that that was one of the major

reasons that they intervened so severely in Ukraine was just to disrupt this budding relationship between Obama and Putin at that time. But then of course, Barack Obama, he was the president, we know very little about his role in the end of 13 and beginning of 14. All the stories are, Vice President Biden held the brief and that he was in charge of working with Victoria Nuland and the gang to overthrow the government there. There's virtually no reporting. I guess I need to read his memoir of his presidency, see if he even mentioned that stuff at all. There's very little coverage of his role there. And for that matter of Secretary of State John Kerry's role in the Maidan revolution, the first major bit of news we have about Kerry there is, as soon as the Maidan revolution was over, he recognized the new government in Kiev. But we don't have much about his command and control of the situation, even though it's his state department that's doing the coup, his ambassador and essentially Victoria Nuland was the acting ambassador at large to the EU, so to speak, the Deputy Undersecretary of State for European affairs and whatever.

Anyway, so this is essentially to try to narrow down and finally answer your question here, this is the proper way to understand the statements of Vladimir Putin about the regretfulness of the loss of the old Soviet republics and that kind of thing. He's not saying he's coming back and he's trying to reconstruct them all. He never said that. In fact, as I show in the book, I believe it's the same one where the quote that you read, I could be wrong, but I'm pretty sure it's the same speech, where he talked about what was sad about the fall of the USSR. But if you look at the entire point of that speech, it has nothing to do whatsoever with – he's announcing a new foreign policy of going back to Eastern Europe at all. The entire context is, yeah, we were down bad. Boy, the fall of the Soviet Union sure hit us hard and our economy was bad and Boris Yeltsin was a drunk and the Americans were walking all over us and it was pretty bad. But then I came to town and gas prices went up and I ended corruption and I rebuilt the country and aren't you glad I'm here because I already saved us. Right? That's what the speech is about. It's a decline and renewal trope. It's often used by politicians to talk about how bad things were before they got here. And now how aren't you glad they fixed it for you. So that's the entire context of the speech, is yeah, things were looking bad before, but things are really looking up now. This has nothing to do with expansionist foreign policy and retaking old lost territory or anything like that. And quite frankly, like on at least some of these, even the Washington Post will debunk it from time to time and say, well, he wasn't really saying that. But people love to take those small quotes out of context that this is how we're supposed to understand the narrative. Get it? He's former KGB. Now he's the president. Now he wants to recreate the USSR. And you're just supposed to forget about the fact that, well, yeah, but I mean, he was in charge for 23 years before he launched this war, right? And you guys all said that he was the best Russian leader ever, and that you liked him even better than his predecessor, and Joe Biden himself said that no Russian leader in all history has ever thrown in with the West as hard as Vladimir Putin has. And George Bush looking into his soul and Barack Obama dealing with him over Syria and all of these things. You know, oh no, he just got here and he's a mad communist dictator. And not only that, he's not a clerk or a technocrat. No, he's a romantic swept away by poetry about the long lost Russian empires. Yeah, right... The guy, I mean, you already know, I forget whether it's left or right brain or whatever, but he's the rational one. He's not a poet and he's not a romantic and he is not swept

away by ideological leanings or feelings about how things are supposed to be. And this is a guy who in the middle of a war, he will say, well, we have some severe disagreements with our American partners on some issues, but we're doing everything we can to work with them on other things. Come on, this guy's Joseph Stalin?! Give me a break here.

And quite frankly, like this is the weapons of mass destruction of this war. This is the pretext for war and for America and for that matter, German and other European intervention on Ukraine's behalf against Russia is that Putin woke up on the wrong side of the bed one morning and decided to launch this war out of pure aggression. So now everything that we do is pure defense on behalf of the innocent being, you know, run over by Sauron, you know the Dark Lord Madman from the East and his gang of roaming and raping orcs and all of this stuff. That was the way that they framed it. And so that was why I titled the book Provoked. Now it's not a justification. I argue in the book that Putin should not have done this for moral reasons and legal reasons. And I explain what I think are some alternatives to fighting that he could have explored before launching the war. And I also conclude that it's going to be a pyrrhic victory and that at the end of the day, even obviously they're going to be successful in retaking much of this territory in the East and the South and all that... And who knows, the longer this thing goes on, the more territory they take. But I think at the end of the day there are many reasons why Putin will regret that he did this at all. He would probably wish that he had stuck with his original decision to leave the Donbas inside of Ukraine, but then do whatever he could somehow do more to end the civil war. But by now removing the entire pro-Russian population out of the country, he's now leaving a rump Ukraine. What's left of Ukraine will be run by hardcore right-wing nationalists who absolutely hate Russia and who mostly are based out of far Western Ukraine, which used to be the Eastern Austro-Hungarian Empire and or Poland, right?, was populated by ethnic Ruthenians, they used to be called, who have never been Russians, right? And even like during the Holodomor and everything, they were safely to the West of that, looking from inside Poland at what the communists were doing in Ukraine there.

So they have never identified their society in Galicia and Volynia in the far west of the country. They never really identified themselves with Russian society or culture or whatever, the way much of the east of the country has. And this is a legacy of the Second World War, that yes, there were people in Eastern Europe who welcomed the German Nazis because they were driving away the Soviet communists. And then in many cases, they found out, geez, we don't really like these Nazis very much either. Well, this is very much the history of what happened in Ukraine, in far Western Ukraine. And then, of course, the Soviets won the war and crushed those Nazi forces. But the remnants of those groups and the ancestor or the descendants of those groups, those exact same groups and through family lineage and the rest, like these are the core of the neo-Nazi movement in the far west of Ukraine now. And some of their more successful and charismatic leaders like Andrey Beletsky, I think, are a great danger, very likely to become the new leaders of the country. I think Beletsky, you know, he might call himself El Presidente instead of der Führer. But he is a Nazi and he is a lunatic. You know, there's a piece in the London Times where they run a denial. He goes, I never said those things. That was Russian propaganda. No, is not either. And if you look at

the antiwar.com blog, you just type in antiwar.com and my name Scott Horton and then type in Beletsky, racial social nationalism. Get it? They're not national socialists. They're social nationalists. As one guy on Twitter was joking, that's the exact opposite. I republished the entire speech there and I have the link to the Wayback Machine archive of the old Azov battalion website, right? This is like Joy Reid on MSNBC lying and claiming that somebody hacked her website and put all this anti-gay stuff on there or whatever. Beletsky gave this speech; and this is if you ever see coverage of the Ukrainian Nazi movement these days, if you ever see a quote, this is the most famous quote that gets passed around. It's just a fragment of a quote, but this is the one you'll recognize, where the guy says – and I hope I don't get you censored in Germany for talking about this stuff – but the guy says that we must lead the white race on a crusade against the Semitic-led Untermenschen, right? Which means subhumans. And so I had that whole speech and that whole speech is your standard Nazi insanity blabbering claptrap about how the entire Ukrainian state is one organism and all people and all their eggs and all their sperm all belong to the central state. The Ukrainian species, right, they're not even a race, they're a species of human, who are separate from all other species, but they need to create the new Aryan superman so they can ally with Iran and take over Europe and the Middle East. It's total just Nazi fanaticism. If you read that, you go, oh, this is a Nazi fanatic talking about his insane Nazi beliefs. Like you can't mistake this for any other thing; this is not conservatism. And this is not socialism. These guys are Nazis. And it's funny because they're talking about securing and protecting Aryan values. Like this Aryan myth is so goofy now that like, I guess the Slavs are Aryans. Don't tell the Germans that the Slaves are Aryans now, but that's what they say that they're fighting for, even though Hitler thought that they were mud people to be destroyed, just like anybody east of there or south of there, right? This is completely nuts that they identify themselves that closely with the German regime from the Second World War, it's insane. But that is exactly who they are.

And the fact that Beletsky is denying it now just means that he is under the protection of the United States. And just like we saw with Mohammed al-Jolani in Syria, who is the leader of al-Qaeda in Iraq and Syria, who bragged that he killed Americans in Mosul and Ramadi, they took him to like finishing school, right? And they taught him how to tie a tie. They taught him to shave his beard shorter. Stop cutting off heads and doing suicide attacks and we'll let you have the power, right? So here they're telling Beletsky, listen, stop talking about how much you love Adolf Hitler and we will let you have the power. And so he's saying, oh, I never said that stuff. You can't find that on the Wayback Machine or at the antiwarblog, I bet. But this guy is a war hero to them. He's been leading what was called the Azov Battalion and then the Asov Regiment that then became the Third Separate Infantry Division and is now known as the Third Army Corps. And they've been fighting, quote, "the good fight" against the Russians especially in Kharkiv over these last three and a half years. So this guy is clearly in the very top two or three guys in the running to replace Zelensky when they hold new elections or whatever happens; could be a coup d'etat. If he works with and this is something that's also very important – if Zelensky tries to negotiate with Russia, he could very well be assassinated by the radical right there. These people are swept up in romantic visions of the past. They're not technocratic, rational clerks at all. They still think they can win. They still want to fight. And they have threatened his predecessor Poroshenko, [Petro] Poroshenko and

Zelensky both, with their heads. They've been worn repeatedly by the Nazis, by Beletsky and Dmytro Yarosh and others that he'll hang from a tree. He wants to work with the Russians and compromise over the Donbas, he'll hang from a tree on Khreshchatyk Street or however you say it, the main drag in Kiev. Or they threaten to just put a bullet in his head.

And Andrew Kramer from The New York Times has said that, hey, these are credible threats. These men have overthrown the government twice with American help in 2004 and 14. And when they threaten to kill the president and overthrow the government, he has to take that seriously, right? That's not like just some kook out in Idaho threatens Joe Biden and gets rolled up by the Secret Service the next day, right? These are credible threats from people who have the ability to carry them out and so have the leadership in Ukraine in a very difficult position where they can't give up now or else they will have wasted the lives of all the men who have died in the war so far. They haven't died in vain yet. But if you compromise, then they will have died in vain. And that makes you the greatest traitor in the world. So we'll kill you. They've said repeatedly so.

That's the extremely difficult situation that the Kiev regime is in now because they have helped to build up and with American help to and Western allied help, they have helped to build up these Nazi militias on the theory that, well, we need them. Ukraine needs them. We'll just have to worry about their crazy Nazi ideology later. But right now, their patriots helping to fight, as Evelyn Farkas, who worked for Barack Obama, said. And many of these others have talked about them that way. Well, now we have a real problem. And the Russians have a really problem. Now, when this war comes to an end, Putin's got to deal with President Beletsky or someone very close to him. And so I'm very afraid that the war is simply going to continue for years now because of this is how government programs work. I'm a libertarian. This is how all government bureaucracies work. They screw up something and then they got to keep making matters worse and worse and worse in the name of trying to fix the problem that they created. So now that Russia has taken all the pro Russians out of Ukraine and left only anti Russians in it, well, now he has a real – that was what he said before. He goes, now we have this anti-Russia on our border. Well, now you've got an anti Russia on your border. The pro Russians used to win elections. That's why America had to overthrow the government there twice in ten years, right? Now they're never going to win an election again. Now Russia is going to be dealing with a very right wing avowly enemy state on their border over the long term here. Or they're going to continue the war over the medium term and just solve it that way by marching ultimately all the way to Romania and Poland.

ZR: Let me get to the NATO part, which you touched upon, but let me preemptively bring in a couple of arguments perhaps you could address and also provide context to how the NATO expansion played into igniting the Ukraine war. First of all, the first argument that is usually made here in Germany is that countries joined democratically and willingly. It wasn't like NATO forced other countries like Poland, for example, and countries have a right to have security alliances. And the second argument that is usually made is that, well, Poland, which has borders with Russia, is part of NATO, too. And Russia didn't invade Poland. And therefore they came to the conclusion that NATO was not the reason, but the reason that I

cited in the first question, which is Putin's expansionist ambitions. So could you address these two arguments and make your case for why NATO still provoked Russia into this war?

SC: Sure. So first of all, there's really no such thing as these nation states, right? When we say Poland this or Poland that, we're talking about the political governments in charge, not the will of the people in mass of the country. And there were people in Eastern Europe and even politicians in Eastern Europe who were really reluctant to do this because they saw what a provocation of the Russians it would be, but then ultimately decided and there was a lot of bribery and coercion and lobbying by especially Lockheed set up a group called the Committee for NATO Expansion. You might remember Sally Painter and Blue Star Strategies from the Ukraine scandal and the Hunter Biden Laptop scandal with Burisma and all that. The same lady was the big lobbyist helping Lockheed arrange all these Eastern European countries and lining them up for membership in NATO. So this was not just that Poland and the rest of Eastern Europe came knocking on America's door, begging to join. It was the Americans who came to them and said, don't you want to fly F-16s and F-15s? Don't you want to be part of our thing? And all of that. And so that was a huge part of what made it. It was not so simple as just they came begging.

And then second of all, what if they did? The question here from an American point of view is what's good for the United States of America? And if one were to possess any wisdom at all, they would have to see that what's most important is Washington's relationship with Moscow. Screw Warsaw. What if they do want to join our alliance? So what? If it's good for us to extend our alliance to Poland, then fine. Remember, Boris Yeltsin was the leader of the Russian government that overthrew the Soviet Union. He was the man who destroyed the last of the USSR, for us, basically. And he said, hey, listen, I understand why the Eastern European states would be reluctant to engage in new forms of cooperation. His ironic quotes, "cooperation with Russia", because he knew he knew good and well that the horrible and bloody history of Soviet dominance over these people and why they would be afraid of Russia and hell, even before the Soviet Union, the previous Russian empires and why they might want the superpower across the ocean to protect them. He understood that. But then he said, yeah, but still, you have to take into account our point of view here, too, right?

The whole idea was – I'm kind of starting with refuting the arguments rather than just going back to the beginning – but the idea was the debate was, are we going to erase the dividing lines in Europe? Or are we simply going to move them further east? What they promised was we're erasing them. Russia is going to be part of the new security architecture of Europe with everybody else. And so that means Ukraine and Belarus and the Baltic States and Poland and Hungary and the Czech Republic and Slovakia and Bulgaria and Romania, everybody's neutrality is baked in because we're all already members of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe. Or then they replaced that in the Bill Clinton years with the PFP, the Partnership for Peace, and said, we're going to abandon the NATO alliance. NATO is going to become more of a political organization. Think of something like the EU plus America. But we're going to replace it as a military organization and as a military alliance with the CSCE. We're not even going to have an alliance anymore because there's no enemy anymore. So

we're going to have a partnership, a security partnership. And you're going to be part of it with us. And they knew that they were lying when they said that. But that was the way that they sold it to the Russians because they recognized all along, even before Bill Clinton ever came to town, the Bush senior government recognized they needed to make the Soviet Union and then Russia, because the Soviet Union was finally overthrown at the end of 91, so Bush senior still had one full year with just post-Soviet Russia, but the deal was to constantly essentially shine them on and make promises to them about how they are going to be part of the new system with us all the while plotting and planning to, in fact, you know, that they were deceiving and that they would, in fact, not only ensconce American power in Europe, but expand it. And the goal from the beginning, while they were telling the Russians one thing was that we're going to end up expanding NATO further to the East.

And so one of the major criticisms of this argument that has been circulated in the past is that, well, it's not in the treaty. They signed a treaty on the reunification of Germany and they don't say anything in that treaty about America promises never to expand their forces east. But that's not exactly true. There is something in the treaty about that. And it's the promise of a new special military zone, which meant that if we are reuniting Germany, and obviously the eastern half, the commies are gone, the eastern half is going to be reintegrated under the rule of the West, right? We're going to move the capital of Bonn back to Berlin and it's going to be the West German American allied regime is going to rule the entire country now. So this was one of the kernels of truth to, well, they're kind of screwing around and back down, was that the way Baker had phrased it made it seem like he was saying that East Germany wouldn't be a member of NATO. There is no East Germany anymore. We're talking about reunification. So it made no sense to say that like one half of the German state or two thirds of the German state is in NATO, but the other third isn't. That doesn't make sense. So they back down on that and said, well, here's what we mean, though, is we promise never to put nuclear weapons in the former GDR, the former East Germany, and we promise never to station substantial combat forces in the East. So right there, they were respecting the spirit of the promise that we will not move NATO one inch to the east if the Soviets were to allow reunification.

Now, people like to pretend that James Baker used that phrase one time on February the 9th, 1990, and then he backed down and they rewrote it and he didn't mean it, and so it doesn't count. But that's not accurate. He actually made that same promise six times on February 9th. And then the next day, Helmut Kohl, the chancellor of Germany, went and made the exact same promise to Gorbachev. And based on that promise, Gorbachev said, okay, fine, I will allow reunification. And Helmut Kohl went right out there at night and gave a press conference like on the steps of the Kremlin and said, Gorbachev just said we can reunite. Let's get it going everybody, shift into first gear right now. We are reuniting Germany and there's no turning back. And he announced that immediately just on the spoken word of Gorbachev. So in other words, it wasn't just a promise not to expand NATO further east, it was a deal. It was an agreement that was reached and they allowed reunification based on that understanding.

And then at the same time, you had especially Hans Dietrich Genscher, who was the German foreign minister, he had every right to make these promises just as much as James Baker had the right to make these promises and speak for NATO and said in no uncertain terms, not only are we going to not expand into eastern Germany, that also precludes the idea that we're going to expand to Poland, to Hungary, to Czechoslovakia or anybody else next, right? And so he said that explicitly, James Baker standing right there at the podium at a press conference doesn't contradict him at all, the State Department agrees. And I beat this dead horse absolutely beyond all reason in my book, because I know that the war party tries to deny it. And so I show that it's just absolutely beyond any denial that President Bush, James Baker and Robert Gates all made these promises that Helmut Kohl and Hans Dietrich Genscher made these promise that Margaret Thatcher and then her successor, John Major and their foreign minister, Douglas Hurd, also made the same promises over and over and over and over and over again. The French as well, Mitterrand, President Mitterrand of France had also made the same promise that we're not going to expand NATO further to the East. And so then they just want to lie and obfuscate and say, well, if it's not in a treaty, then it doesn't mean anything. But that's not true.

We have international agreements all the time, and we have treaties that are based on informal agreements and this kind of thing that happens all the time. If you look at how Nixon and Kissinger split Mao Zedong's China away from the Soviet Union and made them allies in the Cold War, we didn't have a treaty with them. That was all informal handshake agreements between America and China on one of the hugest geopolitical moves of the entire century. America splitting China, the economy China away from the Soviet Union is huge. It was all based on handshakes and trust and understandings with Mao Zedong, the most violent and irrational human being who ever lived. That's who they made a handshake deal with and they deal with and they stuck. It was the same thing over the deal over how are we going to deal with West Berlin? Now, young people might not understand this, but the city of Berlin was entirely surrounded by commie East Germany, but the western half of the city was under the dominance of America and Britain as a legacy of the Second World War. And so, you could see the difficulty there and this is the cause for the Berlin Wall being created. And because what was happening was communists were fleeing from the communist East to West Berlin and then from there they could get on a plane and get out to West Germany and the rest of the free world. And so communism is slavery and so people were attempting to flee in large numbers and that was why they built the wall, was to prevent them from getting out.

But this was obviously a huge contentious issue for the entire Cold War. You have a car backfire near checkpoint Charlie and everybody reaches for their gun and people are terrified that nuclear war is going to break out over a crisis in Berlin. Truman did the airlift to them in 1941 and then I think it was under Kennedy in 61 that they had – I'm sorry, I have it in here somewhere where they had another crisis over American access to West Berlin and the people of West Berlin's access to the West. But that entire deal other than those two crises, the entire situation or how do we handle the existence of this free city in commie East Germany was all informal assurances, it was based on an agreement that America had already struck with the Soviets over how to deal with Vienna, Austria. And then Stalin said, well, let's just

extend the same deal to Berlin, too. And Roosevelt, this is before he died, Roosevelt said, yes, good, but let's not even sign anything on it. Let's just do it on a handshake in order to build trust and say that we can trust each other to just live up to our handshakes. So that was the deal that controlled the status of West Berlin through the entire Cold War; was based on informal assurances.

Another very important one is to end the Cuban missile crisis when it was really Kennedy that picked the fight by stationing these missiles in Italy and in Turkey. And then Daniel Ellsberg gave a speech that said, ha, ha, we know how few nuclear missiles you have and what a weak position you're in, Soviets; which he took the rap for that. He said, boy, I should not have given that speech. And he was only the deputy Undersecretary Defense for something. But it was enough to help to provoke Khrushchev to deploy nuclear missiles to Cuba. Then Kennedy said, uh-uh, you remove them or I will nuke Moscow. Like we will go to war, get those missiles out of there. I will not tolerate their existence there. And this is as close as the world ever came to nuclear war in October of 1962. And what they did was they made a deal. They went around the CIA and around the State Department. The president used his brother Bobby, the attorney general to make a secret back channel deal with the Soviets that said, if you pull your missiles out of Cuba, we promise to pull our missiles out of Turkey, and implicitly Italy, although they didn't even say Italy, but just they had been deployed at the same time these Jupiter missiles, so even that part wasn't even spoken, much less handshook on, and also we promise never to invade Cuba again.

Now that deal was completely secret and deniable. And they didn't even admit that it was true that there was a secret deal until the fall of the Soviet Union. So the story at the time was Kennedy face them commies down just with his macho and testosterone and the old Khrushchev didn't dare step to him and back down. So it was a totally deniable deal. And yet the Kennedy and Johnson and Nixon and Ford and Carter and Reagan and Bush administrations all lived up to that deal and stuck with that deal that was obviously never written on paper was totally secret. And they still live up to that. They never invaded Cuba again. They never put mid-range missiles back in Turkey or Italy. And they lived up to that deal. And so, no, it's not a treaty. But it's still a deal and it's still meaningful. And as I show in the book, they all knew they were lying. They knew they were lying in the Bush years and they knew they were lying in the Clinton years. When the Clinton State Department first heard that this was a problem for the Russians, they went to investigate it. Did we really promise not to expand NATO? And so they did their own internal investigation at state. And you know what they found? Yeah, we did promise not to expand NATO. But oh, well, we're just going to break those promises and do it anyway. And then Warren Christopher got on a plane, went straight to Boris Yeltsin and lied right to his face. And so we're not going to do NATO expansion, we're going to do the Partnership for Peace instead. And Boris Yeltsin said, this is brilliant. This is wonderful. Tell Bill I'm so enthusiastic and I'm so relieved. And this is just great. Thank God. That's what we're going to do instead.

And because they knew and they talked about at the time that if they had started to expand NATO then he would have been destroyed because Yeltsin had to stand for reelection in 1996

and they knew what an absolutely contentious issue this would be in Russian politics. That it would destroy him because it was him and his men who said we were cool and said that America is not an aggressive enemy of ours, not anymore. They just hated the USSR. They like us now when we're getting along. It was him and his man who had said that. So if the Americans had put the line of that by expanding NATO then it would have destroyed him and they knew it. That was why they delayed it until after he was safely reelected, which they spent a billion dollars colluding with the Russian regime in order to get him reelected in 1996. And then they went full speed toward NATO expansion then; knowing all along that from the 1990s on that this is as ambassador and later CIA director William Burns would say this is the most neuralgic issue for the Russians, meaning this makes them mentally ill. This is the thing that drives them absolutely up the wall. And none of them can stand it. They just can't stand it; the idea that we are going to expand our military alliance to their east.

And this was clear way back in the 1990s. And the leading lights of America's foreign policy establishment in the 1990s, all opposed NATO, not all, but many of them, like two thirds of them, opposed NATO expansion for these reasons at the time. And they even did an informal poll of the Council on Foreign Relations, the most important foreign policy think tank in New York City, and two thirds of the CFR said we should not be doing this. These are the people who just won the Cold War. These are the cold warriors. And they're saying, wait, we won. Why are we going to keep beating the guy that we won in the race? Like, haven't you ever heard of being a good sport before? You know what I mean? They didn't want to do this. And I'm not talking about a bunch of weakling liberal Democrats. I'm talking about people like George Kennan and his rival, Paul Nitze, who was to the right of him, and he didn't want just containment. He wanted Soviet rollback. Well, they got the rollback and it's just like, hey, man, mission accomplished, dude. Why are we going to continue to pursue this? George Bush senior's right hand man, Brent Scowcroft, agreed. So did Secretary of Defense McNamara, who ran the Vietnam War for Kennedy and Johnson. And so did Bill Clinton sitting Secretary of Defense William Perry, opposed NATO expansion and tried to stop it and then later blamed himself for the entire, as he put it, the entire deterioration of American-Russian relations since that time. He takes full responsibility personally. Because he didn't stamp his foot and shout at Bill Clinton, no, I forbid it, I will resign. And he says, people say to me, it's not your fault. The entire deterioration of American-Russian relations since then is not your fault, William, but I refuse to accept that. Yes, it is too, because I didn't do everything I could to talk Anthony Lake, Strobe Talbott and Bill Clinton out of this destructive and horrible policy.

Now, who's William Perry? Is he some hippie from California or something? No, he is a math wonk from the bowels of the Pentagon. He's a lifelong career Pentagon engineer and strategist, right? He didn't come from the political parties. He was a technocrat born from the Pentagon itself, right? And he came up and just said, this is madness. Why would we do this? That was what they all said, right, this is pure arrogance. And then it's also, I think, worth mentioning that these people didn't really hate Russia, right? What they wanted to do was they want to make sure to keep America as the most powerful military force in Europe to keep the Germans down. If the Russians don't like it, well, what are they going to do about it?

And they all said that, man, they talk like schoolyard bullies. Oh, yeah? What are you going to do about it? Yeah, that's what I thought. And that's how they act. It's not their eternal hatred for Russia. And although they disdain Russia for maintaining their independence from us and ever telling George Bush no, when he wanted to get a UN vote for the war in Iraq, or, you know, any other thing where they've stood up to us. But mostly the attitude is well, they don't have the power to stop us. So if we want to intervene in Georgia and make sure that the oil pipeline from Azerbaijan goes through Georgia and Turkey to the Mediterranean Sea and not north through Russia, well, then we'll just do that. And if the Russians don't like it, well, screw them. And if the Russians decide that we must hate them and that they better hate us and that we're right back to the Cold War because this is how we treat them, well, fine. It's not like they control all of Eastern Europe anymore. So who cares? What are they going to do about it? And they all said that over and over and over again. And in fact, that's William Perry also paraphrasing his colleagues. The attitude was, well, they're a weak country now. They're not the Soviet empire anymore. So we can do what we want and they can just lump it if they don't like it.

And so it's that kind of attitude that led them to NATO expansion. Now, I'll just breeze through this real fast. It was also George W. Bush tearing up the ABM Treaty and installing anti-ballistic missile systems in Romania and Poland in violation of Bill Clinton's promises in 1997. Again, respecting the original promise of James Baker that, oh, okay, well, we are going to expand NATO further to the east, but we promise not to put military forces in the new NATO countries. And then that's exactly what they do, is they put dual use missile launchers that can host Tomahawk cruise missiles in Romania and Poland. Oh, but don't worry. Hey, NATO is a defensive alliance. Don't you worry about it as we're steadily encroaching further. And then there's the color coded revolutions, which are famously coup d'etat dressed up as popular revolutions. And they started this in Armenia, 97, Slovakian, 98, Croatia, 99, Serbia in 2000, Georgia in 2003, Ukraine in 2004, Belarus, which failed and Lebanon, which failed in 2005, but also the Kyrgyzstan Tulip revolution, which did succeed in 2005, the attempted Iranian overthrow of the Green Revolution in 2009, some people might recognize the Umbrella protest movement in Hong Kong; this is all the National Endowment for Democracy, USAID working with the National Democratic Institute and the International Republican Institute and all the myriad George Soros organizations, such as the Soros Foundation, the Open Society Foundation, the Renaissance Foundation and the rest of these to pour in hundreds of millions of dollars into these coups to overthrow these governments. So while the world's distracted with absolute catastrophe going on in Iraq, Bush is subtly overthrowing all these governments in Russia's near abroad. Anyone who wants to get along with Russia and with the avowed purpose of moving them west. And then in 2008, he debuted what was called the Bucharest Declaration over the dead body of his entire National Security Council, the entire embassy in Moscow and his own Secretary of State and Secretary of Defense who told him that it was unwise to do it. Or at least we know that they opposed it. I don't know exactly what Rice told him. I think Rice eventually did support it because she just did whatever he said. But it was Victoria Nuland, Robert Kagan's wife, the same lady from the putsch of 14 working for Dick Cheney, and they're the ones who pushed Bush to do it.

And Angela Merkel and Francois Hollande of Germany and France, they tried to stop him too. And so they wouldn't let him give an official membership action plan, but he went ahead and announced anyway, the Bucharest Declaration, where he swore that, well, one day Georgia and Ukraine will be welcomed into NATO. And we're working on that process now. So this is just like getting them into a fight with their larger neighbor, but without the promise to come and really help them. It's just getting them in trouble, but without the war guarantee. And so this is what all the scholars called the worst of both worlds. Now, I'm not saying they should have given them the war guarantee. I'm saying they shouldn't have announced that they could ever join our military alliance at all. And in doing so, they helped provoke the war in Georgia, where Mikheil Saakashvili, who had taken power in the illegal coup of 2003, he launched a war against Ossetia and Abkhazia, which are these two breakaway provinces, because you have to have settled borders to join NATO. He thought, why better, you know, launch a big coup de main and retake the lost provinces, that way I can move toward the NATO alliance. And that ended up causing the Russians to intervene and come across the Caucasus Mountains and push the Georgians back out of South Ossetia.

And at which point, Dick Cheney recommended a missile strikes against the Roki Tunnel under the Caucasus Mountains to kill Russians and could have started World War Three right then; over former Soviet Georgia that probably most Germans couldn't find on a map, much less Americans, right over there, somewhere between the Black and Caspian Sea. I mean, if you say the word Caspian to Americans, some of us know, like from messing with a globe when we were a little kid, that that's that giant lake in the middle of Eurasia somewhere, right? Something like that. Or we know Prince Caspian, right, which is the sequel to The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe. But like all this is 8,000 miles from here. This is a land that most Americans have never heard of. And in fact, when that war broke out in 2008, many, I don't know the number, but many Americans were afraid that Russia had invaded our Georgia between South Carolina and Florida because one, they'd either never heard of former Soviet Georgia, or two, even with that information in their head, they couldn't figure out why it was a top headline in America that Russia had rolled into former Soviet Georgia. So through their cognitive dissonance, they just rationalized if this is a top headline, it must be that he's attacking us. People were calling their mom and dad. People were really afraid that we were in danger and they didn't know that, wow, it doesn't really make sense that they would launch their big initial invasion beachhead in Georgia – I don't know. They panicked over it just because that's how far removed former Soviet Georgia is from the lives of the American people, from the interests of the American people. Even though our government makes it our business and gets us into these fights.

And so this was obviously a major provocation against the Russians at that time. And this was not really the beginning, but it was part of a major step up in America's integration of Ukraine into NATO, at least on a de facto basis. And this is something that's very important to understand is this process of what they call interoperability. And what that means is essentially overhauling the Ukrainian military so that it can work with NATO and be essentially just another auxiliary military ally of the NATO alliance if we went to war. So if we did have a war between NATO and the Russian Federation, you have the supreme allied

commander of NATO forces, would be in charge, an American general, and then he would be in charge of all of the armies of Europe, right? The Germans, the Hungarians, all the Baltic states and everybody else. So the idea here is again, we're making Ukraine a de facto member of NATO. We're not giving them the full war guarantee, but we are completely overhauling their command and control systems, their order of battle and their entire communication systems and their the organization of their entire military and then working on replacing all their legacy Soviet weapons systems with new NATO standard equipment; including, of course, those Javelin anti-tank missiles and all of the rest of that. And so they were working very hard on what they call this interoperability in making Ukraine a de facto member of NATO, even without that Article five guarantee. But then all the while saying, of course, yes, we do mean to bring Ukraine into NATO.

Even under Donald Trump's first term, Vice President Pence went to Georgia and gave a speech and said, we still stand by the Bucharest Declaration. We are still intent on bringing Ukraine into NATO. Remember, we've already decided to break Bill Clinton's promises about not moving military equipment into the East. If we're bringing Ukraine into NATO, well, there's every reason for the Russians to suspect that we're going to put these missile launchers in Ukraine, too. And these are, again, dual use launchers. The Mark 41 missile launchers are also known as Aegis Ashore, these missile systems, the Mark 41 missile launch can host the Sparrow anti-ballistic missile systems. They can also hold Tomahawk cruise missiles that can be tipped with H-bombs. And so Putin in his declaration of war, he said, imagine if they put Tomahawk cruise missiles in those launchers, we're talking 15 minute flight time to Moscow. It's like a knife at our throat. We can't deal with this. We're not going to accept this threat to our security. So again, that's not to say that it was justified for Russia to start the war. And if you want to talk about it, I have some answers about some other alternatives that he could have had. The idea that this is some poetic romantic swept away by visions of lost glory and all this crap is just completely preposterous. They have an ongoing massive border dispute and the threat of the world's greatest military alliance moving to just 300 miles from their capital city. And where this is the route that the French and the Germans took twice to invade Russia. And they have no natural defenses. There are no hills or rivers or mountains or anything. There's nothing but wide open fields on the way to Moscow.

And so it's absolutely a severe security situation and a security concern for them. And as I show in the book, the Hawks knew it all along too, and they said so all along too. And I guess I'll just wrap up this segment with Zbigniew Brzezinski and Henry Kissinger, who were two of the greatest, most famous and most important grand strategists of American foreign policy long after their time in office. They both served in the 70s. But they, you know, Kissinger was the Republican and Brzezinski, the Democrat, but they were basically both Rockefeller's guys, Council on Foreign Relations guys and grand strategists of American military power. Both of them, severe advocates of NATO expansion into Eastern Europe. Kissinger said, yes, we are moving the dividing line east. We are not erasing it. And the Russians will just have to learn to like it. Right? Okay? These guys were hawks. But both of them said we need a special status for Ukraine. We need to ensconce permanent neutrality for Ukraine the way it was for Finland and Austria in the old Cold War, but they're not a member of NATO or the

Warsaw Pact and they're not occupied by either side's troops. We leave them neutral as a bridge between East and West so that we don't have to fight over because as they all recognized, again, Ambassador William Burns and his "Nyet means and nyet" memo said, that if it comes to a fight over NATO membership for Ukraine, that could cause a civil war in Ukraine and that could cause Russia to have to choose whether to intervene, a decision they do not want to have to make. So in other words, this is Sergey Lavrov, the foreign minister telling the American ambassador, for the love of God, man, please don't do this. Don't put us in this position. And then Burns tells Condoleezza Rice, we really should not put them in this position, right? Not because he's a Russian simp, but because he is doing his job. He's telling her this is madness, right? We're going to cause a war. And then they went ahead anyway.

And then it was Burns, ironically, who was CIA director for the first year of Joe Biden before the war broke out. And instead of telling Burns, you solve this problem, Biden did not tell him that. They decided that actually we would like to dissuade Russia. We'll warn them you better not invade. But we're going to keep arming up Ukraine. We're going to call it deterrence, even though we know it's a provocation. We're gonna call it deterrence and we're gonna refuse to negotiate in good faith about any of these outstanding issues. We're going to pretend again. Putin just woke up on the wrong side of the bed this morning and decided he wanted to be Joe Stalin. And now he's Stalin/Hitler and we are Churchill/FDR standing up to the evil tyrant. And that's the entire story here. So you don't negotiate. That would be like Neville Chamberlain at Munich. You don't negotiate with Hitler. You only got to be tough and face him down. And then the idea was, as they all said over and over again and as I show in the book, they all said over and over again, if we can't deter them from invading, we can replicate the 1980s Afghan War. Where we bring them in, bog them down, bleed them dry and force them out the hard way. The same way we did backing the Mujahideen against them in Afghanistan in the 1980's.

Now, mind you, this is just three months after America's absolutely humiliating debacle of a defeat in Afghanistan and America having to withdraw while the Taliban's walking right into power in Kabul after spending 20 years failing to clean up the mess from the last time we did this. But well, anyway, whatever, let's just do that again. And they also invoke Syria. They go, we did such a great job backing the insurgents in Syria. You mean leading to the rise of the Islamic state caliphate and Iraq war three to destroy it again? That backing of the insurgency in Syria? Cause yeah, I remember that. It was the worst thing you did since Iraq; equivalent to the evil of Iraq War two was America's dirty war in Syria. And that's, these are the words on their lips. Oh, we're so good at this. Even though we just got defeated by insurgents in Afghanistan, we just helped insurgent's defeat the Russians in Syria, which is not exactly true, but that's what we want, and we did in Afghanistan in the 80s and that's what we're trying to replicate here. As they all said over and over again, we are going to inflict a strategic defeat on Russia. If you go back to Afghanistan, Brzezinski who worked for Jimmy Carter, he later admitted in an interview, the way he phrased it, he said, were we deliberately trying to provoke the USSR into invading Afghanistan? No. But we were knowingly increasing the probability that they would, which is of course the exact same thing, right?

That's exactly what they were doing was trying to provoke them to intervene. And so we see a lot of that same thing here.

And, you know, in the Rand Corporation study, extending Russia, they talked about, you know, what we could do, we could mess with them here, we can mess with them here. We can mess with them here. And I should say everyone should read this. Extending Russia, 2019 RAND Corporation, rand.org and by extending Russia, what they mean is overextending Russia. And by that they mean provoking them into overextending themselves, right? So that you understand what we're talking about here. They're saying, well, we could screw with them in the Nord Stream pipeline. We could try to do another coup d'etat in Belarus. We could mess with the national government in Kazakhstan and force Russia to have to expend energy to prop up the government in Kazakhstan. That's the big one. They're Mexico, right? The big one on their southern border there. We could pour more weapons into the jihadists in Syria. We could pour more weapons into the radical right in Ukraine. These are all their ideas for how to mess with the Russians, how to force the Russians to be distracted and overextended in too many different areas; to weaken them. But in that same study, they also warn that, Jesus, if we do a coup in Belarus, we could provoke Russia into invading Belarus. And if we arm up the jihadis in Syria, man, that could lead to them taking over Damascus and Russia going back to war there, right? Real problems with those jihadists there. If we pour more weapons into Ukraine, well, that could help Ukraine step up their efforts in the civil war, and that could provoke Russia to intervene with a real invasion, full scale and troops on the ground to take those Eastern territories away from Ukraine, something that would very much hurt Ukraine and weaken us too. And so we got to be very careful about how we do all these things. They say in there, when it comes to weapons to Ukraine, we must carefully calibrate the amount of weapons that we're pouring in so that we are deterring Russia, but not provoking them. But then what do they do? They just poured in so many weapons that they provoked them. And I also quote CIA officers saying to Yahoo news, don't blame us. We told the bosses to tell the White House to stop sending more weapons. We're not putting in the proper amount to deter Russia. We are putting in so much that we're provoking them. We're making the Russians decide that it's inevitable. So we might as well go now before America is done arming them up even more than they already have. And that is the position that the CIA themselves said that they were putting the Russians in on the eve of this war, man. Provoked, that's it.

ZR: Scott Horton, sorry, we've run out of time, but I will contact you again. And I want to talk about the mainstream narrative that has emerged since the Ukraine war, especially also what you mentioned, the alternatives that Russia had, and as well as Germany's geopolitical emergence. I look forward to contacting you again. Thank you for your time today.

SC: Thank you very much for having me. Appreciate it.

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END

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