



What NATO & Germany Don't Want You to Hear

— Scott Horton Part 2

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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. Even though we've grown on our YouTube channel with 162,000 subscribers, only a few thousand have made this transition. We are not asking you to leave YouTube and follow these channels. Instead, we are asking you to join these channels as a precautionary measure because YouTube is owned by Google and Google is a US corporation that can shadowban and censor us at any time, especially given our critical coverage of Israel and Ukraine. And if you're watching our videos regularly, make sure to support our journalism with a donation. We don't take any money from corporations or governments, all with the goal of providing you with information that is free from any external influence. How you can join our alternative channels and donate to our cause, you will find out in the description of this video below. Today I'll be talking to Scott Horton, who is the director of the Libertarian Institute, editorial director of antiwar.com and host of the Scott Horton Show. He is also considered one of America's leading anti-interventionist voices and is the author of several books, the latest being *Provoked: How Washington Started a New Cold War with Russia and the Catastrophe in Ukraine*. Scott Horton, welcome back to the show.

Scott Horton (SH): Thanks for having me. Good to be with you.

ZR: Scott, in our last interview we discussed the context behind the war in Ukraine, how Washington and NATO's actions helped provoke Russia and how Western leaders understood that their geopolitical moves, particularly the push to bring Ukraine into NATO, would likely trigger Russian military intervention, yet pursued them anyway. For those that missed this conversation, you can check out part 1 in the description of the video. I highly encourage you to watch it, as it is one of the most watched videos this year. In today's interview, I'd like to approach the issue from another angle. One perspective I feel is missing in much of the independent media scene is whether Russia had exhausted all of its alternatives before it

decided to invade Ukraine. As a media outlet, we strive to provide full context and do not take any support from any government around the world and therefore I think it's worth exploring this question. When I speak with critics of NATO, they often argue that Moscow had no choice. I usually pose this question to them: would the Russian state still have existed a day, a week or even a year later without Russia having to launch the war in Ukraine? And their answer is almost always yes. At that point, I ask: How does that justify an invasion? After all, a war should only wage as a last resort when the state's very existence is under immediate threat. This rationale mirrors the US approach in its post-World War II wars, especially the 2003 invasion of Iraq, which was justified on the basis of an imminent threat from the weapons of mass destruction, a claim that proved false. So my question to you is this, did Russia truly face an imminent threat in early 2022? And if not, what alternatives or other avenues were available to the Kremlin that might have been more effective than launching the invasion of Ukraine?

SH: Yeah, that's a great question. I'm glad you asked it. And I agree with you that I think people sort of oversimplify this. If Joe Biden and his predecessors provoked the thing, well, then you're just supposed to stop there and and I guess skip a step basically and just accept that Russia had to do what they had to, but I don't see it that way. And I have a section in the book called "There's Options", which is a little homage to Bill Hicks about how they did not exactly have to do this. And further, just as you did in your question, making the parallels between excuses the Americans had made in recent history in the lead up to the thing. First of all, in a thousand page book, the bottom line is that America refused to influence Kiev to end the ongoing civil war in the east of the country where they had a peace deal from February of 2015. And essentially, American Kiev refused to implement the dang thing. So that was one major issue. The second was the de facto integration of Ukraine into the NATO military alliance. And they had vowed repeatedly over and over and again, and including in 2021 that you are damn right, we are bringing Ukraine into NATO someday. So they wouldn't give them the war guarantee. They made it clear they are on the path and they were doing what was called "interoperability", basically standardizing the Ukrainian military where it would be, in the event of a war between NATO and the Russian Federation, it would just be another auxiliary army in the NATO alliance, along with Hungary and Lithuania and Germany and Poland and the rest. Even if we're not giving them an Article Five war guarantee and membership, they're still making them a de facto member of the American and Western military alliance. Not just on Russia's Western border, but their Southern border here too when we're talking about Ukraine, just three, 400 miles from Moscow and St. Petersburg. Just right there.

So, those were the outstanding issues. I don't know if people like this analogy or not, it makes sense to me – essentially America had put Russia's back to the wall. They didn't necessarily have them all the way in a corner. But the thing is, if you put a guy's back to the wall, he might just stab you, right? He might not wait till you got him all the way in the corner. And so is the provocation very real? Yes. Did it justify the way that Putin acted? I don't believe so. And I think that he had – just as you said, this was not an immediate and proportionate policy. In fact, even if they had brought Ukraine into NATO, Putin still could have made a year

worth of threats that "you better kick them back out again" or something. We're still not talking about war yet, right? The war had not come to Russia. Russia decided to escalate it to this degree. Now, again, this civil war had been going on since 2014 and that was America's fault. That was not Russia that started that. You know, the war party always starts the story with Crimea. The story begins with America overthrowing the government in Kiev. Then the Russians took Crimea. Then America insisted that Kiev launch the civil war in the East. We know that it was John Brennan, the head of the CIA that went to Kiev. Two days later, they launched the war all on his promises and demands. So that part of it is right, that it was America that started it. But that's still essentially a civil war in Ukraine. One side backed by America and one side backed by Russia to a much less degree than they had claimed. But still, that was not exactly a territorial threat to the Russian Federation. You're totally right about that.

So then, I believe it was Aaron Maté who said – I'm sorry, I always forget which of these recommendations was his, I believe it was Aaron Maté – that Putin could have shut off all gas to Eastern Europe. We're talking about the winter of 2021, 2022 here, right? November, December, January, February – these are the coldest months. And he could have made it very clear that, oh, I am playing hardball, all right, let's see how you guys like paying the market rate for natural gas without access to ours. Which he did, by the way, in November of 2021, he shut down Nord Stream 1. That was why he didn't need to blow up Nord Stream 2. He could have just shut it off at the source the same way he had done with Nord Stream 1, which was in fact diplomatic action against the Europeans. Trying to intimidate them toward the end of 2021. He could have followed through and cut off all natural gas and said, this is what it's going to be like. Right? That was a major card he could have played, but he needed the money. And he didn't, I guess, have the rest of the Asian countries lined up enough yet to increase their imports to make the difference. So he wasn't ready to do that.

Another thing that he could've done, which I'm pretty sure this was an original of mine, was he could have just announced that he is going to obstruct all business on the UN Security Council until America implemented the Minsk II deal. And in conjunction with that, he could have absolutely demanded – and he had done this in 2018, but it was all right in the middle of Russiagate and all of this stuff, and Trump barely even responded, it was just dead in the water – but he could've done this again, he could have absolutely demanded Blue Helmets UN Peacekeepers from a completely uninterested third country in the world. There's almost 200 countries in the world. Pick a country to take their military, put them in blue helmets and have them stand on the demarcation line in Eastern Ukraine to stop the fighting on the line and then implement the rest of Minsk II. And he could have said, "look, I got veto power, the UN Security Council is dead until you do what I say here, this is a peaceful solution, but it's a real one and I absolutely demand it". He did not do that.

And the other thing he could have done – which I think this sort of goes without saying sometimes, but it's really worth exploring to me – is he could've told the truth that you are damn right I'm going to invade Ukraine and a lot of people are going to die, you better come to the table and sign my treaty. And instead he didn't do that. He played all coy and said,

"well, you know, I'm building up my forces, but I'm not necessarily going to invade, who said I'm going to invade? You guys said I was going to invade on the 16th and I didn't. See? You guys are cooks. What are you talking about?" This whole diplomatic dance that they did, which is completely stupid and completely contrary to their goals. If they were trying to get the treaty signed, which I do believe they were at least in December, maybe at one point in January or February, they had given up on trying to get Biden to truly negotiate in good faith over their proposed treaty, which was not an unreasonable treaty. You know, it was negotiable. It wasn't like some dead letter that was meant to be rejected. It was a real proposal that could have been debated. So at some point, I guess the Russians had given up there, but what Putin could have done was made himself very clear that that's right. You know what? I might just take everything east of the river. I'm really angry and I'm very, very concerned for my nation's security. And so you better give in here. And he didn't do that. Instead, I joke in the book that, you know, potentially it was his generals that told him that like, no, we want it to be a surprise attack when we do attack and everything. So I say, well, maybe it was military necessity that demanded this diplomatic incompetence. Right? Or what he should have done was made it very clear that these are the stakes and this is what will happen. And actually, I quote him in the book, saying – well, first of all, I quote Emmanuel Macron telling him, "don't give in to provocations, they're trying to get you to do something stupid, buddy. Don't do it". Right? Then I quote Putin, also at a press conference saying – I'm sorry, I can only loosely paraphrase, I forget the exact quote. It's something very close along the lines of: "I think they're trying to provoke us into doing this. And that's why they're threatening our security this way because they want to escalate it in this way, but still, it's a good way to get me to do it, because yeah.".

And this is something that we talked about before, which is part and parcel of the standardization of bringing Ukraine into NATO as a de facto member is the very real potential that America would install so called defensive missile systems in Eastern Ukraine. And the thing about that is the missile launchers for that Aegis on shore that hosts the Sparrow anti-ballistic missile missiles, it's called the MK 41 missile launcher. And it can host Tomahawk cruise missiles as well, which can be tipped with hydrogen bombs. And now that Trump tore up the INF treaty, especially, which they could have cheated anyway, but that's a real strategic threat. Oh, and I'm glad I mentioned that because this was in part his excuse. And I'm glad you brought this up in your question, because Putin knew that this was all in violation of international law. He didn't have a UN Security Council resolution telling him he could invade across the sovereign border, which is the only legal way to do this, according to the UN Charter, which is a treaty that Russia has ratified. Right? So he knew he was breaking the law, but then you know what he did? He invoked Bill Clinton and Kosovo and said, oh, well, if an ethnic minority is being persecuted, then I have the right to break off that territory and guarantee its independence. If Bill Clinton can go around the UN Security Council and break Kosovo off of Serbia, then I can break the Donbass off of Ukraine. How do you like that?

And then – and this is a true thing, and you got to wonder why Zelensky would be so reckless to do this – but in the lead up to the war, Zelensky and one of his aides as well, threatened

that they would just go ahead and tear up the Budapest memorandum of 1994, where all sides promised not to intervene to protect Ukraine sovereignty, but they all promised to respect Ukraine sovereignty if they would give up their nukes. And they go, Oh, well, maybe we'll just get rid of the Budapest memorandum. Well, that is a not very subtle way of saying, maybe we will pursue nuclear weapons. That is what they mean by that. Right? No one's going to give them a nuke. And to make one would take so long that the Russians are going to invade before they make one, just like with Iran, right? "We're going to invade before they are done with their first one. So don't even bother." Right? So it was only a provocation for him to say that. It was completely stupid for him to say that. And then Putin said, "Oh, weapons of mass destruction, I'm being threatened with weapons of mass destruction – how do you like me now, George W. Bush without your UN resolution? You want to go ahead and start a war? You say that your country's being threatened with weapons of mass destruction? Well, you heard them, they're going to tear up the Budapest memorandum". And then he says, "and there's an ongoing genocide. The poor people of the Donbass have been outside of the protection of their own government, which treats them as outlaws and war enemies and has been killing them by the thousands." Approximately 9,000 had been killed mostly on the so-called rebel side in the last seven years.

And he says, "well now I'm Barack Obama and I have the responsibility to protect. Just like when Barack Obama went to Libya when he was pretending that Gaddafi was about to murder 700,000 men, women and children in the city of Benghazi. He said, 'imagine the town of Charlotte wiped off the face of the earth. That's what's going to happen if I don't intervene'." And Putin said, "yep, look at me. I'm Barack Obama. Now I have the responsibility to protect the poor people of the Donbass", and then he launched this war. So who is it that tore the hole in the international law that he waltzed right through? It was America's imperial leaders who did all of this, a lot of it, at Russia's expense in the first place. The Middle East wars, in one very real way, were always all about the Cold War dominating those oil resources so we can keep them from China. And so if we need to, we can vastly increase production and dump the price in order to screw the Russians, which is one of the ways that Ronald Reagan helped to bring the Soviets down in the 1980s in conspiracy with the Saudis – you guys will take a financial hit for 10 years, but we got your back forever. And we're going to screw them Russians. And that was how they did it. So this is a huge part of why America needs all the Middle East wars and all that dominance in the Middle East in the first place, to still continue to try to contain the Russians now 36 years after the end of the Soviet Union.

ZR: Let us now look at Germany's foreign policy, which has undergone some transformation over the last decades. At reunification in 1990, Moscow was given further assurances by the US that NATO would not expand eastwards. And we talked about this in great depth in the first part of our interview with you. Yet since then, NATO has admitted more than a dozen countries from Eastern and Central Europe. Despite being part of NATO, Germany at times pursued a more independent line. For example, in 2003, Chancellor Gerhard Schröder refused to join the US invasion of Iraq. In 2008, at the NATO summit in Bucharest, Chancellor Angela Merkel opposed US President George Bush's plan to grant Ukraine and Georgia a

NATO membership action plan, because she was fearing destabilization – concern later confirmed in WikiLeaks cables. We also saw this divergence between US and German foreign policy in Iran. While Washington remained reluctant until President Obama's nuclear deal in 2015 to normalize relations with Iran, Germany was already pushing for diplomacy and trade with Iran throughout this period.

And then we saw the divergence when it came to Russia. Chancellor Merkel advanced the Nord Stream pipeline projects. Nord Stream 1 was opened in 2011 and Nord Stream 2 was completed in 2021, even as Washington sought to block the pipeline through sanctions on German and European companies. This divergence between the US and German foreign policy ended after Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, and Germany quickly announced a 100 billion euro special military fund to reach NATO's 2 % target. Under the new Chancellor Friedrich Merz, this shift has gone even further, lifting any fiscal limits on defense, buying more US military equipment, vowing to make Germany Europe's strongest conventional army. And now even discussing NATO-style security guarantees for Ukraine in which German troops could be potentially deployed in the conflict. Today, there's essentially no difference in policy between the US and Germany, perhaps only on a rhetorical level. One could even argue that Germany is now pursuing a more aggressive posture towards Russia than the United States itself. How do you assess Germany's transformation and what does it reflect on the geopolitical level? Is Washington losing power or Germany gaining more on the geopolitical stage?

SH: Oh, man, that's all very interesting. I wish I had a deeper insight into German domestic politics and in the way that domestic politics dictate these outcomes and all of that. I mean, as I demonstrate in the book, from the very beginning of NATO, the purpose was, as the first director, Lord Ismay from Great Britain said, it was to keep the Americans in, the Germans down, and the Soviets out. And so that has remained since the end of the Cold War with the Soviet Union and its dissolution. The point was to keep America there to prevent Germany from being the dominant power on the European continent, which it otherwise would be. This was actually part of even the negotiations and the promises over NATO expansion, was that the Americans said to the Soviets, hey, do you want an independent, potentially nuclear-armed Germany with its own foreign policy or do you want us to stay in Germany? And the Soviets said, actually, we like you better than the Germans and we would prefer, just like the British would prefer that America remain the dominant power there.

Now, Angela Merkel, you know, she wasn't that hard of a hardliner and I don't think she was really trying to stick it to the United States, but she seemed to be trying to split the difference and protect Germany's interests in a way by building what she called the Eurasian Home concept with Vladimir Putin. And this was based on building these pipelines, really even replacing German nuclear with this natural gas from Russia, which I think is huge and important and wonderful, if I know you know and people should remember, keep this in mind, that the last two times Russia and Germany fought, it was the worst thing that ever happened. Nuts to Texas natural gas exporters and I'm a Texan, but they can find some other markets somewhere. It's ridiculous that that kind of pressure at all, which only has something

to do with it, not everything, but that's part of why America would prefer to sever this relationship between Germany and Russia, prevent them from having an alliance which would freeze America and Britain and our other Western friends out of Eastern Europe potentially. And with all of Russia's natural resources and German manpower and know-how and everything, they could be the dominant player in Eurasia and the "world island", as the British theorist Halford Mackinder called it back then.

So this is why America has to make sure, in their mind, this is what Washington thinks, they have to do everything they can to break up this relationship between Germany and Russia in order to maintain American dominance there instead. And in the book, I quote, there's a guy, George Friedman, who runs Stratfor, which is sort of this private pretended CIA. You know, they're intelligence analysts, they do some dirty tricks, but they're basically analysts and they brief corporations who can't afford CIA briefings, I guess, on things around the world and whatever. And he gave a great speech where he talked about this. A good keyword to search if you want to look at it is "primordial fear". This is the primordial fear of the United States of America, that Germany and Russia would get it together. Which by the way, again, as an American here, it ain't the Hitler-Stalin pact. You know what I mean? What do I care if modern day Germany and Republican Russia are getting along? That's only to the good. And as far as whatever billions of dollars are being cost to any one company somewhere, that's meaningless compared to the fate of mankind. And the financial interdependence of Russia and Germany, which if you listen to the war party, they'll say that's what's wrong. They call it blackmail. Well, Germany can't fight Russia if Germany is dependent on Russian gas. So that's terrible because we want them to fight. Are you kidding? You know what I mean? But that's the way they talk about it. They call it blackmail when this is the whole point. That we want the Germans depending on Russian gas, but we want the Russians dependent on German euros. Right? So that they don't fight. For the same reason we want low tariffs between America and China so that the billionaires in both countries have too much at stake for us to come to violent conflict which could kill millions or tens or more. And so we don't want global governance, but we do want economic interdependence between, especially the major nations. But then you can see how, despite all of their, you know, blather about the liberal rules based world order, it's not a level playing field that they seek at all. It's essentially the same old Anglo-American empire alliance that they've been pushing for a hundred years. And if it has to be at the Germans expense, whatever.

Now, I'm sorry, to your question, well, what's going on now is it looks to me like the Americans are using the war in Ukraine to whip the Germans into shape – that look, we're just not going to have that. And their last leaders who wanted this Eurasian home, they're gone. And the new guys – I mean, I don't know what role the CIA plays in just picking and choosing the leaders in Germany. I bet it's a major role. Remember that time a few years back? Oh, this is probably 15 years ago now there was a major news broadcaster who said that the CIA tells us what to do and would say all the time we lie to you, this and that. And then he was fired. And I forgot if they killed him after that or not, but Germany is very much under the thumb of the American empire and is being essentially twisted against acting in its own interests. And again, it ain't the national socialist. So what do I care if the Germans are

dominant on the continent again? If America just came home, because, by the way, we're bankrupt and we can't afford to do this anyway. So regardless of my opinion, we literally cannot afford the world empire. So then what's going to happen? Really? Germany and France and Poland and probably England will create a European army. Good, so what? That means they're not going to fight because they're all going to be in one big army together. That was what they were trying to do when American Britain prevented them from doing it back 20 years ago. So fine. There's no reason to think that they're all going to go to total war again, like in the 20th century. They'd have to be mad men. And I think they're dumb, but I don't think they're that crazy.

ZR: Since early September, we've seen a string of incidents indicating a growing Russian threat. And this is being repeated in the media and the political establishment over and over again. So, for example, on September 9th and 10th, we saw Russian military drones enter Polish airspace. On September 19th, three Russian fighter jets violated Estonian airspace for about 12 minutes and were intercepted by Italian NATO aircrafts. On September 21st, Germany scrambled Eurofighter jets to shadow a Russian surveillance plane over the Baltic Sea. In just this week, Denmark reported disruptive drone flyovers near several airports, while NATO deployed additional early-warning aircraft to Lithuania in response. It was the first time Article 4 of NATO, which calls for consultation, was invoked twice in the same week by member states. German Chancellor Friedrich Merz stated on September 10th in regards to the first incursion, and let me quote him here, quote: "Russia has endangered lives in a country that is both a NATO and an EU member. This reckless conduct forms part of a long series of provocations in the Baltic Sea region and in NATO's Eastern flank", unquote. Russia appears to be systematically testing NATO's defensive and reactive capabilities, possibly preparing for a larger war with Europe. In your view, do these incursions show a threat posed by Russia? And do you think Germany should be playing a larger role? I mean, you already answered the question that Germany could combine with other countries. But talking from the US experience, what does a militarized society look like – and if Germany becomes one, what consequences does it have on the social fabric domestically?

SH: Yeah, well, look, I mean, all of this is just one very small and recent and terrible symptom of the larger conflict here, which is so unfortunate. And I forgot if we had talked about this last time, how difficult it will be to end the war now since the Ukrainians still stand on territory that they do not want to quit and that the Russians still claim. And yet the Russians can't seem to claim it other than in super slow motion. They're fighting more a war of attrition than a war of just land seizure. So the Ukrainians are on their back foot, but they're losing very slowly. So the war is just dragging on and on right now. And this is a symptom of that. A huge part of the problem, of course, is that America and Europe continue to back the losing side and drag the thing on and on. If we'd ended the war six months ago, well, then we wouldn't be having this conversation about drones, right? So now it's a question. And of course, in Western media, they act like history started this week and they go, oh, my God, Russia's flying drones over here. So what are we going to do as a defensive measure against that and sort of forget all the rest of the background and the context. When the answer is everybody send your best guy to Geneva to sit down and bring this conflict to

an end now. That's how you prevent the drone incursions, right? Because what else are they going to do? They can, yes, spend billions of dollars on their own new drone industry. I mean, that's the future of war. We can see it, manned aircraft are absolutely obsolete. America's frontline M1 Abrams tank is bust. I mean, they dropped grenades on them with fifteen dollar drones and completely took them out. And so it's definitely a new era of warfare. So I guess they're going to have to get used to that, build new electronic nets and new ingenious ways of communicating with drones to prevent jamming and all these things. That is on the national government of every country in Europe to do that. But as far as preventing the Russians from doing these things, yeah, I mean, they should send somebody to give Lavrov a dressing down. But at the same time they should do everything they can to bring the conflict to a close. And frankly to butt out of the thing, to stop backing Ukraine in anything other than supporting diplomacy.

This is the least subtle proxy war in world history here. Right? Where American and European leaders have boldly proclaimed that this is a proxy war. Boldly boasted and bragged about not just that we're killing Russians and we're sending them home in coffins and we are sending them home and body bags and all these things, but we're killing their generals in the field, helping sink their Navy and this kind of thing. I mean, can you imagine the parallel? And I know you can. It's just unbelievable if you put the shoe on the other foot. Imagine the Russians going to these lengths to help the Taliban fight America in Afghanistan for the last 20 years, giving them billions and billions and billions, hundreds of billions of dollars, artillery and drones and everything that they need to fight the Americans. America would have nuked Moscow. We'd have gone to full scale war with Russia if they had done this to us. The degree to which the Americans and the Europeans have been overtly backing the Ukrainians and gloating about Russian casualties and suffering and economic dislocation and the rest is really unbelievable. If it was a TV show, you'd be like, this is too far out. And it really raises the question of what are we going to do? You know, my friend and co-host, Darryl Cooper, says the Russians aren't going to forgive us for 100 years for this. In the pages of world history, boy, did we screw this up. How are we ever going to figure out a way to make it right? And then here we have an American president, probably more than any president in our near term future anyway, who truly wants to get along with Russia. But you really just can't because they're just stuck in this war. And so the possibility of truly normalizing relations and trying to figure out a better way to move forward is essentially just halted until many other things change and move into place. So I am very pessimistic and very worried about how things are now.

ZR: You just mentioned that US President Donald Trump wants to end the war. But I've talked to other journalists who say he doesn't want to prevent the war, he just wants to give it to the Europeans and delegate it. And the bigger focus is China. He wants to make sure that Russia keeps on bleeding while the entire focus – and that's the whole theater that we're seeing in West Asia, is to counter China. Because if Donald Trump was truly, truly convinced of ending the war, he could just tell NATO members, hey, we're not going to come to your support, we're not going to do Article 5. Or he's going to stop sending weapons. He could just tell Zelensky tomorrow "we're going to cut off all aid, there's no more support," we are US

proxies" – so what do you think is still keeping Trump in the game? Is it the new conservative base? Is it the fact that he perhaps tried to gain the vote of many anti-war voices in order to defeat Kamala Harris? And once he's in power, he has reversed his position? Or is it the military industrial complex? What do you think is driving him?

SH: Yeah, look, the dynamic of the thing is a mess, right? He is in a difficult position. He absolutely was sincere that he wants to end the war. The problem is he doesn't know anything about it. And he doesn't know how to end the war. And he really can't. If you look at the battle map right now, the Russians control virtually 100 % of Luhansk. But they control only about three quarters of Donetsk. And one quarter of Donetsk, that's a lot of land on the ground. And then they only control about two thirds of Zaporizhia along the Azov coast there and also about two thirds of Kherson. And the one third of Kherson they don't control is on the other side of the Dnieper River there. So the Russians are far short of their goals. Now Moscow had put out a trial balloon saying they might be willing to climb down on Kherson and Zaporizhia and maybe draw the lines where they are now. Because see, they have, if you picture the east of Ukraine in your head here, they have that Azov coast, that whole so-called land bridge from Donetsk to the Crimean Peninsula. And they control the southern end of the Dnieper River there. So they have reopened the fresh water supplies to Crimea that the coup d'état junta had cut off. So they've accomplished their goals there as far as guaranteeing fresh water to Crimea, guaranteeing land continuity between the Donbass and the Crimean Peninsula. They could, and I encourage any Russian foreign ministry officials listening now to end this war right now. You basically won, but they don't want to quit until they've got all the Donbass at least. And yet the Ukrainians are not going to turn around. I mean, hell, a lot of the soldiers are turning around and running away. But the government and the military, they are not willing to turn around and quit that territory that they still stand on. And the Russians, they may end up overall, and I don't know what they've decided, they may well have decided that they're going to take all of Dnipropetrovsk and Sumy and Kharkiv and everything east of the river. And I don't know if that's true or not. They very well may have. And if they have decided that, that could take a very long time. I don't know what it would take for the Ukrainian lines to just simply crumble. But that's been predicted for a very long time now and has not happened. And so I don't know the extent of Russia's true ambition at this point, how much territory they want to take. But at least they say they only want the Donbass and no oversee there. They don't claim and overtly say they want everything east of the river.

But anyway, so Trump's come into power for a second term and said, okay, relax, guy, everybody just chill and stop fighting. And then they're like, no. Right? The Russians are winning, but slowly. And the Ukrainians are losing, but slowly. And so they're just not in the right spot to quit. He did say at the beginning, well, I'm suspending all aid, the Europeans want to back them, fine, whatever. But you understand the dynamic here where America is backing the weaker losing side. So we're really talking about leaving somebody – and again, America got Ukraine into this mess. So we're talking about a real betrayal here. Right? The Bay of Pigs times a hundred thousand. Right? Times a million. It's an unforgivable thing, what America has done to Ukraine, getting them in this situation – to just turn around and

leave them now. I'm not arguing against it, but I'm saying the politics of that are very different than, say, for example, picking up the phone and telling Netanyahu to stop slaughtering babies when he is the overlord and they are the captives. Right? And where they, the Palestinians, are doing nothing but lose. The civilians, I mean, not Hamas. And the Israelis are at no threat whatsoever and have the run of the place to do whatever they want. Making them stop, that's one thing. Telling the Ukrainians, "well, good luck, pal", when they are actually being invaded and conquered by a much more powerful neighboring state in a fight that we encouraged them to get in and all these other things is a whole other political dynamic.

So Trump was betting, ah, I'll go in there and I'll just tell him what to do and everyone will want to be friends with me because after all, he's got a lot to offer. He doesn't have too many more legitimate threats to make. Biden already tried sanctions and weapons, but he can promise normalization. Which is a lot. He could lift a lot of sanctions and try. So to your China point, too. I don't think he's changed his mind about this. The two major takes on Russia in America's foreign policy establishment are: One, we need to befriend Russia to separate them away from China. And to keep them on our side, it's after all, a more or less a white Christian Western civilization. Even if it's the Eastern frontier of the West, it's part of our same broader Christendom going back over the last couple of thousand years of civilization here. So we'll keep them with us and split them away from China, which is the senior partner in the program now. They're the more powerful players. Donald Trump was telling the truth that that was why he wanted to get along with Russia. He was never their blackmailed slave or any of this stuff. He was thinking about how to screw the Chinese. And he even said, I asked Henry Kissinger and Henry Kissinger said, you're so smart because that's right, that's what we should do. Kissinger is the guy who helped Nixon split China away from the USSR back when China was the weaker partner. Right? And he's saying, yes, this is smart, this is what we should do. We should be – not really kissing up to the Russians – but let them kiss up to us. Bring them West. That's what they want anyway.

The other side is no, we hate Russia because what? Because they're right wing Christians, I guess. And the American secular left liberals, they hate Russia. Putin himself is a Donald Trump figure to them in their mind. You know, their dad that left them or whatever their problem is. They kind of transpose all of their partisan hatred onto him and say what we need to do then is that we can never befriend them – red, white and blue Republican Russia is far worse than Soviet communism to America's Democrats. So they say, no, what we'll do is we'll bog them down in a war in Ukraine. It'll be like Afghanistan in the 1980s. We'll sucker them in and bog them down into fighting this long term commitment. We'll give them another Vietnam. We'll give them another Afghanistan. Just as Bin Laden gave us an Afghanistan replicating that same plan. We'll do that in order to weaken China, in order to prevent Russia from being there for China, which is stupid anyway. It doesn't really work anyway. And especially look at the result, right? You could just picture Joe Biden, feeble old Joe Biden – he gave Vladimir Putin a giant kick in the chest. Told him, get the hell out of Europe. Turn East. Sell all your metals and timber and hydrocarbons to China and India instead of us. I mean, has anyone ever shown Joe Biden a map of Eurasia? Does he not think that there was

anything East or South of Russia, people for them to engage with? Yeah, there's plenty. They don't need us that bad. Or at least it was marginal. Our side blew it, essentially, chasing this same policy.

So, yes, it is all about China. But no, Trump is not insincere. It's just he ain't that good, right? He wanted to solve it. Then he couldn't. So now he's going mad, which, by the way, I should bring this up. His statement the other day – "I think the Russians are getting their asses kicked and maybe Ukraine could take the whole country back" and all that. He wasn't announcing any real new expanded American support other than what he had already said, which is I'll let the Europeans buy the weapons and give them, but I'm still not doing it. And Vice President Vance still said, yeah, we're not escalating our support here. Our military is already helping them with intelligence and all those kinds of things. But as far as the weapons here, we're making this Europe's problem. And the Russians understand and the Europeans understand they don't have the wherewithal or whatever amount of weapons you can imagine in there to make the difference. Right? I mean, it would really take America's military to go to war against Russia's military in Ukraine to defeat them and drive them out now. And nobody's going to do that. And the Europeans, they sure as hell aren't even going to try it without us. They're just not going to do that. You mentioned the war guarantees? Give me a break. I mean really, I don't know what's going on in their heads. I really don't. But on the surface, that's just sabotage, right? That's what this war's about in the first place – if America is given essentially an Article 5 guarantee or Europe is giving a full war guarantee to Ukraine, making them full allies, well, Russia won't stand for that. Hence the war.

So I saw a quote of Lavrov saying that's a dead letter, forget it. In other words, as long as the West continues to insist on that, the Russians aren't going to stop. And so yeah, like I say, I'm sorry, I don't really mean to defend Trump because I could just sit here and indict him all day on all different other subjects. But I think on this one thing, he does wish that he could do something about it. He just doesn't know what to do. And quite frankly, if I worked for him, I don't think I have any better advice than just quit. But politically, that really looks very bad, you know, to simply abandon. And look, it's the same thing that just happened in Afghanistan. And they still talk about it. Like the worst thing about the Afghan War was when we left. It looked really bad. Like, oh, man, actually, no, we lost that war for 20 years and we got a lot of other people killed too. That whole thing was an absolute catastrophe. And why? Because we made a bunch of promises that we literally could not keep, to a bunch of people to give them power that they could not hold without our support. So the whole thing is like building a house of cards and then telling them you're going to move your family in. No, you're not, either! Same thing in Vietnam. We propped up a government for 15 years. And eventually we went, you know what, guys, it ain't going to work. Why did they stay so long? Just because losing and giving up and watching their friends be crushed looks that bad. That's why. You can't be soft on the commies, you can't be soft on the terrorists, you can't be soft on Vladimir Putin, the czar and all of these things. But, yeah, you have to, ultimately.

And this is exactly what it comes down to. We either send in the US Navy and Air Force or we're not. Ukraine is going to defeat the Russian army in Ukraine with America's Navy and

Air Force assist or they're not. And they're not. We're not coming. We're not coming, they have to know. And so for all Europeans and all Ukrainians – and honestly, man, I really can't understand, I just can't for the life of me figure it out, and I guess I do understand – people don't really understand how they can exercise any immediate power on their own. You know what I mean? We don't have a lot of leverage. But it just seems to me as soon as this war broke out, we should have had a global general strike. Right? Like, eight and a half billion humans all agree: no, we're not having this. Lavrov and Blinken to Geneva, now. Stop this fighting. You can't have a hot war on Russia's border 300 miles from their capital city. This could turn into a thermonuclear war. So that's it. You know, forget workers of the world. How about all human beings on planet Earth unite? We are against this war continuing for one more day. It's absolutely just unbelievable that we've allowed this to continue for three and a half years. I mean, man, this is playing Russian roulette. Forgive my horrible analogy, but, like, it's crazy that we have allowed this to continue so long. And that the public in all of our most powerful Western so-called democracies refine this whole war in the name of democracy. But the people of Europe and America just can't seem to get our act together to make our countries come to an understanding with the Russians here and figure this thing out. It's just unforgivable and unbelievable to me.

ZR: So how do you assess this going forward? The Europeans have a hardline position that there will be no territorial concessions and no recognition of Russian territory. The United States, as we know, since the start of the year, has been one day calling Putin and then the other day sending weapons to the Europeans and then the other meeting Putin again in Alaska. And then just recently it's been reported that Trump has lost his patience and the quote was that he posted on social media recently – let me quote him here, quote: "Ukraine, with the support of the European Union, is in a position to fight and win all of Ukraine back in its original form", unquote. And it's becoming increasingly difficult to see that there's anything other but Vietnam and Afghanistan happening all over again to the US, where eventually, whether it's on the Trump administration or a future, different government that the US will have to pull back – if not, as you stated, this could turn out into a thermonuclear war. How do you see all of this? And do you think Trump will end the Ukraine war under his administration? And what possible steps would he have to undertake concretely? If you were his advisor, what were the first things that you would tell him that Ukraine, Europeans and Russia would have to do?

SH: Well, I kind of like the first part of that question, actually. I would maybe advise him to focus on the thing that you said there about, well, we will never recognize Russian control of eastern Ukraine. Well, great. I don't care what you call it, pal. America never recognized the Soviets dominance over the Baltic states. Does anyone doubt that the Soviet Union dominated the Baltics states from at least between the world wars. Right? From the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact on. Yeah, of course they did. We don't have to recognize that. They have all different levels of diplomatic recognition. The same with Crimea. Well, we accept that Crimea and Novorossia and the Donbass are under Russian sovereign control. What? You know what I mean? Whatever you call it, whatever you want, dude. You don't have to admit, but you do have to recognize the reality on the ground and act accordingly, right? So

the same thing I said about Afghanistan for years. I don't care. Call it a victory. It ain't one. You can call it whatever you want. Just get the hell out of there. You know what I mean? So when I hear them saying things like that, I hear potential wiggle room for a diplomatic climb down. Okay, the war is over. Our side lost, but we will never recognize our defeat here. Okay, dude, whatever, you know? So I think that's the point.

Now, as far as whether Trump can solve it – no, I think he cannot solve it. I think what it comes down to very unfortunately. I mean, I don't know. There may be other factors I'm not considering here, but it just really looks to me like the question is how long until the Ukrainian armed forces just cannot hold up this front. It's like 600 miles from north to south across the country there. Overall, it looks to me and I really don't know and I don't think anybody really knows the actual casualties. But I think the way the Ukrainians claim that the Russians are losing five times as many men as them and all this stuff is a complete hoax. I don't think anybody really believes that. And we can see by the battle maps that on the ground the line is ever steadily moving westward, never eastward. Right? The Ukrainians are making no progress on any front anywhere. They are being just steadily rolled back. And a lot of them have fought very bravely and a lot of them have held the line for a very long time. But there's a recent report by the Institute for the Study of War that says that the Russians have now built up a reserve of 300,000 men, many of which have already rotated into the war now and are battle-hardened guys. And maybe this goes back to your question before that I don't think I really addressed – are they preparing to fight Europe? I don't really think so. They might be preparing for a major escalation of the war in Ukraine. A major push and attempt to break completely through Ukrainian lines.

The best experts that I know, military experts on the war, that I follow the most closely are Daniel L. Davis, who hosts the Daniel Davis Deep Dive on YouTube. And also there's a guy named Willie O.A.M. And his real name is Matt Williams, and he is an Australian infantry veteran of the Afghan War and also a real expert. I watch these two guys basically every day and. And both sides say this, that they're fighting a war of attrition. It's not simply a war to seize land. That'll come. But that'll come after we're done destroying their army. They chew up enough of their guys that they can't resist. Then our guys can walk around wherever they want. And that's what Ukraine says about the Russians too. They go, yeah, we're losing territory, but that doesn't matter. We're going to take that territory back one day. As soon as our war of attrition works and we're done killing so many Russians that their lines break and then we are able to walk around wherever we want in the West, except one side is smoking crack here and the other is making a lot of sense. Right? And look, I'm not a pro-Russian partisan in this thing. I hope that you can tell I'm just a Texan here, but I'm just on the side of reality. Russian victory is inevitable. I don't know how long it will take. I think me and a lot of other people are surprised at how long they have been able to last. And that is in great part due to Western assistance.

But eventually they're going to run out of men and the Ukrainians are in a terrible demographic situation where so many people have fled the country and so many people have already been killed. I don't know if you know this, but you'll sometimes see photos of older

men in their 40s and 50s fighting on Ukraine's front lines. And there was even Russian propaganda. I don't even know if it was Russian propaganda. Might have just been a misunderstanding that opponents of America's policy said, oh my God, look, they've already lost so many men, they're already sending their 40 and 50 year olds to the front. But actually that was a misunderstanding, potentially. I think it was a legitimate misunderstanding because it's counterintuitive that Ukraine was sending the 40 and 50 year old's to the front first. I mean, other than the Nazi volunteers who like rushed to the front themselves, but otherwise in the regular army, they sent the 40 and the 50 year olds to the front first and they keep the 18 and 20-somethings and 30-somethings in the rear to do logistics and supply and these kinds of things to try to spare their lives long enough that they can have a baby before they get sent to the front to get killed. And the idea is the 40 and 50 year olds have already had a chance to reproduce. And so they are more expendable in a society where they already have one of the lowest birth rates in the world. Now with the war and with the massive refugee exodus and everything, they have the lowest replacement rate on the planet Earth in Ukraine right now. And so that's why you see 40 and 50 year olds being sent to the front. And that's why you see American politicians like Lindsey Graham demanding, slamming their fist on the table, demanding that Ukraine lower and lower and lower their conscription age. What do you mean your conscription age is only 27? You better lower it to 18 or at least 25. And so they lowered it to 25. And Lindsey Graham demanded, how dare you not be sending all your 18 year olds to the front? In Kiev, they're going, man, we need our 18 year olds to be able to turn 19 and hopefully get someone pregnant before they get sent off to get blown up. I mean, this is a desperate situation for their side. Time is not on Ukraine's side here. And America is really doing them no favors and Europe's doing them no favors by keeping them in this war as long as we have. That's what's going to end the war, when the Russians win it. And I don't know how long that's going to take and how many more people are going to be killed. But I don't think that wisdom is going to prevail in Moscow.

And look again, and I mean this when I say this, the Russians could just stop the war right now. Ukraine has no ability to retake any of this territory. You got all of Luhansk, you got three quarters of Donetsk, you got the two thirds of Zaporizhia and Kherson that you want, and you got Crimea. So fine, just call that a victory. Right? That's my advice to the Russians. They could stop right now too. But I'm afraid that they're not going to. And now that it's on, they may continue on to Odessa and God knows what. If Ukraine's lines really do just break, and their supply trails back to the West are all severed and they're just completely screwed and the Russians do have the run of the place – well, then what? They're going to stop then or they're going to press their luck and go on because Odessa is on the other side of the river. And then once they take Odessa, you know what? There's a strip of land called Transnistria on the Moldovan side of the Ukrainian Moldovan border. It's called that because it's on the other side of the Dniester River there. But this is territory that's still controlled by Russia since the fall of the Soviet Union and still has Russian peacekeeping troops, they're keeping the Moldovan regime out or sharing power with them, sort of, there. So this is one of these frozen conflicts, which if you're a Russian military planner and assuming they've essentially broken the Ukrainian military down to insurgency level and that now they want to take Odessa – well now, I don't know if you can literally, but at least figuratively, you can see

Transnistria from Odessa. And so maybe they want to keep going then. And that's what I'm afraid of. It's just like with all government programs, it's a slippery slope. Once they have a problem to solve, they keep finding more problems to solve and more things to do. And they keep making matters worse and finding – you know, in fact, one of the major things, and I call the war Russia's Pyrrhic victory, predicting their eventual victory in this war, I say that in the book, that ultimately what has Putin done here? He's taking everyone who ever liked Russia out of Ukraine. So whatever's left of Ukraine after this is going to be a right-wing Nazi right that absolutely hates the Russians guts, you know? And they're going to have to deal with that. Their side used to win elections or at least people who more or less favored them. They used to win elections. That's why America had to keep overthrowing the government there. But now they have drawn the line in a way where those people are all citizens of the Russian Federation now.

Actually, my most recent article for antiwar.com with my partner, John Weeks, is called Blitzkrieg Blowback. It's about how one of the major military leaders in the war right now is a guy named Andriy Biletsky. He's the head of what's now called the Third Army Corps which was previously known as the Azov Battalion, the neo-Nazis from the Patriot of Ukraine gang, from the Social National Assembly. Get it? The social nationalists? A guy on Twitter was joking with me – he goes, don't you get it, Scott? They're the exact opposite of the national socialists. Like, these guys are real Hitlerians. And, you know, in American media and politics, it's very common to call anyone on the right a fascist. But I'm not on the left. And I don't mean it like that. I mean, these guys are avowed Hitlerian-Aryan supremacist wackos. They say that the whole nation of Ukraine is one – this is Beletsky talking – the whole nation of Ukraine is one organism of the Ukrainian species. And it is all this one thing. And every sperm and every egg belongs to the state in order to create the new Ukrainian Superman. And then the new Ukrainian Superman will conquer all of Eastern Europe. Right? Like this is pure Nazi claptrap. And this is the guy – he is the most quoted Ukrainian Nazi, in fact. Because it's such a catchy phrase. People repeat this all the time. You'll see it anytime someone's pointing out Nazism in Ukraine, they point this out. This guy said: "We will lead the white race on its final crusade against the Semite-led Untermenschen". And that's the guy who's Colonel Biletsky, leader of the Third Army Corps and a former member of parliament and almost certain to be – well, I won't say almost certain, but he is in the running with only two or three other men to succeed Zelensky. The previous general Valerii Zaluzhnyi and a couple of others. But Biletsky is right up there and he is a bona fide war hero now, man. He's been fighting since 2014 and leading his guys. And they are the most successful part, apparently, of the Ukrainian military fighting outside of the chain of command with their own special Nazi chain of command and working directly with the Germans and the Americans arming them up.

So what's the future of Ukraine now? And see, this is why I'm so pessimistic about this thing, is because even just fast forward a few years, let's say Russia takes everything east of the river, but then they got a Nazi Reich west of the River that won't stop fighting. They're just gonna keep going. And then the Germans and the Poles and the Moldovans and the Romanians and everybody else is going to have to deal with these guys. You know, what's

now far-western Ukraine used to be Eastern Poland or the Eastern provinces of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, they are Volhynia and Galicia. These were only added to Ukraine after World War II. They had belonged to Poland before that and the Austro-Hungarian Empire before that. So I don't think that Putin necessarily has ambition for any Ukrainian territory west of the Dnieper River. Who wants it? It's all forests and swamps and mountains, the Carpathian Mountains. He doesn't wanna fight insurgency there, but he might find himself having to know that he made sure that anyone who likes Russia is no longer a part of Ukrainian society. And now he's left with a western far-right wing new government to inherit the power in Kiev. I just don't know. I sure wish this whole thing hadn't happened.

ZR: Scott Horton, author and director of the Libertarian Institute, thank you so much for your time and insights and I'll contact you soon to also talk about what's happening in the Middle East, in particular Israel and Gaza. Thank you, so much.

SH: I appreciate it.

ZR: And thank you for tuning in today. If you like the journalism that we undertook in this video and would like to stay up to date, then click on the subscribe button below. It costs you nothing and only takes you a few moments. And if you want us to continue with our journalism, journalism that doesn't take any money from corporations or governments all with the goal of providing you a prospectus that is free from external influence, then make sure to donate today. You can find out how to donate from the description of this video. I thank you for your support and for tuning in. I'm your host, Zain Raza. See you next time.

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