Col. Wilkerson – Epstein Files, Ukraine Peace Deal & Corruption & Germany's Militarisation

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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. We have 165,000 subscribers on YouTube, only a few thousand have made a transition to these alternative platforms. Please note, we are not asking you to leave YouTube permanently. All we're requesting is to join these channels as a precautionary measure because YouTube is owned by Google, and Google has a long history of shadow banning and censoring content of independent media such as ours. You can find out more about our alternative channels in the description of this video below. Today, I'll be talking to a retired army colonel who served in the US Army for 31 years. His last position for the US government was from 2002 to 2005 as Chief of Staff for then Secretary of State Colin Powell. He's now a senior fellow at the Institute for Responsible Statecraft. Lawrence Wilkerson, welcome back to the show.

Lawrence Wilkerson (LW): Zain, good to be with you, especially to be in Germany, a very conflicted country right now.

ZR: Let us begin with US domestic politics before turning to foreign issues. In the last few weeks, we've seen some major political shifts in the US. First, in November, Democrats scored a series of high-profile victories. In New York, the Democratic socialist candidate Zohran Mamdani won the mayoral race in America's largest city. And Democrats also capped the governorships in Virginia and New Jersey. Second, and quite surprisingly, Congress passed the so-called Epstein Files Transparency Act, almost anonymously. The House voted 427-1 to require the US Department of Justice to release all unclassified files related to Jeffrey Epstein's investigation and prosecution, including communications, records and other materials. And the Senate then approved the bill by unanimous consent. President Trump, who initially dismissed demands for the files as a democratic hoax, but after the internal Republican pressure, he changed his position and signed the legislation, thereby obliging the Department of Justice to publish the files within 30 days. How do you read the political

significance of these events? And what might the signal for the political future of Donald Trump be?

LW: A great many Americans are trying to answer that question or that series of questions right now, plus more. Let me just try to make a realistic statement, however, based on quite a bit of knowledge, but some educated guessing. First of all, let's take the elections. I think one of the reasons you saw Marjorie Taylor Greene, who is a very astute politician. Regardless of what we may think of her one way or the other, she is a very astute politician. And she very much, unlike a lot of members of Congress these days, tuned into her constituency in Georgia. I spent a lot in my life in Georgia because of the military at Fort Benning, at Fort McPherson and elsewhere. I know Georgia pretty well. So she's got a varied constituency, but she's got a constituency that is probably feeling MAGA discussed right now and so she's responding to that constituency. I think some of the election success of the Democrats was from the same thing, a little bit at least and we'll have to see how that plays out in the midterms. But it is a hopeful change if you will not just for the Democrats who I hope will take it on board properly and not take it on board as a reinforcement of their party, that Kamala Harris led or that Joe Biden led because that would be a disaster. This is young people. This is a young people under 40 that are coming into the party and trying to change it. And I hope the older people don't try to stop that.

And then the Epstein files. Why did Trump suddenly change? Here's what I'm hearing, and I'm pretty confident this is at least partially accurate. He didn't change because of political pressure being brought from anywhere. He changed because he realized he could do something about the Epstein files that would seem reasonable to his coterie, his group, and doable. And what I mean by that is he simply sent Pam Bondi and Kash Patel out to Winchester, Virginia, to a very sophisticated facility that we pretty much reinforced after 9/11, whereby he cleansed the files. He took the Republicans out and left the Democrats in. So wait until we see what comes out of the actual assessment of those files. Now, he probably wasn't, you know, his people, Patel, Bondi, and their henchmen, weren't stupid enough to take all the Republicans out; nor all the foreigners out. But rest assured, they probably considered taking Bibi out, taking Ehud Barak out. Ehud Barak is big time there. You may have seen that Larry Summers has been really embarrassed by it. Good for Larry Summers because he's the one who orchestrated the fire sales in Moscow, along with Anatoly Chubais and others, and caused Putin to watch what was happening and turn sour on everything that was happening and allowed him to consolidate power because he was shrewd enough to flow into that chaos and pretty much strip all those he didn't like and reinforce those he did like, and now that's the oligarchy that supports him. So Larry Summers is a criminal, flat out a criminal. And I'm glad to see him finally caught and come to some kind of accounting. But it tells you how significant some of the people are that are in there. Of course, he's a Democrat. He's a very visible Democrat. Ehud Barak is in there, significantly, I think, next to Prince Andrew and maybe surpassing Prince Andrew, Ehud Barak is in there. Emails that say things to Epstein on the island like: I'm not going to bring my security detail this time. You're the prime minister of Israel and you're not bringing your security detail? Why might that be? Big questions arise there. I don't think it's going to be as impactful though, as some people are

thinking it's going to be given the overwhelming vote that you pointed out in the House and then the acclamation in the Senate, but John Thune is Trump's right-hand man in the Senate, so whatever John Thune tells the Senate is pretty much going to be done. We need to watch though. What happens? Who is actually revealed, as it were, in this expose? And then the last thing, we just, you didn't ask this question, but I'm gonna comment on it and you probably get to it anyway. I think we have a similar phenomenon going on with UN Security Council Resolution 2833. There's some euphoria over that and it's in the usual channels, the Trump supportive channels, but there is some euphoria on the other side too, even amongst Democrats. And I think that is totally misplaced. I think this is a disaster. An absolute disaster. So those are the kind of the big things I've been monitoring in the last 96 hours or so.

ZR: Let us now switch to Ukraine. I would like to first recap some of the notable developments taking place in Europe in regards to Ukraine for our viewers that took place around November. On November 3rd, the UK delivered another badge of long-range Storm Shadow missiles to Ukraine. On November 5th, Ukraine received Advanced Partner status with the UK-led Joint Expeditionary Force, a defense framework of ten NATO member states, bringing it closer into a joint military planning with them. The European Union also increased economic pressure on Russia by passing its 19th sanctions package at the end of October, and already in November talks are underway for a 20th sanctions package. In the same period, Ukraine agreed in principle to acquire Sweden’s JAS-39 Gripen fighter jets, with both governments indicating that the first aircraft would arrive as early as of 2026, a major boost to its air defense and strike capabilities. On November 12th, G7 foreign ministers meeting in Canada reiterated their support for Ukraine, strongly condemning Russia's attacks on energy infrastructure and affirmed their unwavering commitment to Ukraine's security. Germany also recently announced additional measures. The Bundestag budget committee agreed on a draft 2026 budget that includes 11.5 billion euros in support for Ukraine. However, now, Western media outlets such as Reuters, The Financial Times and The Guardian are reporting something completely different, according to multiple diplomatic and intelligence sources, US and Russian officials have privately drafted elements of a potential peace plan, a plan that will require Ukraine to make significant concessions, including territorial compromises and limits on its future military capabilities. Some reports even indicate that President Trump has reviewed a 28-point draft proposal without Ukraine's participation. So on one hand, Europe is increasing its military aid and strengthening Ukraine's ability to continue the war while on the other hand, if these media reports are accurate, the United States is quietly exploring a peace deal with Russia that will force Ukraine to give up territory and its military capacity. How do you assess this contradiction within NATO?

LW: I think the contradiction is just that, it's a contradiction, but I think it's a contradiction between what I will call less powerful countries and the big daddy, the empire, Washington, and the controversy will be resolved if it is resolved, on the side of the big daddy. What I mean by that essentially is I think Anchorage was a more successful meeting between Putin and Trump than we suspected originally. And Trump gave us every reason not to suspect that anything formidable happened there. But Sergey Lavrov and others in the interim have made

some comments. And I found out that I was wrong about the phone call between Sergey and Marco Rubio; if Sergey is being honest, and I think he is, because Sergey says that was a very productive phone call. In other words, Budapest wasn't canceled because there was some animosity created in that phone call, or there was something else that caused it to be canceled that was bad for any future negotiations, it was canceled because Trump and his team realized they weren't ready. Because they want substantive discussions for the first time. And I'm told that working groups are being put together, which should be the case, if you're going to have substantive talks the working groups will include everything from the very top of the agenda, which will be to extend New START beyond February 26th and to plan for, and this is extremely complicated – so I'm glad they're doing this in working groups of experts on both sides – and to plan for future nuclear negotiations to reduce the cost of nuclear weapons in all the countries and own them. And also to discuss a new nuclear treaty regime. And I've been hearing that there are some very, very good ideas contained in this, imaginative ideas, like, for example, taking the weapons away from Britain and France. They don't matter anyway. They're just dangerous sitting there. They're not enough to constitute anything of a war-fighting capability, but they are enough to really make a mess and start a war. So we want to have them. And there are some other countries that I would include in that, too, to include North Korea and Israel, and maybe even stretch out further. I think it's a little bold to go after Pakistan and India, but nonetheless, we must remember that the primary purpose of the Non-Foliferation Treaty was even that the great powers, the ones who originated the nuclear weapon possession routine, if you will, would disarm. Not for a minute do I think that's going to happen, you simply can't disinvent nuclear weapons, as Colin Powell once said, I think very wisely. As long as the technology is there, somebody's going to have them, somebody is going to build them. So, but the idea is to get down to the lowest level possible, particularly with the big people like Russia and Beijing, possibly, and the United States, get way down, way down. So the world's a much less dangerous place with regard to nuclear weapons. That's a huge component of what they started in Anchorage, I think even started in Helsinki in the first term. Anchorage picked up on it again and Ukraine was sort of a disguise. I mean, they talked about Ukraine, but the basic huge situation for both countries is nuclear weapons and that's the way it should be. Ukraine is a backwater to nuclear weapons, but it is an important backwater. So let's talk about that. From what Sergey said and from what state has leaked out, Rubio's feelings, I guess, as national Security Advisor or Secretary of State or whatever, we are looking at exactly what you said, which causes this and is going to exacerbate this wide divide between Brussels and Europe as an entity and NATO and the United States. Because essentially we're abandoning Zelensky. And it's going to be codified at this meeting how we're abandoning him. And maybe even he won't be there while we're having the meeting. He may be gone. There are a manner of ways of, shall I say, getting rid of Zelensky. Some of them are non-hostile, if you will, and others of them, bang, he's dead. One wonders how it's gonna happen, but I think Zelensky has to go. And there has to be some kind of formulation in Ukraine as to how – they never were a democracy – but how they return to democratic procedures and produce a new leader, one that's conducive to the majority of the Ukrainian people, to their structure, and also to this deal that's going to be worked out, which I think is going to much the way you said. It's not going to be a rump state. It's still going to have territory. It may even still have Odessa and therefore access to the

Black Sea, and it will still have enough territory to be a reasonably competent but neutral entity in the heart of Europe. And that's what it's going to be, totally neutral, no EU membership, no NATO membership for sure, and a neutral country with all the ramifications of that status.

The problem in my mind, and I've been trying to deal with this with some other people whom we've been debating, not debating, discussing, is the Nazis. And they are 150 to 200,000 strong, and they are the people who are going to screw it up no matter what, but particularly are they going to screw it up if it turns out as I just described, because they won't accept that. So Russia is going to have to contend with, let's just for hypothetical purposes say there's a fence or a line or something established between the former warring parties, Russia's content on its side, and it includes a lot of what was Ukraine, the Donbass in particular and the Ukrainians are on their side, and the bulk of the Ukrainions are content also and glad the damn war's over and the killing's over, but the Nazis are still doing what they do all the time. They're attacking across the line, they're attacking Russians wherever they might be. They're attacking them if they're still living in Ukraine proper. They're attacking them in the new regions that Russia will be responsible for. And nothing will be peaceful. And at any moment, you may spark and start up again. And that's the problem, I think, in the decade or so that comes after this deal, if a deal is reached. That's the problem. I don't know how we're going to deal with that. It's going to keep the most important thing that this negotiation will start other than nuclear weapons from happening. And that is a restructuring of the European security architecture to eventually include Russia, if Russia wishes to be a part. And they have been all along, so I would suspect that after a cooling-off period, if you will, that would be a reasonable objective again. But will it be possible if they're still fighting?! Even though it's low-key fighting, it will be bloody and dirty. And it will disturb Russia. There's no question about that because these people are intent on disturbing Russia. So I don't see a really rosy future there. I don't wish I could say differently, but I don't.

And if the Europeans don't get their mitts off of this, including Germany, including France, including Britain, including Norway and all the rest of them, and if Estonia doesn't quit making bellicose and stupid statements like: The Baltic Sea belongs to us. The Russians should go away – they haven't read the law of the Sea Treaty lately. I think they're signatories, too. That's international water. So shut up, you little pipsqueak. But those are the kinds of things that can happen. And there are certain people in Poland that trouble me, too. They make remarks from time to time that are very impolitic, that Poland shouldn't be making, and that Donald Trump should be weighing in on and saying to them, you shouldn't be making those remarks. Shut up. Otherwise, you're going to lose us. And, you know, as the Poles think right now, at least a sizable portion of them, their security depends on America. That shouldn't be. They should get out of that, just like the rest of the Europeans should. If it evolves the way it should evolve, we go back to 1990 and 1991 and we build up a European security architecture that is completely separate from NATO, stand NATO down completely except America still gives, affords its nuclear umbrella to all of its former allies in Europe. I might not include some of them, some of the latest members, but nonetheless, that's probably the way it would have to be. The transatlantic league stays intact. Trade, commerce, you

know, stays intact, but we come home, basically. And that's the only sane thing to do because, Zain, we are broke. We are broke, even my old boss, Richard Haass at the policy planning staff at the State Department, former head of the Council on Foreign Relations and now head of Emeritus, has weighed in twice now, I believe both times in Fortune magazine. And he's about five years late, more than that, but at least it's out there. We're broke. We're broke. We can't even look forward in the next two or three years to paying the interest on our debt and defaulting. It will be $2 trillion annually in just three to five years. It's already a trillion dollars. It's the equivalent of the entire national security budget for the Defense Department. We're paying interest on that debt. We can't continue that. So there's got to be some retrenchment. There's got to be.

ZR: Talking about Zelensky, I want to look at Ukraine's energy sector and come back towards him. Today, Russian forces carried out major attacks with drones and rockets on energy infrastructure and left more than 400,000 Ukrainians without power following large-scale strikes in Western Ukraine, far away from the front line. But the energy sector has not only been hit externally by Russian attacks, it has also been shaken internally by a major corruption scandal. Investigators uncovered an alleged $100 million kickback and embezzlement scheme centered on Energoatom, Ukraine's state nuclear energy operator. In response to the investigation and the public pressure that followed, both the Justice Minister and Energy Minister submitted their resignations. At the center of the scandal is Tymur Mindich, a longtime associate of President Volodymyr Zelensky, whom anti-corruption bodies accuse of orchestrating the network and leveraging high-level political connections for personal enrichment. What is quite interesting is that Western media, in my view, is largely treating this as a one-off scandal. I mean, just a few months ago, Zelensky was trying to bring the anti-corruption agency NABU under his office and strip it away of its independence, but the backlash was so strong internationally as well as internally that he decided to reverse course. In Germany, the majority of media corporations, at least from my observation, are not even asking whether Zelensky may have been aware of this network and therefore attempted to preemptively block this investigation. What is your assessment of this corruption scandal in the broader context of the war and could it complicate or erode Western support?

LW: Let me give you some history that I was actually involved in. In 2002, when Powell moved me from the policy planning staff, where I was concentrating mostly on the far East, Japan and Korea and North Korea in particular, and moved me into being his Chief of Staff, he gave me another portfolio too, and that was Ukraine. So from 2002 to roughly 2005, I was looking closely at Ukraine. Including having to sort of babysit one of the leaders whose name escapes me right now, you probably remember it. But he had been allegedly impacted by a nuclear pellet or nuclear soup or something that he'd eaten and his face was completely distorted. And he came to the United States for medical treatment amongst other places. In that experience, I discovered, and let me back up a minute, I was also a member of one of the most select groups we had ever put together in the US government. About 70 people working together on almost a weekly basis in an incredible atmosphere of tension, intelligence and fear, but doing a marvelous job, I think. I mean, it was an incredible working group that everybody could come together and work in a very, very solid, efficient and effective way. It

was Secret Service. It was FBI. It was all 16 of the intelligence entities. You name it, in law enforcement or in national security, they were there, over 75 members. What was our target? The DPRK. Why at that time? Because they were counterfeiting anywhere between 15 and 20 billion dollars of US currency every year and making lots of hard currency themselves off of it. In fact, it was probably one of their greatest sources of hard currencies. They were also counterfeiting our cigarettes. Whole connexes of cigarettes would come to the United States, with the tax stamp on them, too. Perfect replication of the tax stamps. The only way we found out about that was that smokers in California began to protest Liggett Myers, I think it was. And Liggett Myers said: What do you mean? Our cigarettes are the same as they've always been. No, they're terrible. They're terrible! And so the Secret Service started looking anyway. All to say that at the same time, looking at those two countries, the DPRK, on the one hand, in the Far East, and Ukraine in the heart of Europe, there was no difference in corruption. They were both criminal states. That was the conclusion I came to. They were both criminal states! You think we fixed that? Do you think they fixed that, just in the few years that have passed? No, they haven't! It's one of the most corrupt states on the face of the earth, just as the DPRK is. So you've got to start from that perspective, I think, and say, they've made some progress. And maybe the war has forced some of that progress because you can't fight very effectively if you have, in the midst of those people you're asking to fight, this rampant corruption. So maybe they have fixed a little bit. I don't want to go back and talk about the so-called Heavenly 100 and the Maidan, and all of that, because that was corrupt, too, and it was proof. I mean, people were shooting people who didn't even know they were supposed to be shooting them, and that was a disaster. And that's part of the problem Ukraine had getting into this war in the first place.

All to say, I don't think Zelensky is going to be successful with these organizations that he brings up and then kills and then brings back up again, or these organizations themselves are going to successful with fighting something that is so rampant and been there for so long that it's just, it's almost endemic. So what do you do? Well, you need a new leader, first of all, and you need a new process that's roughly democratic in some way to select that leader. And you need that leader focused internally as well as externally. Externally in order to bring about this peace that might be possible and internally to fix Ukraine! I mean, the EU and NATO would be absolutely insane, but NATO's proved it can be – it took Albania, it took Montenegro, none of those countries could pass the test. None of them. We just took them in in order to make money. They couldn't pass the tests for NATO. NATO's entry restrictions are greater than the EU's. You've got to be a practicing democracy, a liberal democracy, you've got to have massive crime-fighting mechanisms set up that are effective. You're gonna have corruption councils that are effective. You're going to have a really functioning social system underneath your democracy to be a member of NATO. We waved all of that for Montenegro, automobile theft capital of the world, for Albania, one of the drug passage capitals of the word, money laundering capital. We let countries in that we would never let in and we let them in for money. That's what we let them in for, for defense contractors to make money. Ukraine is an example too. It could never pass the test to get into NATO right now, and probably not for ten years. At least they'd have to work very hard during that decade. Now they're not going to have that possibility. They're going to be independent and neutral.

Therefore they need, in my view, even more so to develop good systems, good social functioning systems. They need anti-corruption councils that work. They need to rein in the oligarchs because that's their real problem, just as Russia has a similar problem too. All the money is concentrated in these oligarchs' hands. And by the way, Zelensky's had his hand out too, and the money's been pouring into his hand from the oligarchs, because that's how he gets his power.

So, long story short, they need to fix corruption, if they're going to be a neutral, somewhat successful state in the heart of Europe, and that's what they're going to be. So they need a good corruption fighting mechanism. Look over the border, you know, Switzerland. Is Switzerland any good? Well, you know, I could show you some things about Switzerland, just as I could show you somethings about Liechtenstein, and I could show you things about other countries that are supposed to be good, practicing liberal democracies. We're all corrupt. But you need to get it to a level that's sustainable within a democratic community. You're never gonna wipe it out. You need to get it to a level that is sustainable and that is not disruptive to so much of your society. The empire's got that problem right now. We have rampant crime. We are one of the money laundering capitals of the world. Read Misha Glenny's book, McMafia; Tel Aviv, Doha, New York City, money laundering capitals of the world because the banks all of whom basically are colluding either willingly or unwittingly and they're making tons of money off of it. They're money laundering drug money money laundering trafficking in people money – that's the big money now, trafficking in people – and all manner of other, trafficking in organs trafficking in illegal animals. I mean, all manner of things. And the banks turn a blind eye to it because they're making thousands, hundreds, tens, millions of dollars off it. And that's got to be brought down to a level that is sustainable within a – I shouldn't say sustainable – acceptable within a democratic society. And Ukraine hasn't done that, Albania hasn't done that, Montenegro hasn't done that. There are all kinds of problems within the NATO fabric itself because we move so hastily and so greedily to bring these people in.

ZR: You talk about a new security architecture for Europe that should include Russia. However, Germany is moving in the opposite direction with its rapid militarization. Let me summarize some of the recent developments in this regard. Earlier this year, the German parliament changed the country's basic law so that military spending no longer counts towards the constitutional debt break. In practice, this means military expenditure has been placed outside the normal budget limits and can now be financed through borrowing, which would not be permissible for any other sector in the economy. In 2025, Germany is already spending around 86 billion euros on the military, about 2.4% of GDP. And government plans show this figure could rise to around 150 to 160 billion euros by 2029, which would be close to 3.5% of GDP. And just this week, the German government presented its first national space security strategy, announcing plans to invest about $35 billion euros by 2030 in military space projects, including surveillance satellites, security military communications and defense space systems. At the same time, the Bundeswehr is buying new helicopters, night vision systems, missiles and modern equipment for its soldiers, while also planning to expand the armed forces from roughly 280,000 personnel today to around 460,000 by the mid-2030s.

Starting with voluntary participation, but officials are openly stating that military elements could be introduced if recruitment targets are not met. The Bundeswehr also recently announced that around 200 former military sites previously earmarked for civilian redevelopment, including housing and public facilities, will instead remain under military control because of the perceived threat from Russia. The major beneficiaries of all of this are German military corporations and their shareholders. Rheinmetall's share price, for example, has risen more than ten-fold since Russia's invasion in 2022. And the corporation Diehl is also expanding rapidly to meet new demand for weapon systems. As someone who has seen the US military-industrial complex from the inside for three decades, what would you say to Germans who are watching the government push the country towards becoming the strongest military power in Europe?

LW: Is that Deutsche Mark or Euros?

ZR: Euros.

LW: I asked that question for a purpose. Are you going back to Deutsche Mark? I'll ask you as a German citizen, what do you think about that? To me as a student of history, especially military history, it almost sounds like Hitler's back. How do you feel about it as a German citizen that so much of your tax money is going to be converted into national security, allegedly.

ZR: If you're going to ask me this question, as a journalist I would say that we have serious issues right now with the infrastructure crumbling, the trains not coming on time, we have shortages of teachers, of people working in hospitals, there's reports of hospitals closing, the social sector is under immense strain, unemployment is rising and I think the money It would be better served if we would put it in our social system than into the military, which is only going to increase the threat of an all-out war with Russia.

LW: Then you have the same problem, perhaps in somewhat lesser amounts, as the empire. The same thing we're doing. We have 40,000 homeless veterans who are living on the street and committing suicide at an extraordinary rate. We have probably the lower 50% now of our, when I say a half of the American 340 million population, fully half of it, doesn't know where its next meals come from. Doesn't know whether it's going to be able to make its house payment if it has a house, doesn't how it's gonna make it through the next week, the next two weeks, the next month. It's a disaster, and it's mostly because we're spending two trillion dollars a year on national security, and as I said, another trillion on the interest payments that that two trillion a year generates in terms of debt. It is not sustainable. Unless you're going on a war economy basis, unless you're going on a I'm going to conquer Europe basis, unless you are going on a Czechoslovakia's first, and then I'll take France. I mean, this is a revisiting of the 30s. And I don't think Germany wants to do that.

Now, let me add, I think, what is a positive thing, from my perspective, looking across the Atlantic. I don't see Merz, Macron, Starmer or for that matter, any of the current European leaders lasting more than a year. I see them all being gone. And it's different in each country.

But the fundamental reason is they are not going to have body politics, people who vote, who will support them if they are doing this sort of thing. If they do have people sufficient to support them in a political process that is even remotely democratic, I'm very worried. I'm very worried about the future for Europe, because I do think that reflects the 30s and that kind of attitude. I hope we're not going back to that. And the one element in Germany in particular that sort of gives me some deep concern in that regard is the AFD. I don't know it well enough to say that there are people in there who remind me of people from the 30s who, you know, took the world to catastrophe, but I do read enough and see enough to know that there's probably some sort of potential there for that. And it can take off, as you well know, it can take off like a rocket ship in a moment if something happens and the people are led in a way to take care of that something that happens that is conducive to their wishes at the moment or that gives them a bugaboo, an enemy, gives them somebody to look at, the communists, the Jews, whatever it might be. That's just history speaking. I hope that doesn't happen. I hope we grow up some really good leadership to replace these really stupid leaders like Macron, Starmer, and before him, and the Christian Democrats in general. But I don't know that's going to happen. I just don't what's going to happen.

I was stunned when Finland, for example, did what it did. I was kind of stunned when Sweden did what it did. But I saw what we did to make that happen. We built those governments. Painstakingly, starting in 2003-2004, we built those governments. We bought newspapers. We bought social organizations. We bought unions. We bought all manner of institutions in those countries to propagandize the people to vote for NATO membership. We created Jens Stoltenberg. We created Mark Rutte. We created what was happening in the Netherlands. They just reputed some of that. Haha, good deal. And I think that's going to happen elsewhere too, but I'm not absolutely confident it will. So I wish you luck in the future. Your situation might be just as dire as ours.

And that's the other comment. I'm just reading this morning at COP 30, all the things encapsulated in this article that China's incredible success in climate crisis positives, I'll call them, is infecting the Global South. And everyone is picking up on what China has done in just incredible speed and efficiency. And they're picking up all right for themselves, whether it's battery technology, it's wind, it's solar or whatever, they pick it up for themselves and at a price they can afford. So that's what's coming out of COP 30, you know, to hell with the empire. We don't need you; trying us there. And yes, there's some ulterior motive to it. Yes, they want to make money and yes, they want to have influence, but they're helping these people and they're helping them in an area that we seem to have rejected helping them. We don't even go to the meetings. And I'm told no one goes to the meeting. We don't even have an undersecretary at COP 30. We have no one there, maybe some reporters, but no one from the government officially there. China's there in spades and helping and helping major. I don't know if you've looked at what China has done lately in terms of the climate crisis, but it's awesome. It's absolutely awesome. You've got the CEO of Ford Motor company driving in the United States, driving a Chinese electric car to demonstrate to his employees what's really good. They have taken off; China has taken off. I told people yesterday, two guys I was talking with, when Admiral Yamamoto attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941, he allegedly, and I

think this is probably true, enough people have said it that I think it's probably true, he allegedly looked back on the fire and the flames and the destruction and everything and said: "I fear we have attacked a tiger and filled it with the desire for revenge." Because Yamamoto had been in the United States as a captain and he had been to California, he'd been to Texas, he had been elsewhere and he knew that the latent industrial capacity of the United States was so formidable that if Japan didn't win the war in six months and what he meant by win the war was go down to get enough oil to survive out of Southeast Asia and not have the United States hit them in the flank, if Japan didn't do that in six months, Japan was doomed. And he was right. He was absolutely right, because you attack that tiger and fill it with a fearful resolve and it was going to destroy you because of what it had.

Well, we do not have that today, period. But who does? China. China has the most powerful, latent, and active industrial base in the world today, second only to Russia. And Russia has been created by the exigencies of war. They have a really good defense industrial base right now because of the war. China has it in general, whether it's shipbuilding, solar panels, batteries, you name it. They have one million electric car charging points in China. We have 22,000. They have 1 million. You say, well, they have a billion people. We got 340 million. They have a million charging points, and we have a few thousand. That's how far ahead of us they are, and they're helping 60% of the world. They are helping that percentage of the world that looks at the climate crisis and says: Let me see if I got this right; you caused it and we suffer. Because they didn't cause it. Not really. They didn't put those huge emissions up into the atmosphere, but they're suffering and they are suffering. Look at southern Iran right now. It's so dry they can't even raise crops there. That's a real problem looming ahead. So, good on China.

ZR: To my last question, we are going into a crowdfunding phase next week. Why do you think it is important for people watching this to support media outlets such as ours that don't take any money from governments, corporations, billionaires, and just put out the information as it is, supported only by our viewers?

LW: That's really an easy question to answer, and I can give you an example right here that just happened in the United States in front of my eyes. Because of alternative media and because of the truth that was flowing out of that alternative media, which in our country, my country now, surpasses in terms of listeners, the mainstream media. But because of their actions, Americans are waking up to the poisonous nature of the relationship of Israel and the United States, and it's going to change. And frankly, I didn't think I was going to see that in my lifetime, that we would wake up and change the relationship, but we're going to. And it's gonna be 40s and under because they're listening to people like you. They're getting the truth.

ZR: Lawrence Wilkerson, we'll have to leave it here, retired Colonel and defense analyst, thank you so much for your time and insights.

LW: Thanks for having me, Zain.

And thank you for tuning in today. If you liked the journalism that we undertook in this video and would like to follow us going forward, then make sure to click on the subscribe button below. Also please note, we're starting our crowdfunding campaign next month with the goal of raising enough funds so that we can continue our independent and non-profit critical journalism in 2026. Journalism that does not take any money from corporations or governments and only depends on its viewers to continue. We look forward to your participation. I thank you for your support and for tuning in. I'm your host Zain Raza. See you next time.

END

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