

The Collapse of the Ukraine Narrative: Europe's Panic and the Geopolitical Reality

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By Frank Dumon

As an observer of the geopolitical shifts that have gripped our continent for decades, it is sometimes necessary to escape the deafening avalanche of Western mainstream propaganda. In a recent, highly illuminating conversation on YouTube, Pascal Lottaz and Ian Proud, a former British diplomat with extensive experience in Russia, delivered an analysis that is rare in today's public debate culture. Their dialogue not only dissects the tactical desperate moves of the Ukrainian regime but also puts its finger on the sore spot of a Europe getting entangled in its own bureaucratic and militaristic pitfalls.

The Illusion of Ukrainian Victory and Desperate Escalation

The core of the current conflict is invariably presented in the West as a heroic struggle of democracy against autocracy. The reality, as Ian Proud sharply observes, is however much grimmer and more complex. Volodymyr Zelensky finds himself in a strategic dead end. His primary target seems no longer the well-being of the Ukrainian people, but rather maintaining American involvement in the conflict, and in particular securing the support of figures like Donald Trump. Because the war is

tearing Ukraine apart internally and the population is increasingly resisting an endless fight, Zelensky is employing a dangerous strategy: opening a second front or provoking broader conflicts to divert attention and guarantee military aid.

A recent example of this is the attack on an Iranian cargo ship in the Caspian Sea. This action is a clear, albeit risky, wink to Trump, intended to show that Ukraine is willing to cooperate with the maximum pressure campaign on Iran. The risk of this tactic, however, is enormous. Iran possesses advanced ballistic missile technology that has been effectively used since the start of the war in February. By provoking Iran, Ukraine runs the risk of not only coming under increased Russian missile attacks, but also under direct attacks from Tehran. This is a particularly worrying development, as Ukraine has largely lost its ability to intercept missiles due to a shortage of air defense systems and ammunition. This makes its cities and civilian population increasingly vulnerable. It is a desperate attempt by a leadership that subordinates the interests of its own population to securing more weapons and political support from the West.

This reality stands in stark contrast to the reporting in Western mainstream media. Newspapers like **The Telegraph** in the United Kingdom present a nearly comically distorted picture, portraying Zelensky as someone "desperately seeking peace," while branding other leaders as warmongers. These media have become mired in an increasingly desperate propaganda cycle. They cling to images of "buildings exploding" – such as attacks on warehouses or infrastructure deep inside Russia – and present these as strategic victories. While these attacks cause logistical problems, they ignore the larger strategic picture: wars are won by economies, not by armies alone. Russia possesses the industrial base, the economic size, and the population size to sustain this conflict much longer than Ukraine, which is becoming increasingly dependent on Western financial injections just to function.

The Internal Collapse of Ukraine and the Role of the West

While the media focus on spectacular explosions, they remain silent about the systematic collapse of the Ukrainian state. The country is bleeding out; it has an estimated only two-thirds of its full pre-war population within its borders. Demographic ratios are distorted: there is now one pensioner for every working person. The economy is completely dependent on external aid, and there is mass desertion and growing domestic unrest. Citizens are taking to the streets against recruitment officers, and the political situation in Kiev is unstable. Zelensky struggles to get even basic legislation, like the budget, through parliament, while corruption remains rampant. The constant shuffling of the Minister of Defense and the head of the army, in the midst of a period where they claim to be "winning militarily," is a

clear indication of a deeper administrative failure.

The West, particularly the United States and the United Kingdom, consciously ignores this reality. Zelensky spends hardly any time in his own country, which suffers from heavy missile attacks, but prefers to travel abroad to raise money and weapons. His visit to the United States, under the guise of attending the funeral of a known 'warmonger,' is essentially a lobbying trip to maintain the flow of military resources.

This reveals the sad nature of modern warfare: the leadership caste profits from the war economy, while the civilian population pays the price.

This dynamic is reinforced by the structure of Western decision-making. In the United Kingdom, for example, it hardly matters who exactly is Prime Minister. The new Prime Minister is under immense pressure to address the domestic agenda: public services are neglected, government debt is 100 percent of GDP, and the cost of living is skyrocketing. Yet there is no attempt to link these domestic woes to foreign policy. Instead, the policy of the predecessor is simply copied: unconditional support for Ukraine and a pro-Israel stance in the Middle East. This is because real power does not lie with elected leaders, but with the permanent bureaucracy – the "deep state" or the grey civil servants who determine policy and instruct each new politician on what to say. The democratic process has been hollowed out into a theater piece, with the anti-Russian and pro-war agenda continuing unabated, regardless of the election outcome.

Russia's Strategy of 'Maximum Restraint' and Reciprocity

One of the most fascinating insights from the conversation is the analysis of Russia's strategy, which Ian Proud rightly characterizes as a policy of "maximum restraint" combined with strict reciprocity. Western media often portray Russia as an irrational, aggressive state, but Russian doctrine is steeped in a calculating, almost physical logic. Proud recalls that Vladimir Putin, at the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum (around 2016), cited Newton's third law: every action has an equal and opposite reaction. This principle is deeply embedded in the Russian approach.

When Ukraine attacks a brewery or a military depot in Russia, Russia responds by hitting a similar or strategically more valuable target in Ukraine, such as a port facility that blocks grain exports and effectively makes the country a landlocked state. Russia does not escalate randomly, but responds proportionally and purposefully. This raises the question of why Russia does not go further, for example with attacks on NATO territory or with more extreme measures. The answer is simple: it is not necessary. Russia has the means and industrial capacity to continue this war of attrition on its current footing, while Europe and Ukraine are slowly but

surely running out of resources.

Moreover, Putin must maintain a delicate balance within Russia itself. There are hardliners, such as Sergey Karaganov, who advocate for more extreme measures, such as nuclear threats or attacks on NATO infrastructure. Putin does not go along with this, not because he could not, but because he recognizes the catastrophic risks of a direct escalation with NATO and simultaneously hopes for a normalization of relations with Europe in the long term. Nevertheless, keeping these hardliners in the public space is also a strategic tool: it sows fear and panic in Europe, without Russia actually taking action. It is a game of psychological deterrence that perfectly matches the Russian historical experience: if you offer a Russian a hand of friendship, he is a friend for life; if you challenge him to a fight, he will strike back harder than you hit him.

European Democracy under Pressure: Hypocrisy and the Lack of Strategic Autonomy



The European Union is in an existential crisis, not so much from external pressure, but from internal decay. The original goal of the European project – removing barriers between peoples and promoting economic, social, and cultural cooperation – has been buried under a process of militarization and centralization. The bureaucratic institutions in Brussels are demanding ever more power and authority, at the expense of the sovereignty of member states. This creates a huge democratic deficit. Citizens rightly feel powerless, because they feel that unelected officials are making decisions that go against their interests and values.

The hypocrisy of the Western "human rights" and "democracy" discourse has become so blatant that it has lost all credibility. Friends of the West can afford to do whatever they want, while opponents are demonized at the slightest deviation. A striking example of this is the situation in Hungary. The rise of Péter Magyar is hailed by some Western analysts as a refreshing change. In reality, he is, as Proud sharply notes, the "Zelensky of Hungary." He says the things Brussels wants to hear: he will not block anti-Russian policy, and he will continue to support military and financial aid to Ukraine. Because he produces the right sounds for the European elite, the fact

that he is also taking increasingly repressive measures within his own country – such as excluding political opponents from elections, closing environmental associations, and curbing press freedom – is overlooked. A bad leader is apparently acceptable, as long as he follows the correct geopolitical line vis-à-vis Brussels. This is the same mechanism that allows corruption and forced recruitment in Ukraine to be ignored, as long as the leader smiles for the Western press cameras.

This selective outrage undermines the foundation of European civilization. Instead of building bridges between cultures, the EU is building walls. And although countries like Spain sometimes still voice critical opinions about this nonsensical policy, the major powers (France, Germany, the UK) feel too bound by their own interests and the pressure from the United States to chart an independent course. They dare not go against Trump's wishes, for fear that he will turn even further away from Europe, and they are too intertwined with the defense industry and media conglomerates that profit from the continuation of the war.

The Economic Reality and the Awakening European Population

Beneath the surface of geopolitical rhetoric, an economic crisis rages that systematically erodes the standard of living of the average European citizen. The sanctions against Russia, combined with recent tensions in the Middle East and the threat of escalation with Iran, have taken a heavy toll on Europe's energy supply. Europe has lost access to cheap Russian energy and is now forced to buy expensive liquefied natural gas (LNG) from the United States. This has led to the de-industrialization of the continent. The United Kingdom, for example, has the highest energy costs in the G7, despite being an island nation with its own energy sources.

Notably, the mainstream media does everything to conceal the link between this economic downturn and the war policy. They try to blame the current energy crisis solely on tensions with Iran, suggesting that peace in the Middle East will solve the problems. This is a dangerous illusion. Even if tensions with Iran were to subside, the structural damage from the loss of the Russian energy market would remain. The European economy cannot compete with high energy prices, and this translates directly into a cost-of-living crisis, inflation, and cuts to public services.

Nevertheless, there is growing unease among the population. Although the majority of people (about two-thirds) still get their news from traditional television broadcasts, which are predominantly pro-war, discontent is beginning to bubble up. This is visible in shifting voter preferences towards alternative parties, such as the AfD in Germany, the Rassemblement National in France, and Reform UK in the United Kingdom. The average citizen may not yet make the full intellectual connection between the war in

Ukraine and their empty fridge or the waiting lists in healthcare, but the feeling of injustice and neglect is pervasive. People are asking why billions of euros are being sent to a war that cannot be won, while their own infrastructure is crumbling. This unease is a ticking time bomb for the established political order. Ultimately, voters will hold leaders accountable based on their daily reality, and that reality is currently being made worse by reckless foreign policy.

Future Perspective: The Midterm Elections and the Need for a European Voice of Its Own

Looking to the near future, there are some crucial anchor points that could determine the course of this conflict. One of the most important is American politics, particularly the influence of the upcoming elections. Although Donald Trump often claims he wants to end the war quickly, the American government remains deeply involved in the conflict, including by providing essential intelligence that enables Ukraine to hit targets deep inside Russia. However, pressure on American leadership will increase as the economic consequences of the global conflict weigh heavier. The threat of new, heavy tariffs (such as the proposed 100 percent tariffs on certain goods) shows that American priorities are increasingly shifting towards a protectionist "America First" policy, regardless of who sits in the White House.

For Europe, this is the moment of truth. The big question is not how Europe can defeat Russia, but how Europe can save itself.

The continent must develop its own foreign policy identity, one that is less tied to Washington's strategic straitjacket. Such autonomy would allow Europe to take a more nuanced position, not only regarding Ukraine, but also regarding other global conflicts, and to seek dialogue instead of confrontation. Unfortunately, there is little reason to believe that this shift will occur before the next major election cycles in Europe. The war in Ukraine will likely continue for at least another year, with all the devastating consequences that entails.

Yet there is a glimmer of hope, and it comes unexpectedly from Russia itself. Despite years of Russophobia and demonization in the Western media, a genuine fascination with European culture remains in Russia. Russians are not a monolithic, war-mongering mass; they are a diverse people who, like Europeans, value friendship, culture, and exchange. Russia's historical experience – with invasions by Mongols, Swedes, French, and Nazis – has created a deep-seated sense of justice and reciprocity, but also an openness to peaceful coexistence. As long as the West continues to play the role of the eternal enemy, Russia will feel compelled to play

that role. But if a hand of friendship is extended, the willingness to build bridges on the Russian side is absolutely present.

Closing Remarks

The conversation between Pascal Lottaz and Ian Proud is a refreshing, albeit somber, correction to the dominant narrative. It reveals a West that is entangled in its own hypocritical rhetoric, led by a bureaucracy that is averse to democratic accountability, and a population that is slowly but surely paying the price for the geopolitical hubris of its leaders. The collapse of the Ukraine narrative is not only a military or economic fact; it is a moral bankruptcy of the Western leadership culture.

For us, who have seen history evolve and hold the value of peaceful international relations in high regard, the message is clear: we must continue to advocate for nuance, for diplomacy, and for breaking the propaganda cycle. The path to peace begins with acknowledging reality as it is, not as we would like to read it in our newspapers. Only by having the courage to face the uncomfortable truth can we lay the foundations for a future Europe that is once again connected with its neighbors, rather than isolated in a self-chosen, militaristic delusion.