

## **Uncorrected Transcript: Check against Video for Quotes**

### **QI Panel:**

#### **The Ukraine “Peace Summit”**

June 18, 2024  
12:00-1:00 PM EST

#### **Anatol Lieven 0:41**

Welcome, everybody. I'm Anatol Lieven of the Eurasia program here at the Quincy Institute for Responsible statecraft. Before I introduce today's panel, I would just like to flag a couple of events next week, on Monday at 10:30am PST, we have a webinar on the South African elections and their results in the new government. And on Wednesday, the 26th that this time, we have a talk on Sumantra Maitra's new book, *The Sources of Russian Aggression*, so I hope that many of you will be able to attend those. Today, we are going to discuss the Ukraine peace summit, so called this weekend, the G7 and its implications for the war in Ukraine, and President Putin's peace proposal, so called from last Friday, and to discuss this have a extremely distinguished panel. John Mearsheimer, who will be known to all of you is professor of political science at Chicago University, and generally regarded as the leading exponent of realist thought in the United States and the West today. Anna Kraatz is non resident fellow here at the Quincy and the former senior fellow at the Institute for open democracy. And sorry for open diplomacy. A French think tank, and Daniel Larison are also one of our non resident senior sorry, Dan Larison, contributes to responsible statecraft as a contributing editor at *antiwar.com* and a former senior editor at the *American conservative*. So welcome, everybody. Perhaps I could start, John by asking you. What did you make of the the Ukraine peace summit this weekend? Was this of any real significance? And if so, what does it mark? Any kind of step forward for Ukrainian peace?

#### **John Mearsheimer 2:47**

I don't think it marks a step forward. I think it was basically a failure. And one could argue even that it backfired on the Ukrainians who were pushing it very hard. I mean, the idea was to basically get the world behind Ukraine's peace proposal, its plan for ending this war. And they thought that they could hold this conference and invite pretty much every country in the world except Russia. And they could reach some sort of meaningful consensus on the proposal that the Ukrainians have on the table, and that this would put enormous pressure on the Russians. And they would make all sorts of concessions, and the Ukrainians in the West would end up winning in some meaningful way. This was delusional. Almost everybody, I think, understood that from the beginning, even before the conference was held. And once the conference was held, it was clear that this added up to pretty much nothing. I mean, lots of countries did not attend, especially countries like China, which really matter for making these sorts of things work. I think of the 92 countries that were there. 77 Signed, but that means a big chunk, didn't sign the final communique. And if you look at the final communique, it was basically pabulum. It was really watered down from what the Ukrainians really wanted and didn't say much of all. So the end

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result is that this just doesn't add up too much, if anything, exposes how weak the Western and Ukrainian position is at this point in time.

### **Anatol Lieven 4:40**

And by the way, I forgot to say questions from the audience, please place them in the q&a at the bottom of the screen, and I will pass on as many as I can to the panelists a bit later on. And do you concur with that? And is there an awareness in Europe now? That these Ukrainian conditions are not in fact achievable.

### **Anne Kraatz 5:06**

I think a lot of the a lot of Europeans are under illusions still, that Ukraine could win. Nobody ever mentioned what when you meet that is it public is very much divided on this piece of statistics. That is rather interesting, though, apparently only 30% of French people wish for Russia to win. But then they don't want Ukraine to lose either. So that strikes me as rather interesting. But the situation in France anyway, is, is very difficult to gauge, because everybody is at each other's throats right now about many issues with including the Ukrainian issue. But at the end of the day, there's some some kind of a consensus emerging among those new parties that have been formed just a few days ago, to run in the legislative elections, which Miko very unexpectedly called for, and almost all of them are for giving some kind of support to Ukraine, but up to a certain point only. And a couple of them don't want Ukraine to be coming to becoming into the European Union. The actual summit that took place in Switzerland was largely fell under the radar because of the situation in France anyway, because of these elections, really, you know, there was a small banner headline underneath the TV screens, they Well, you know, give anything matronly, the people who didn't sign the final communique was one small element, which may seem trivial, but it is actually non trivial. There was a mention of the number of children that should be returned to Ukraine in the event of a peace treaty. And that number was 20,000. Well, in France for years, well, for two years now, the number that was quoted very often by some of the NGOs that work on those subjects is 200,000. So we have an enormous difference in scale there. But as you know, numbers don't mean much these days, whether it be a number of casualties on either side, but it is interesting to see that number 20,000 is actually written down in this in this in this community.

### **Anatol Lieven 7:30**

Yes, I mean, I was struck by the fact as well that the International Criminal Court, and its investigations has also scaled down the charges against Russia enormously from what was initially discussed, because I think they just could not find the the the evidence to support it. In Dan, do you see any shift in the US debate on this now? How much skepticism have you detected about this summit and about the Ukrainian demands?

### **Daniel Larison 8:09**

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Well, I think in the US, the I'm not sure that the peace summit has really, whether the so called peace summit is really registered very much in the American debate. I think it's it's telling that the president didn't even feel the need to attend personally, which suggests that the administration doesn't attach that much important importance to this meeting itself. They sent vice president Harris and Jack Sullivan, I think to attend in place of the President, given that the President was already there for the g7 summit, it was a little surprising that he didn't bother to stay. And so I think that indicates even among supporters of administration policy, members of the administration, themselves are not that invested in this process where at the start of the process that they were trying to get going. I think, I think generally there is much more skepticism of administration policy, as it relates to their reluctance or their resistance to any kind of diplomatic engagement. Because there doesn't seem to be any other way out. For the policy then to find some way to have a release working towards a ceasefire. The the fight to get the last appropriations through Congress, I think was probably just a preview of what we can expect next year. If if there's a change in control in the White House, there will be a much tougher fight to get more military assistance to Ukraine going forward, especially if the Ukrainian government seems to be completely uninterested in any any kind of compromise settlement. So that's, I think that goes back to what John is saying that this this push for the summit may have Actually backfired, in a sense by showing how far removed the Ukrainian government is from where a lot of other sentiment is in, in the US and in some European countries.

### **Anatol Lieven 10:13**

But at the g7, there was at least verbally, symbolically a great show of support for Ukraine. John, how how did you assess the the impact of the g7 as opposed to the the the peace summit in Switzerland?

### **John Mearsheimer 10:30**

This is an important question. I think there was more than just return rhetorical support at the g7. Conference, there were three steps that we saw, that were taken mainly by the United States, because we're in the driver's seat here. That really matter. First of all, we doubled down on sanctions. Number two, we worked out this arrangement where we're going to loan the Ukrainians \$50 billion. And then third, and most importantly, we worked out this tenure security agreement with Ukraine. And this is enormously important because both Blinken and Zelinsky, said that this is a bridge, and I want to underline that word. This is a bridge to bring Ukraine into NATO. This is guaranteed to enrage the Russians, and guaranteed to make sure that this war goes on forever and ever. You don't take steps like this, if you have any interest in trying to reach some sort of compromise agreement with the Russians. The Russians have made it manifestly clear since April 2008, that NATO expansion into Ukraine is categorically unacceptable. Many people in the West don't like that argument. But the fact is, that is what the Russians believe. And every time we double down and talk about bringing Ukraine into NATO, it just gives the Russians an even greater incentive to number one, take more territory. And number two, make sure that they do everything to wreck Ukraine. So I think the United States and its allies in the West live under the illusion that they're helping Ukraine that they're going to

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make Ukraine's situation at the bargaining table down the road better than it is today. This is simply wrong in my opinion. And in fact, what we're doing is guaranteeing that Ukraine is wrecked and that this conflict goes on for as far as the eye can see.

### **Anatol Lieven 12:34**

Yes, I mean, it has been argued that while in the fall of 2022, sort of 2021, early NATO membership for Ukraine was not on the agenda, the military cooperation agreement signed between the US and or announced between the US and Ukraine, and may have played a decisive role in deciding Putin to issue his ultimatum and then and then invade because of course, there. There are also forms of US military presence. And of course, we now know about the strong presence of the CIA ever since 2014, that fall short of NATO membership, but it's still considered in Moscow to be to be highly menacing. And could I ask I mean, on this score, is the any pushback in Europe or east in Western Europe, against these US policies? And do you think they mean, if the restaurant romanesco now wins these parliamentary elections? Will this have a very important effect on on French policy? Or in fact, we'll Macron sure that French policy towards Ukraine remains unchanged for them until the next French elections. President.

### **Anne Kraatz 14:06**

But until you know, I think it will have an important impact in something as much as if the French president doesn't have a majority, well, you won't have a majority, that's for sure. The RN will probably get a majority, simply not a complete majority, but a very large one, and we'll be able to put a lot of pressure on the president. The president will still have lots of prerogatives, but he will not control the defense budget whatsoever. So he could, he couldn't push for all kinds of things, but you might not get them through just because of this particular aspect of his not controlling the budget. The RN is definitely said that it wants to support Ukraine, but not at the not at the not at the expense of what they call a suicide they mean an economic suicide. And they have have distance themselves thoroughly from Mr. Putin himself. Because this is what's important to many people who watch television. I mean, either you're for putting or you're against putting people don't necessarily think of the larger issues, and putting has been on French television every day almost all day long. The to be, of course, to be presented as the bad guy that he definitely is. But he has it has become a figure that everyone knows about in front of the RN is is determined not to be dragged into a very expensive support for Ukraine, because this is where what it really comes down to it's the money they are finding themselves in, or they are announcing that they will find themselves in front of a difficult financial situation for France, which is true. France's debt has exploded. And the the agencies that give ratings to France have already gone down. So they will, they will simply have to say we have no money to support Ukraine any longer. It's interestingly interesting. Interestingly enough, they are not against sending French missiles, they have announced to Ukraine, as long as they're not allowed to hit inside Russia. So we've we've heard that before from other countries. But so they've made this concession, if you will, we're not against sending missiles to Ukraine, possibly thinking that Ukraine would end up paying for them, which I'm not sure it is true. So here we are with the RN.

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However, there is a party the Socialist Party, which now calls itself a public forum run by Rafael Grossman, the party under which the former president phospho Lord has decided to run again for Office as a representative, and that party led by reference books man who for a while was an advisor to the SEC, as really, during the Georgian conflict with Russia, is absolutely adamant. We must support Ukraine all the way we must seize the 200 some billion dollars that belong to the Ukraine sovereign fund, and use it to this is over and beyond the interests, the Americans themselves, so it could be used to finance to help finance Ukraine's war. So it will depend a little bit on how well that party does in the polls. But he has referred Lookman has decided where it's been forced to, to align himself with the most extreme far left party, which is false estimates, which means the insert into the party of the subordinates, which tells it all.

**Anatol Lieven 17:46**

Above all insubordinate to America

**Anne Kraatz 17:51**

Well, a lot of people in France feel that they should sort of become somewhat more insubordinate to America. But that's a very complex question. Anyway, here we are, if the RN makes it, and chances are, it will. And this there is, you know, a real, real movement from the rest of the people who don't to think that it's unacceptable to have a far right party at the head of France, especially after they've criticized, you know, in no uncertain terms, the ones that are existing in Italy and had existed in Austria before. Unless that happens, the far right party is going to be at the helm in France, and that will change everything. For Ukraine. That's what we're talking about.

**Anatol Lieven 18:40**

Dan, it's generally thought that there will be no moves from the US towards negotiations until the next US presidential elections, assuming of course, that there isn't a Ukrainian military disaster on the ground before them. But what about after the next US elections? Because as far as the Biden administration is concerned, I can't detect any thinking. Now behind the scenes of what a you know, a viable negotiating position would consist of, and I suppose as far as the Trump team is concerned, we just don't know partly because of course, there isn't a Trump team as such on international affairs. What are your views on this?

**Daniel Larison 19:33**

Well, I think you're right that if Biden were to win, there would still be the same resistance to pursuing a diplomatic path. Same as we've seen in the last two and a half years. With Trump. I mean, he's made noises about making deals or cutting deals. He says this about almost every issue that he would be able to find some way to make deals that Biden can't make, but you Oh, but I don't think that there's really anything to that. If we're looking at the people around him, the person who has been talked up or or has been considered as his possible Secretary of State is

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Rick Grinnell, who of course, is very much a hardliner on most issues. I think he would prove to be very much hardliner on this issue as well. And if someone like Grinnell is in a top position in the Trump administration, I think we would see a US approach that is, for many people, surprisingly intransigent with respect to Ukraine, that there would be a lot more continuity with Biden's position than then many people expect. Or they could be the Trump doesn't go with Grinnell and chooses to go in a different direction. But as of right now, that's who he seems to be promoting as one of his chief spokesman as one of the people that he wants to have close to him on these issues.

### **John Mearsheimer 21:01**

Can I jump in, in response to your question to and about European attitudes towards Russia, and whether there's any prospect for change there, and make two points that suggest that it's highly unlikely. The first is, I think, the Russell phobia, and the Putin phobia in Europe, is so great that it is very hard to imagine how you can negotiate your way to some sort of meaningful settlement with the Russians. The fact is that to keep the Europeans on board, and here we're talking mainly about the European public's over time, what we did was we thread inflated, and we portrayed Putin in the worst possible terms, he's the second coming of Adolf Hitler, we portrayed Russia as the second coming of Nazi Germany, the font of all evil, and so forth and so on. The problem that you face when you portray an adversary in these terms, is that it becomes almost impossible to then negotiate some sort of meaningful deal because you're in effect dealing with the devil. So I think it's very hard to sort of turn the ship around in the water because of how we have portrayed Putin and Russia more generally. My second point that I would make is, it's very interesting to watch the Europeans, but they live in mortal fear these days that the American security umbrella is going to disappear, that we're going to pivot to Asia, and we're going to leave them high and dry. They understand full well that having the American suit security umbrella over there ahead, keeps the peace in Europe by and large, and they want us to stay. But that means that they'll do almost anything we say there was a piece in The New York Times recently by Steven Erlanger, that talked about how easy it is these days for the United States to get its way with the Europeans. And I believe it's due in large part to that. And of course, the United States is going to remain as hawkish as ever, that might change if Trump is elected, but that remains to be seen, remains to be seen whether he'll be get elected, whether he'll get elected, and then how much that will matter. But assuming there is no sea change with Trump, I think the Americans will remain hawkish on Ukraine for the foreseeable future. And the Ukraine's, excuse me and the Europeans will dance to air tone. So I think there's very little prospect that things are going to change in Europe anytime soon.

### **Anne Kraatz 23:40**

Yes, well, your first point between Putin and the Russians being humanized in Europe. I'll tell you, it's not exactly true. There's a certain fascination for Putin as a strong man, which of which there is some in the United States as well understand. Russia has a very good historical image in France. And in Germany, as you know, it has been a very close nation to Germany, no matter what, you know, no matter what happened during the war. I mean, during the Tory spirit period,

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the whole mid administration of the Tsarist regime was run by what they called Prussians at the time. And beyond that, there's a great interest in Russian literature or Russian films, and so on and so forth. And you have a whole category of people who listened to a the French equivalent of Fox News, which is C news in French. And those guys are completely against France getting involved in anything, like supplying weapons or money to Ukraine and have a vast audience. They are really very much the equivalent of the of the in terms of the audience in terms of what they push for. Very equivalent Fox News in in France. So That's one element you cannot dismiss, because there are lots of radio stations and YouTube. Little shows that not at all take the stance against Putin. However, having said that, of course, you know what Mark Hall has finally discovered that he was Russia's greatest enemy after trying to be, you know, a mediator. And he's painted himself into a corner. And so have a number of European European presidents and other and other people in high places, they put themselves in a corner, they have, they have talked so much about the morality and the international order and the necessity not let someone take over territories by force that they really don't know what to do anymore. And now that my call is in a very weak position in France, the whole situation is is could turn around on its head. And I wouldn't be so surprised if it were to happen, because as I said, basically very few French people who wish for Russia's victory, and on top of that, if my taxi drivers with TV shows are anything to go by, they all say, Well, you can never beat Russia. I mean, a lot of people say that in France, I can remember, of course, that in France, a lot of the people who are now a part of the far right were originally ardent communists. And because the relationship between communist and Russia, there's always something there, you always you know, there is always this kind of nostalgia for the good old days of whatever, of communist friendships and togetherness, but it's not as simple as that.

And of course, in Germany, it is very complex. In Germany, you have a relationship with Russia that has no equivalent anywhere else in Europe, and historically, and goes over the moon. And you have at least one body with this goodness, vagabonding ash, has absolutely no weapons to Ukraine, remove all sanctions against Russia. And she just got 6.8%. I think in the, in the European elections, which was a surprise to me, in Italy, of course, there is still an enormous amount of sort of old fashioned almost family support for Russia because of the Communist Party, even though Maloney has made absolutely clear that she wants to support Ukraine. So all of this is complicated, and it is largely the heads of states in Europe that have painted themselves into a corner, for example, Mrs. Ursula von der Leyen, will be reelected for sure. At the head of the commission, has just said that what President Putin proposed was absolutely unacceptable and could never be accepted by Ukraine. So there you are, you have you have people at the helm, making very categorical statements leaving no room for, you know, ambiguity, in spite of my call saying that he wanted strategic ambiguity, or the strategic ambiguity really consisted of telling Putin maybe I'm going to send 4000 French soldiers to Ukrainian soil, at which most French people recoil in horror. It's a complex situation because Europe, Europe is in a way more likes than the United States, at least relationships among each other, and entitled other countries like Russia should not be taken as similar.

**Anatol Lieven 28:46**

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On on the on Putin's peace proposal, Dan, I mean, once again, I think once you put that in inverted commas, it's it is obviously, quite unviable as it stands. But do you see any hopeful aspects to Putin's points at all?

**Daniel Larison 29:07**

Well, I guess it depends on how, how seriously he is about the territorial issue. If he really does insist on Russia controlling all four territories that have been claimed, and technically, they've claimed that they've annexed even though they don't control all of them. They really intend on that being their gain at the end of the war, and they're not going to budge on any of that, then I agree. It's, it's pretty much hopeless. Where there might be some opening is to test them to see which of those territorial claims they're actually really wedded to which ones they're prepared to stick with until the end and which ones they're prepared to let go on? I would think there there might be some room for compromise there. Some room for negotiation. But they're, you wouldn't you would have to actually test it and start talking to them about it. And unfortunately, I don't see any, any work going towards preparing for that, whether in Washington or in Kiev, so it doesn't, it doesn't look very good. The prospects for making any progress, but there, there might be some opening there, if we tried to find it.

**Anatol Lieven 30:30**

And I jump in here, I mean, I agree with Dan, that the proposal is not viable at this point in time, that there's no way the Ukrainians or the West is going to accept anything approximating the deal that Putin has put on the table. But I think the key point here to keep in mind is that the Russians believe that they're winning the war, they believe that the balance of power, especially on the battlefield has shifted. And if you project out over the next year or two, it will continue to shift in their direction. And I think their basic view is that, of course, the West isn't going to accept this deal. The Ukrainians are not going to accept this deal. But we're going to basically force it down their throat, we're going to conquer more territory, we're going to do more to wreck Ukraine. And ultimately, they're going to have to accept something along the lines that we've described in this peace proposal, or you'll have a frozen conflict in which we are sitting in a very excellent position. You want to remember that Putin made it clear in his 14th June talk that he was not interested in the frozen conflict. He wants a real peace agreement. And that makes perfect sense. From his point of view. I think he's extremely unlikely to get it. I think he's going to make more conquest on the battlefield for sure. He's going to do more to wreck Ukraine and sow dissension in the West. I think it'd be successful on that front. But I think what he's going to end up with is a frozen conflict. He won't get a meaningful peace agreement. But I think that frozen conflict will be one that he can live with.

**Anatol Lieven 32:25**

And by the look of things looks as if in future it will be even worse for Ukraine, perhaps much worse for Ukraine, given the the military situation at least on the ground.



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### **John Mearsheimer 32:40**

This is why I've argued all along it now is the time to cut a deal. minimize how much more territory the Ukrainians lose number one, and reduce the number of Ukrainians are killed on the battlefield, trying to keep this war going, as we in the West are doing is, in my opinion, strategically and morally foolish.

### **Anatol Lieven 33:02**

In one question, I mean, sensible Russians I've talked to recognize that it would be impossible in effect to get any Ukrainian government or Western governments in it formally and legally to recognize Russian sovereignty over these annexed territories. They have suggested, you know, that this, as we have seen in Cyprus and Kashmir and elsewhere, this issue will simply be deferred for future negotiation, which was, of course, as far as Crimea was concerned is an entity's own proposal at the start of the war. But Putin, of course, is now asking for formal recognition, which no, I mean, not, not a possibility. So some some questions from the audience. From Germany, is there. Do you see any possibility of China, Brazil, India being able to introduce a viable set of peace proposals for for negotiation? Or will the United States and Ukraine continue to ignore such initiatives? Who would who has a view on this?

### **Daniel Larison 34:38**

So my thought is China might have had a good chance of doing this, except that. Now the Ukrainian government has come out very strongly against China and has been criticizing them publicly for what support they have provided to Russia, even though they could have provided a lot more than they have that they've had have actually been quite limited in the amount of support that they've given there. There are no limits partner. So it's, it was interesting that ahead of the meeting and Switzerland, Solecki was so pointed in attacking the Chinese and blaming them for undermining the summit, when it seems like it would have been worked advantage to try to cultivate better relations with them. So I think any proposal coming from China now will be viewed as doing the bidding of Russia, or whereas being incredibly favorable for Russia, regardless of what the content of the proposal is. And so I'm afraid that while China would be in a good position to be a mediator because of its relationship with Russia, the Ukrainians are now seem to be very closed off to that.

### **Anatol Lieven 35:54**

A question, of course, especially since the latest New York Times article on the subject, about the peace negotiations in in Istanbul, after the beginning of the war. John, do you think that they did stand a good chance of success? Were they doomed to fail? And what just how important was the role of the US and Britain in, in bringing them to an end?

### **John Mearsheimer 36:29**

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I would choose my words very carefully in answering your question. And that is to say, I think they stood a good chance of succeeding, I don't think they stood a very good chance, I think they stood a good chance. The two sides had made quite a bit of progress. And I think the Ukrainians were interested in shutting down the war, and the Russians were as well. So I think a deal might have been worked out. And I would argue that if the Americans and the Europeans more generally had backed the Ukrainians and push them to try to work out a deal, it's very possible that you would have gotten an end to this conflict immediately after it started. But of course, that didn't happen. In my opinion, almost all the evidence says that it didn't happen. Because the West and here we're talking mainly about the Americans, and the British intervened to tell the Ukrainians to walk away. And the Ukrainians Of course, did walk away. I think we did that, in large part, because we thought Ukraine could win, that we could defeat the Russians. At that point in time, the Ukrainians were doing quite well, on the battlefield, the Russians looked like they were having lots of trouble. And furthermore, at that point in time, we thought sanctions would work to have a devastating effect on the Russian economy. And the combination of sanctions post Russian defeats on Ukrainian battlefields would knock the Russians out of the ranks of the great powers. And of course, we were not doing the fighting the Ukrainians were. So it was easy for us and easy for the British to tell the Ukrainians to cut off negotiations. The end result is this disastrous situation that we face today.

### **Anatol Lieven 38:24**

There have been a couple of quick questions to me about Russian perceptions or following on from my conversations with them. I mean, I would say that my strong impression, and this is backed up by opinion polls that have been accurate and seemed accurate and reliable in the past, is at on the one hand, a large majority of Russians are not committed to war for complete victory, whatever that means. And of course, the idea of complete victory is also very vague on the Russian side, Putin's so called peace terms do not actually involve complete Russian victory, you know, which would be the presumably the subjugation of the whole of Ukraine and much bigger territory, territorial gains. And equally though, own the great majority of Russians appear opposed to anything that looks like surrender. And, of course, existing Ukrainian peace terms, as backed by the West, do, in fact, explicitly state that they involve complete Russian surrender and defeat in Ukraine. strong opposition to that, both for patriotic reasons but also because it is very widely thought that would lead to the drastic, well, the collapse of the existing Russian regime and the drastic week turning of the state and you return to the chaos of the 1990s. So you are you are not going to get mass Russian support or protest in your new form for acceptance of existing Ukrainian and Western peace terms, no way. But on the other hand, well, in the unlikely event, as John has said, and as I think we agree of the offer of a compromise piece, I don't think you would get much enthusiasm for continuing the war, then the number of really hardline Russians, you know, who do want to go for complete victory also appears limited, but as long as the only alternative is render, they will fight on. And of course, Putin has been very successful with tremendous help from us, and also from Western rhetoric in convincing Russians that this is, in fact, not a war with with Ukraine, but with the whole of the West, and that the Western US intention is, as John said, to basically eliminate Russia from the ranks of the great powers. So anyway, very briefly, those are those are my, my perceptions on

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the years to come, and do you see because, of course, the next French presidential elections are due in in 2027. An awful lot can happen between now. And then if the war is still dragging on. Do you think that there is a chance of a much stronger backlash against continuing support for Ukraine, in Europe and in favor of a compromise piece?

**Anne Kraatz 42:10**

Well, it's a little bit hard to say, when talking about Europe, we have to contend not only with the with the local governments, national governments, we also have to contend with the European centers of power, the Commission, the European Parliament, and the last words we hear from the from the European organizations. The motto seems to be there has to be a revolution of the mindset, and I'm quoting us alcohol here, we have to speak a language of power. So the European Union is lining itself up in regarding this conflict, almost as a as a competitor with the United States. You see, and that is a little bit of trouble. A lot of people had convinced themselves that Americans had already lost interest. I mean, it was the, you know, in a way, the general idea that it would just, you know, the Ukrainians to put it plainly, and that Europe and particularly France, and possibly was Germany, to take over. And I saw with my own eyes, how, literally from one day to another, people who talk about this all the time, suddenly became extremely bellicose and, and militaristic. And I'm not just talking about the French, but about the Germans as well as been you've noticed that the Germans are becoming interested in their own warlike, past, and they've just instituted a remembrance day for their soldiers. I'm not, I'm not saying that it's bad. But I'm just saying this is a sign of the Germans looking at war in a completely different manner than what they've accustomed us to. It seems as if German, young people, young men, especially are not completely averse to wearing a uniform again, In Defense of Ukraine or in defense of something else, I don't know, in France, the National Front has gotten the results that it has gotten through a lot of very young people who, who identify with a sort of strongman posture that is very young man who's leading the National Front row done Bardella with 28 years old and might become the next French Prime Minister. And who, by the way, is the son of Italian immigrants. Perhaps he has a Napoleon heard the Napeolonic syndrome, isn't it he's much taller than Napoleon was, but it was also an Italian and actually spoke French apparently with a very I have a Italian accent. And his mother didn't even speak French at all. That's, that's an anecdote. But this is to say that that young people seem to be attracted towards the military militaristic posture. Whereas at the same time you have 82% of the French people who say, no, no, we don't want to send soldiers to Ukraine. Maybe it's just the prestige of the uniforms, as we used to say.

But I think Europe is in for a lot of very substantial and possibly profound changes. I hope we don't rule the day when we arm Germany, by the way, but that's another question perhaps. So you don't know. And the trouble is, the trouble is, if I may say that the trouble is, is the United States, because a lot of Europeans feel that they are becoming vessels to the United States, and the United States doesn't do anything to dispel that. That notion with the articles and publishes in all kinds of very good scholarly magazine saying as much and and of course, the arrival or return of Trump to the natural us scene is, let's get everybody into each other here in Europe, even though you already have, and this is a strange thing to witness. But there it is, you

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have a number of French people who would be ready to support Trump and who in fact are trying to, if not emulate him, yet imitate him. And I referred earlier to this channel, which is just like Fox News. I mean, perhaps I exaggerated a little bit, but it's a little bit make France, Great Again, by you know, making it more militaristic, and so on and so forth. And since on the other hand, you have the the French government and every other government in in Europe, in agreement with the idea that they have to reconstitute their defenses, the defense industrialization. This these two elements combined, make for a future that looks considerably more militaristic to me than it has been for the since the end of the second world war than in Europe, I may be totally wrong, but it is something that when fields is something of a trend. And also, the position of the United States hasn't been clear if it's over Ukraine. Even Biden's position, even Biden himself hasn't always been completely clear. And some people in his administration has been much more hawkish and others as we know, the military was in fact, more or less against giving weapons to Ukraine. And this, of course, was known in France. So its strategic ambiguity is sometimes coming from the United States. And, and it creates confusion in everybody's minds duty. So it is true, as John just said that, at the end of the day, everybody knows that it is the Americans who will decide the fate of Ukraine and possibly the fate of Europe, and to have in the past for for for the good. And there's a tremendous amount of frustration in that regard in Europe, all over Europe, I believe. So I don't know if I answered your question.

### **Anatol Lieven 48:32**

I mean, as a Brit, of course, I am strongly in favor of splendid uniforms. I mean, the more feathers the more fairy hats, the more gold grade, the better. As long as it stops at that, you know, and and and we don't end up with people wearing fairy hats at Borodino. My own sense is that a good many of these younger people, if confronted with actual war, might think better of this, this militarism. But of course, I would rather not have them find that out in in practice. John had a question from the US Senate actually about the Indo Pacific. US strategy and partnership. What in your view, could be the effects of this on US policy towards Ukraine? I mean, so far, of course, we've seen Japan lining up Australia with with us over Ukraine, but India has been very careful to keep a distance. Do you have any thoughts on how this might develop in future?

### **John Mearsheimer 49:44**

Yeah, it's funny that that question came up because what I wanted to jump in and say was we want to remember that Ukraine is one of three big flashpoints. Gaza is another of course and East Asia is the third. And you have to think about what's going on in Ukraine in the context of those two other arenas as well. And with regard to East Asia, I think first of all the United States is, to some extent, short changed East Asia, because it's been so deeply involved in Ukraine. And now it's so deeply involved in Gaza. And given that the United States considers China to be the principal threat, and East Asia to be the most important theater, this tells you something is wrong, and that this balance or this imbalance has to be redressed. To take this from another perspective, what if we have a crisis involving the Philippines and China and the United States gets dragged in and the United States and the Chinese end up shooting each other? I'm not

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saying that this is likely to happen, but it's a plausible scenario, one can tell all sorts of plausible stories about how conflict breaks out in East Asia, I believe, if that were to happen, that would have a profound influence on how we think about Ukraine. And then if you go over to Gaza, the war in Gaza is first of all, foreseeing the United States to divert a considerable amount of military assets away from Ukraine, towards Gaza, to the Israelis. This conflict shows no signs of ending. And it's not only a drain on military resources. More importantly, I think the American policy in Gaza is dealing with the United States and the West in very important way. It's just cleansing all sorts of problems. You can see unrest beginning to percolate in Europe, about what we're doing. Joseph Burrell, you can tell that he's very uncomfortable with Western policy in Gaza. So I would argue that given that the Gaza war is likely to go on as long as the Ukraine war, that this is going to cause us all sorts of problems visa vie Ukraine. And furthermore, getting back to the question from the audience, I think if you think about the possible trouble, that we might run into in East Asia, you can see where that will detract from our efforts in Ukraine as well.

### **Anatol Lieven 52:27**

And do you think that Gaza is going to have a really deep and permanent effect on European views of the United States?

### **Anne Kraatz 52:40**

I think anybody who has a conscience, and that means a lot of people all over the world cannot be bit horrified by what took place on October 7. And anybody who has a conscience, conscience cannot be bit horrified by what's happening now in Gaza. Now, in France, a number of protests movements are placed, but a lot of them were stopped by the government actually. And the Gaza war is not reported. As well as it is in the United States. It doesn't. How can I put it, it isn't as present in on the French media than it is on American media. And, and, as you know, France has the largest Israeli sorry, Jewish population in in Europe. And so of course, it's some it's a consideration for the government to take into account. It was actually one of the main main points of the LF LFV. The FOSATU is the insubordinate people to make during this campaign for the next legislative elections, but they have been attacked in a very, very violent ways against taking that stance and have been accused of anti semitism at a return. But that, of course, as I said, people's conscience is is horrified by what happened in both instances, and it's something that will definitely there will definitely have a have an impact. However, the political parties, the political party that is likely to be at the helm of I mean, it's the National Front and they are absolutely ardent supporters of Israel, primarily because, of course, their founder was an notorious anti Semite himself. So it's certainly something that that is that is in everybody's mind. And, of course, the it also it also directly impacts Ukraine and Russia because you cannot accuse Russia of, of crimes against humanity and think that it is unthinkable to accuse Israel of crimes against humanity. So it's not really a I mean, it is a political question. But it is so much an emotional and moral question that it is difficult to analyze in political terms, because people will have to be at peace with their own conscience when they deal with it.

### **Anatol Lieven 55:36**

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There was a question which I'll answer about whether it would be appropriate to threaten Russians sovereignty over Kaliningrad, in response to, you know, Russian, self declared annexations, and aggression against Ukraine. And that, of course, in terms of justice, possibly in terms of reality and Western and global interests. Any serious threat of Western conquest of Kaliningrad, which is Russian territory, would lead immediately to war, direct war between Russia and NATO. And if it looked as if we were winning, it would lead directly to nuclear war. I, having visited Kellyanne in Rand it, all I can say is, there's much nicer when it was Koenigsberg, apparently, I would really not risk the existence of humanity for the sake of cleaning today. dreadful place. Well, finally, several questions, I suppose fairly enough to us all, I will pass them on to you about how if it were in your power, what would you regard as a just and sensible settlement to the, to the war in Ukraine? We have a few minutes left, Dan

### **Daniel Larison 57:10**

I'll give it a try, so if you could arrange it, I think we would have some sort of UN view, U.N.-sponsored referendum for determining the status of Crimea so that everyone would be accepted legitimacy of the outcome of that reference. That might settle that question, then you would need to have significant autonomy for eastern provinces in Ukraine to address any lingering resentment or concerns grievances that the people there may have had towards the central government. Obviously, Russia would have to evacuate all of its troops from every other part of Ukraine. And then we'll probably need to be some kind of demilitarized zone or some sort of band of territory where the Russians couldn't directly threaten Ukrainian territory from imposed or monitored by some sort of UN peacekeeping force. I don't know if all of that would be workable or achievable. But that that'll be my starting point.

### **John Mearsheimer 58:30**

You asked what would be adjust in sensible settlement, I'm going to leave the word just off the table.

### **Anatol Lieven 58:38**

As fits a realist

### **John Mearsheimer 58:42**

Sometimes as good realist, I even can talk about what I think is a just settlement. But in this case, I just want to think about what is a sensible settlement, what we can hope for here. And let me just preface what I recommend by saying we're talking about actually getting a peace settlement, not a frozen conflict. Okay. If you want a peace settlement, I think you have to do two things. One is you have to accept the fact that the Russians are going to annex Crimea and the four oblasts that they now almost control. You're not going to get them to give up those four Robles. So you have to accept that. That's the territorial settlement. And then second, you have

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to not only create a neutral Ukraine and put it into all this talk about bringing Ukraine into NATO. But you have to completely sever the security relationship between the United States and Ukraine. There can be no security relationship. Ukraine has got to be on its own. People may not like that, but there is no way you're going to get a peace settlement, where you Ukraine is linked in any meaningful way from a security perspective with the West, and especially with the United States. The Russians don't trust the Americans and the Europeans a toll given their past experiences, especially with regard to Minsk. And therefore, you have to create a truly neutral Ukraine effort from a security perspective from the west. And again, you have to accept the fact that those four oblasts plus Crimea are going to be formally incorporated into you into Russia.

**Anatol Lieven 1:00:37**

Anne, very briefly

**Anne Kraatz 1:00:38**

Well, I agree partly with John but I mean, you do have to give something to the Ukrainians who have very bravely fought back against the Russians. If they if if you have to accept that John Jones said that they are not going to rule it over the those four outlasts what's in it for them, then I'd like to like to think that we could go back to something like the Minsk agreements, but it's time that they should be implemented. In other words, you know, give the voice to those people of the Donbass and Atlanta and I mean, the Donetsk and Luhansk, who originally were absolutely horrified when when Biden took place, and they were considered, you know, traitors, and because they've voted for, for all of a sudden I forget his name. The fellow had to, to get away and go to Russia. What was his name? Yeah, Jana COVID. Were left the ref that voted for him. They had field you know, they were part of more or less of Russia, they spoke Russian, whatever, even if they felt completely Ukrainian. I mean, all of this is something that should be looked at in detail. But in the end, how can the Ukrainians save face if Crimea and was for a blast? Go to Russia? We have to give them something now. John says you shouldn't you should, they should be completely independent of the United States. But surely, the neutrality of Ukraine should be absolutely made ironclad. And in for that, you need the Americans and you need the European. So there has to be some given to them. Otherwise, if you're if Ukraine security is not guaranteed. You one doesn't see why the Ukrainians themselves will stop fighting, you know, because they will have to give everything up to the Russians in exchange, they would get nothing. So you have to give them something. And I think what you have to give them is an ironclad security act. I mean, several countries have already signed a security pact with Ukraine, France, written I think, if you don't want American footprints, maybe it's one thing but at least European guarantees will blue satisfy Ukraine and Russia in that case, if we give Russia if we give Ukraine a security guarantee? Well, in a sense, it's a guarantee for Russia as well.

And of course, a lot of people are talking and I think Daniel just did about referendums, referenda finding out if those people in Donetsk in the new heart still want to have something to do with Russia, or by now having had to having been subjected to Russian bombs in the like, if

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they decided that their fate should be strictly Ukrainian and nothing else. And as long as they were allowed to continue to speak Russian, which is one of the one of the demands that Putin made recently. So that's the question I would have, you have to give them something. I think the Minsk agreement gave them something, but nobody was ready to implement them. But in a way, it was a good idea, when they would have those four oblasts would have had a certain amount of autonomy through like almost a federal Ukraine and and possibly Russia would have been satisfied with that, because then it would have had access to the resources of that area, Ukraine, which are not what they used to be what they used to be consequential in all kinds of areas. And by the way, I just want to say this, I mean, this is kind of like an anecdote. I wonder if any of you have seen the YouTube statement by Lindsey Graham. going absolutely, extremely excited about the tremendous trillions worth of rare earths and other minerals that are under the under the Ukrainian soil. And he's getting all excited about harm, how much this could bring to the United States in great in great commercial exchanges. And so of course, the social social networks immediately erupted with saying, oh, there is the real reason why we're supporting Ukraine.

### **Anatol Lieven 1:05:26**

Insane reason, well, thank you so much. That was a fascinating and I hope, very useful discussion. And my thanks to the audience. I'm sorry, I couldn't get to everyone's questions. There are literally dozens of them, as you can imagine. So thank you all once again. I look forward to seeing you in future and I hope that members of the audience will be able to attend our two events. Next week. Many thanks.