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QI Panel:

Europe and the Crisis in Transatlantic Relations

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Anatol Lieven 0:38

Welcome everybody. I'm Anatole Lieven, Director of the Eurasia program here at the Quincy Institute for Responsible statecraft. The Quincy Institute, as I hope you know by now, is a relatively new Institute in Washington, DC, dedicated to the promotion of restraint and prudence in US foreign and security policy. We are a non partisan, not bipartisan. We have we are not part of the blob, but non partisan Institute. We are not attached to any US, political party or European for that matter. Today we are going to discuss a matter of very, very great newsworthiness, the transatlantic relationship and also the US Canadian relationship, in the context of Trump's demand for Greenland, what happened In Venezuela and the possibility of a new US attack on Iran.

To do this, I'm joined by an extremely distinguished panel. Pascal Boniface is founding director of the French Institute for International and strategic affairs, iris in Paris, and director of the quarterly review, la revue International is strategic. And he has published or edited more than 60 books on international relations, nuclear deterrence, European security, French international policy and other issues. Many of these books have become classics in French, and some not enough, alas, are also translated into English. Zoltan Koskovic directs the geopolitical unit at the Center for fundamental rights in Budapest. Hungary and his area of study covers the multi faceted geopolitical crises of the 21st Century, the war in Ukraine, us, Russian foreign domestic policy and conflict in general. And he has been widely published in both the English and the Hungarian media. My colleague, Zachary Paikin is Deputy Director of the better order project at the Quincy Institute, and a research fellow in our grand strategy program. He's also a senior fellow at the Institute for Peace and diplomacy, a Canadian International Affairs think tank, and he is a senior researcher in the international security dialog department at the Geneva Center for Security Policy, the gcsp, oh no, you're not but you're still connected to it. Zach, I believe forgive me.

Well, welcome everybody. So first question, beginning, if I may, with you. Pascal, the crisis, which then became, perhaps a non crisis, but which could become a crisis again, over Greenland, following on, of course, the US raid on, on Venezuela Trump's demand for Greenland, the threats which were then withdrawn to use military force to impose heavy sanctions on Europe, but I suppose could come back again and now the new threat to attack Iran. How deep a crisis, in your view, is this in relation between the US and France transatlantic relations. And do you think that this is a temporary thing, or is it likely to become a permanent feature of the international scene and of European policy?

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Pascal Boniface 4:32

Thanks Anatole, thanks for invitation. It's always a pleasure to work with Quincy Institute. So I will say I don't know exactly if it was a crisis will be permanent, or one day or the other, the necessity of a reconciliation between European and US will prevail. But for the first time since Trump is in the White House, for the first time, European has a unique response and to say no to Trump and. Trump has give up his one occasion. It's the first time, because in the other episode, regarding the trade, regarding NATO, regarding Iran, the Europeans had always admitted Trump views, and even if they are not agree exactly the mood was, US is too important for Ukraine, so we have to obey to us, because we need to protect which was, in fact, irony, because in order to protect Ukraine sovereignty, we are in a position to make concession on our own sovereignty.

But on this field, we have seen that when Maduro has been captured in Venezuela, which is totally illegal regarding international law, many European leaders, including my president, have said, Oh, it's a good thing to see Maduro in seated and with no reference to international Law and to UN Charter, which not the traditional European view, but Trump has gone too far. So we have admitted that it could bomb Iran in June or July, but it could make Monroe new. Monroe Doctrine in Venezuela, extracting and capturing president you could lack or not Maduro. And personally, I'm not a fan of Maduro, but it was at its own country, and it's a sovereign country, and to capture him, to make him in a jail in us, is totally illegal, and it's it's come back to the 19th century, so it's a sherry flow as a law of Far West, and not the international law, but wanting to have renounced on his own sovereignty these times, Trump went too far.

And so the European reaction was anonymous, including the Baltic countries, including Mrs. Van der Leyen, which is not very open on to Trump and we, which has made a lot of concession in the past, and including, even if it's not inside EU, including United Kingdom. And it's not so frequent that United Kingdom side with EU against us. And so, due to this block to this European unity for the first time since one year. So Trump has never ended to insult European leader. Has never ended to say that European Union is an enemy which has been created to screw up us and so on. And we have accepted all this insult, but this time, your European leader said, Enough is enough. We could not stand we could not accept that, and we stand together. And even eight countries have sent few troops. So it was purely symbolic. But then some troops to win land, and Trump said this country will be heavily punished on a trade agreement, and they will impose them a 10% tax complementary and he has even pretend to put 200 tax on wine, targeting specifically France. So all European countries stand together, and so Trump has give up his education. And so it has been a victory for EU, and we will see if we will have other victories.

The next step will be the EU regulation on digital market, because there is a strong attack from Trump and from the gafam on this even nizaban For Thierry Broughton, who was the former commissioner for industrial affairs on this subject. We will see if we will visit. But I think that European leaders has understood as understood, but if they give up, there is no more sovereignty. And I will just add two things on that, to not to take the floor too long. In fact, I think

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that European leaders have follow their public opinion, because the European public opinion has really upset with Trump, and they don't care if we need Trump to protect Ukraine and so on and so for in the French, in German, in the UK, in all European Union opinions there is, they're angry against Trump, and they're angry against their government, not To resist to Trump, and so they have done that also for internal matters.

And it will be my last sentence in this first expression, I think that Mark Carney, your Canadian Prime Minister, has played a very important role with his speech in. DeVos, because he has set a new rule, set a new tone, and so he has impressed all European leaders. And I think that in many European countries, many people say we will like to have this kind of leader at home. And for example, in France, McCarney speeches has been published in many newspaper Le Monde gontinon, like what because it was a symbol to or to resist strongly, but specifically to Trump and how to not give up to your own sovereignty, even it's quite dangerous. But I think that for the public, urban public opinion. It's too risky not to take a risk to oppose Trump.

Anatol Lieven 10:47

Thank you. By the way, I'm sorry to the audience I forgot to say, if you have questions, I hope you do, please put them in the Q and A you'll see at the bottom of your screens. And I will pass as many of them as I can to the to the to the speakers Zoltan, how is this? All this scene in Hungary? Because, of course, Pascal has said that in Europe as a whole, generally, Trump is not at all popular. But in Hungary, the government of Mr. Orban has sought very good relations with and achieved very good relations with Trump. Have have these latest moves by Trump changed that at all? Or how is it seen in Hungary? What is happening?

Zoltán Koskovics 11:38

Well, I completely understand and sympathize with Pascal's outrage at the 200% tariff over wines. I must say that European grandstanding and posturing is not productive at this moment, and that happens to also be the Hungarian government's stance. In fact, the European response was not completely unanimous. Central European nations like Hungary and Slovakia withheld their support from the public elements of this approach, so we refused to endorse an EU declaration on the subject. But it's true that we did not stop the Europeans this time moving forward, the official position of Hungary is that this is fundamentally a NATO matter and should be resolved within NATO. But from a geopolitical standpoint, we are very worried that Europe is isolating itself from too many of the players of geopolitics. Of course, there is a iron curtain between Europe and Russia right now because of the war in Ukraine, and we are having difficulties with the Chinese.

And right now we are in a deep ideological conflict with the United States. This is where we need to tread carefully. I, as a realist, do not like to deal with ideologies and domestic or political matters, but it's unavoidable at this point there is the focus of Trump's presidency is deep, profound reform of how the American body politic works, how the state apparatus works, if you will. When he speaks about the deep state, he means the entrenched bureaucracy. And his core

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observation is, whether you agree with it or not, I happen to agree with him. In this regard, is that the entrenched bureaucracy, the technocracy, took too much political power from where it belongs and Trump belongs and believes that it belongs in the hands of the elected leaders of the people primarily himself, but himself, but not solely. Now this ideological struggle within the United States unfortunately translates into a geopolitical dispute. Shall we use this careful world word with Europe? Because the European Union is basically the world champion of bureaucratic technocracy as such, there is an ideological conflict that currently exists between Washington and Brussels, and Brussels is not the stronger party in this regard.

Now that is, that is in the background if you read the national strategy that was published in late November. Then it is very clearly explained there. The Americans hope that Europe will come to its senses and it will do several things, one of which is to stop mass migration into the continent. Another one is to stabilize a relationship with Russia. The world word stabilize is extremely important here. I'm quoting it directly from the strategy. Nobody is expecting the Europeans to be friendly with the Russians. Of course, indeed, in the long term, the Americans will expect Europe to balance against Russia because, as the Pentagon's defense strategy also recently. Revealed, says Europe should be perfectly capable of doing that, and all of these priorities coincide with Hungary's priorities. Also ideologically, Budapest and Washington are lot closer than Brussels and Budapest, for instance, and in such a context, it would be unreasonable to expect the special relationship between Budapest and Washington to suffer because of something like Greenland.

And the third thing I wanted to mention here is that the Monroe Doctrine should be taken very seriously because Donald Trump, I think, and the people who advise him mean it completely literally. And there are, there are reasons for this. There are many reasons, of which I don't want to get into. But the primary reason is that the world is in transition. We are moving away from a unipolar system, whereas a unipolar system, it was never fully unipolar to multipolar system. There is going to be intensifying great power. Competition with new actors rising. India, for instance, is going to be a global power within the next decade, I think, but certainly within the next two and in this multiplayer system, in this multi polar arrangement, there's going to be competition. And one of the things that can give huge advantage to one of the great powers is they can, if they can create and maintain a regional hegemony, which none of these actors can, except for the United States and Donald Trump's midterm strategy is to make sure that the US enters this new era of great power competition with unquestioned hegemony in the Americas, and to that extent, both Venezuela and Greenland are absolutely crucial to this strategy.

Anatol Lieven 16:51

Yes, I mean, as Pascal has suggested, there never really has been any serious European pushback against American hegemony in what we used to call the New World. It was only when this became an actual demand for terror, wealth for European territory, but also, well, probably not, but potentially in Trump's language for other other people's territory, which seemed to go beyond anything that the US has done since 1898 and Zach on that score, I would like to ask you we've heard some praise for kyny, if you'll forgive a really dreadful pun. It made me think of

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an adapted version of an old book and film, not the Mouse that Roared, but the moose, the moose that roared. How worried are because, of course, as has been pointed out, the Danes were prepared to give or to return to America, in the case of bases, everything that it had previously had, and to allow that.

And also indicated that, you know, opening Greenland to American mining and process of processing of rare earths was not a problem, but when it comes to issues of sovereignty, Canada, of course, has long had American early warning system in northern Canada, and, you know, has been a very close ally. But How worried are Canadians now about the US? Is this threat to annex Canada or to support the secession of Alberta? Are these things that have been taken very seriously in Canada?

Zach Paikin 18:50

I think so. I mean, certainly at the level of the media elite and also at the level of the broader population. At this point in time, you know, a threat to annex A country is obviously very serious. We've seen Canadians increasingly say that, you know, he Donald Trump, is President of the United States, because America is the way it is, that he is a symptom of a much deeper malaise in the United States. And it's not just a question of get rid of Mr. Trump, and the problem is all resolved. There have been no shortage of other folks in his administration and in the broader Maga movement, who have been prepared to voice some very disturbing opinions about the future of Canadian sovereignty and Canadian unity that, you know, we've never had to really encounter since, you know, the era of manifest destiny. To be quite frank, you know, it's quite, quite a long time. I remember in the 1995 referendum. I was quite young at the time, but the 1995 referendum on Quebec sovereignty that President Clinton made a very important intervention, stating that a united and sovereign Canada has been a very strong and important partner for the United States.

And I have to worry that if you know, we do end up with a situation where we have, perhaps not one, but. Perhaps even two referenda in Canadian provinces. There could be a referendum in Alberta, the result of a public petition that's been circulated. And there could be a referendum in Quebec as well, because there will be provincial elections in Quebec later this year, and the polls suggest that the Parti KY could return to power on an explicit promise to hold a referendum in their first term. If these do take place, Mr. Trump is the kind of guy who likes to seek, you know, to exploit vulnerabilities. He's not the kind of person who's going to say this is an internal issue for Canada. But, you know, I can just say publicly that Canada has always been an important partner. You know, he and his people might be willing to press our buttons and be willing to voice even more support than they already have for these separatist movements, which would obviously put us in a in a considerable bind.

And it's not just you know, the threats to an excess and the you know, support we've seen, you know, most recently, from Secretary Besant in support of Alberta separation. But you know, we've seen these, you know, tariffs that have been imposed by the United States in complete violation of the what we call kuma, what you call in the United States, the usmca agreement.

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You know, these have been put forward on the completely ridiculous premise that Canada has been some kind of a gateway for fentanyl into the United States. We don't know how to deal with basically, these types of measures that are put forward for entire spurious purposes, and it leads us to believe that it's just very difficult to manage our relationship with with the US, and we have to prepare ourselves for the reality that, you know, our free trade with the United States will, in fact, not endure over the medium term, to say nothing of the of the long term, there's every possibility that Kuzma will not be renewed.

And so, you know, Prime Minister Carney is taking the very sensible step of trying to, you know, reach a new beginning in relations with China, certainly not to restore anything resembling the status quo ante, but nonetheless, he is using the language of strategic partnership. They have resolved a tariff dispute that you know stems in part from the fact that the Canadian government, the previous government, under Justin Trudeau, had imposed a 100% tariff on Chinese EVs in an attempt to get into the United States good books for all the good that that did us, you know, we were met instead by, you know, these these tariff threats. And so we are simply resolving that that dispute. There's no attempt to forge a broader and never was an attempt to forge a broader free trade agreement. But Canadians have certainly woken up to this reality. The United States is always going to be our most important economic partner and security partner, just given the realities of geography, the security compact of North America is always going to be different than the question of is the question of, is the United States prepared to defend Europe? That's just a fundamentally different thing. But nonetheless, you know, we need to find ways to hedge and to reduce our exposure, at least to the extent that we can, if not economically and in security terms, and at least intellectually.

There are, there are ways in which we can free ourselves from intellectual reliance on the United States now, given the way that President Trump has behaved and given Prime Minister Carney's speech in Davos, I'll just say one last thing about the European angle on all of this, just based on my co panelists and what they were saying before, it may do well to recall the metaphor that the former EU High Representative for Foreign security policy. Josep Borrell infamously put forward this idea that Europe is a garden and the rest of the world is a jungle, and we all saw that as sort of very self serving, possibly even racist. What many people did not really derive at the time or internalize at the time is the fact that is, if the rest of the world is the jungle than the law, then the law of the jungle presumably applies there.

And so that means that, you know, violations of international law in places like Venezuela and Iran and elsewhere are not all that important. But now that it's Europe that's on the chopping block, it's much more serious and and that has less to do even with issues of hard security and a lot more to do with status. I think what motivates Europe right now, it motivates many actors, in fact, if not all actors in international affairs, is status, saving face. And so, you know, part of the reason why the Europeans have been inserting so many poison pills into the negotiating process over Ukraine over the past many months, is because compromising with Russia and reaching a framework agreement to end the war in Ukraine would require treating Russia as an equal, and that would, by definition, reduce Europe's relative status in the international order. And so that's part of the reason why I think many Europeans have gotten so

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animated about the Greenland issue. It's not, that's the question. It's not, it's not that, you know, the sovereignty and territorial integrity of an EU member state is being challenged, is that this, for the first time, actually threatens Europe's status, you know, in the pecking order of the international order. You know, whereas interventions in contravention of international law in the global south have not done so.

Anatol Lieven 24:50

But Zach, you raise a very important point, because, of course, the more, the longer the war in Ukraine goes on, but also beyond. That the more Europe has managed to convince itself that Russia is mortal threat and the Great Other, the less it can presumably afford to resist the United States. And indeed, I mean, we have just seen today a speech by Margarita, the head of the Secretary General of NATO, basically saying, forget any idea that Europe can defend itself against Russia. We have to have the United States. Well, Pascal isn't the automatic consequence of that. That ultimately, if that is true, and if that is what European establishments believe they cannot actually ultimately resist almost anything that America wants to do, if they believe that only America is saving them from the Russian bear.

Pascal Boniface 25:53

Yes, totally Mark Rutte is. Everybody is making fun of Mark Rutte in Europe because he's really ridiculous. It seems to be like, I think, that the General Security of Warsaw Pact was less compliant with Brezhnev than Mark Ruto is with Trump. So everybody is making fun of it. It's not a good thing for NATO. But you have two different things. Of course, if Russia is attacking Europe tomorrow, could are we not able to protect ourselves? I'm not sure. I'm not sure. First, I'm not sure that Russia will attack Europe. I think it's different. And so they have huge difficulties to swallow Ukraine. They're not ready to swallow Poland Berlin.

Also, I think there is, I don't think that so, of course, we could never be sure. But I think it's not in Putin not only interested in putting capabilities to attack rope by military means, it could try to destabilize Europe. It could to make some dirty tricks in Africa to make some destabilization operation in many European countries, but large, full scale military attack. I don't believe it, but unfortunately, many European leaders believe that it is possible. So they think that only US is able to protect but I think that you have 140 millions of Russian we are. You have 450 millions of European citizens. So on the same way, it will be impossible for Ukraine to reconquer the territories, because there are 30 millions against 145 millions. But on the other hand, we, if we are 450 million against 400 145 I don't see all Russia could attack Europe, but nevertheless, even if I think that we have the capacity to resist, but it's even not the problem, because Trump has said many times, but he won't protect us. Trump is a predator, not a protector.

And the problem is that all, most of European leaders, are in a denial of reality, because they dream of the former good times. So all good times, and they act as if the western world is still existing, but the reality is a geopolitical reality. There is no more western world. We are not in the same world very firm, because Trump is closer to Putin than to MERS or Macron. He has

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never insulted Putin. He has never mocking Putin. He has make jokes on all European leaders, and not to say about Peter Thiel or Elon Musk, but and he has said that it's not his problem that Article Five could be interpreted in many ways. So many ways seems to it means that there is no automatic protection, and so we could not count on us protection. And so we are still like, you know, as a kids who want to to believe in Santa Claus, and they are very disappointed. And if we use so, when there is no more us protection, there is us, threat, in fact, not a protection.

So are we ready or not on every things we could not count on us. So we have to act differently, and we have to cope with reality. There is no more western world, because first the US, the pro us, protection is is gone, and the US prediction is there. And even on all the values, United Nation, international law, multilateral system, the values that you. Japan stick to even if many times they don't respect it, but they stick to this value Trump is in order to destroy and this board of peace, there is no except in Gary, but all European countries are refused to join board of peace. So I want there, perhaps I make a confusion between my desire and the reality, but I wonder if this time, the reality is stepping the face of European leaders, and they have understood that they have to do something different, for example, to make an agreement with India, for example, and perhaps to follow the Canadian way, not to attack us, but to having understood that it's not the Allies it has used to be.

We have to think differently and to act differently. And I think that due to the pressure of public opinion, all European leaders, I think that is very you have spoken about as a far right movement. For example, it's very hard for the far right movement to say they are pro Trump in January, 25 far right leaders want to make believe, to publicly that we invited to Trump inauguration. They were very proud to be close to Trump. No, they hide their proximity with Trump because Trump is highly unpopular. None of the US president has been so unpopular than Trump in most of European opinion. So I think that it's a good pressure for European leaders and also understood that if they give up to Trump, their international credibility for all those global stuff will be over, and so we will see perhaps some will try to mend the reaction once again, But Trump, I say that so when, if you someone spite in your face, don't say it is winning.

Anatol Lieven 32:07

Yeah, it's a good old saying, there's a cruder version of that as well. On that score, Zoltan, there's a question from the audience, which points out that key right wing figures in Europe, especially BARDELLA in France, but to a degree, Meloni in Italy, Vidal in Germany, even actually Farage Trump went too far when he insulted NATO soldiers who had fought in Afghanistan. Is Trump now becoming a real problem for the right in Europe, because, of course, the right wing parties are and certainly see themselves as being intensely patriotic or nationalist as well. Very difficult, is it not? And I think Farage, you know, Farage is response over Trump's remarks on Afghanistan really exemplified this very difficult for explicitly patriotic parties not to respond to the insults that diminish the dignity and pride of their countries.

Zoltán Koskovics 33:24

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Well, the source of the problem there is taking part in America's previous predatory wars, because let us not pretend that American predation started with Donald Trump. It was just liberal predation before that, and liberal predation was almost always completely acceptable to the liberal empire. And this is where I would like to stress that I don't think that the West has come to an end. I think that the liberal order has come to an end. The West is completely salvageable. The West has not always been liberal, and there is no reason for it to be liberal in the future.

And this is where the European right comes into play, as it was spelled out once again in the national strategy. America hopes that Europe will change course, and that changing of the course is moving away from technocratic liberalism. There is a massive amount of common sense reasons why we should that? What? But the most basic one is that technocratic liberalism in the last two decades has made Europe much weaker than it is. That is why I mentioned that we should not put too much effort into posturing and grandstanding, because the entire world can see that we are in a huge problem. There's a multi dimensional crisis in Europe right now. It's institutional and it's moral. It pertains to a security crisis in Ukraine, a border crisis with mass migration, crime crisis in many Western European countries. Most of these issues can be addressed by those. These right wing parties that you mentioned, at least, that's what they are promising in their various election programs and manifestos, and they have a realistic chance of winning in a number of major European countries, not least of which is France, where I think I can say, once think for certain that macrons policies, macrons program, is certainly dead for the next cycle, at least, but I think that he has discredited himself in front of the French people to the extent that his entire political movement might have to stay out of power for decades, if not forever.

A similar situation is happening in Great Britain. In France, there is an alternative, populist left wing movement, which is right now polling second in France. In Britain, reform does not have to contend with that, because that would be the political alternative in an atmosphere where the traditional parties and the traditional institutions of European democracy, alongside with the traditional parties that created those institutions have largely discredited themselves, and not just in front of the population, that's that's a big problem, but in front of the entire world. And this situation, I think that provided that the democratic process is allowed to run its course, unlike in Romania, for example, and eventually in possibly in the next cycle, but in two or three cycles, certainly the populist right is going to come to power in Europe, which is one way for Donald Trump to solve his problem with Europe. Of course, if that is the intention to help these parties, sometimes maybe Donald Trump should be a little bit more careful with careful with the the words that he uses.

Anatol Lieven 36:46

If I could ask a follow up question, though reform in England, of course, grew out originally from what became the Brexit movement, of leaving the European Union. Are the processes that you describe compatible with the survival of the European Union as an institution, or in the end, is

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this going to lead to the disintegration of the European Union? If it does, then I suppose any chance of pushing back against whatever the US does becomes even weaker.

Zoltán Koskovics 37:24

So, yeah, excellent question. Excellent question. Well, I think that it is possible. Yes, the European Union was not always this ideologically driven organization. It's difficult to put a name on what the European Union is, right now, it's certainly not a federation. Confederation doesn't seem to stick. Let's call it an organization, but it's ideologically driven. It is very liberal and very technocratic at this current juncture, but that's not how it was. Has always been, and I don't think that's how it was conceived. There is a possibility to return to a cooperation that is economic primarily defensive. We are going to need to a defensive element here. I actually agree with President Macron in this regard, but I would note that he kind of stole that idea from Prime Minister Orbán about a decade ago when he came up with this. And this happens quite a lot. Eventually, the European mainstream does often accept Hungarian proposals that they use to criticize just a small note.

And in that case, if you leave ideology out of this, and you don't pass their member states over, how they protect their borders, what do they teach their kids? Do they allow gender studies into the classroom? Or they don't, if you leave all of this out of it, then I think that a European cooperation that is worth the name, European Union, can be salvageable. But here's a please, nobody take notes who wants to do this, but he's a way how to destroy the European Union very fast. Remember when Donald Trump threatened tariffs over the troops deployment to Greenland, he specifically picked some European countries who were also members of the European Union, putting the UK as out here for a moment. Now, it is highly illegal and irregular to put extra tariffs on certain members of the European Union, but not other members of the European Union. But being illegal or inappropriate doesn't mean it's impossible. It is actually possible to do that. It requires cooperation from the member states of the European Union who want to avoid the extra tariffs. But it can be done now. If that were to happen, that would instantly end the European Union. Another reason why, probably Europe, Brussels, should be very careful about the posture it takes.

Anatol Lieven 39:45

Zach a question from the audience about Europe, but also, of course, applies totally to Canada. How? How serious is this new outreach to China? In your view of. Of course, Carney has very much done that as well. And to what extent can it help Canada and Europe to balance against the US? In your view?

Zach Paikin 40:15

Yeah, so in the case of Canada, it's it's relatively limited, as I mentioned before. We're not talking about a restoration of the status quo ante that will not be possible, because the past decade has left some considerable scars in our bilateral relationship with China, in which

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Canada, at the behest of the United States, arrested Huawei CFO Meng Wanzhou, and the Chinese responded by kidnapping two of our citizens. This raised tremendous alarm bells across our country about the threat of Chinese foreign interference more generally. And, you know, I think it will be very difficult to undo, you know, the impact of that discourse. So, you know, is it possible to restore some kind of a normal functional relationship with China? I should hope so, but we're not going to be returning to returning to the status quo ante. China is the second largest economy in the world, so there really is no way for Canada if it seeks to diversify its economic partners, to avoid dealing with the Chinese.

But the amount that we trade with with China is a fraction, obviously, of our trade with with the United States. The ambition, I believe, is for Canada to double its trade with with China over the coming decade, and you know, as a result, also double all non US trade, in fact, over the coming decade, with the hope that that would reduce the share of our exports that we send to the United States from about three quarters of our exports, where it is today, to about 50% so still heavily dependent. Obviously, the gravity rule of economics still applies, but relatively less less exposed in the European case, it's a little bit more complicated, because, as I was intimating before, the Europeans really do still depend on the Americans for the defense at this particular juncture in time, and that's less the case for the Canadians. The you know, the Canadians have their claws sunk into the American economy in in ways that the Europeans do not, for starters, and that's again, a function of geography, you know, and supply chains.

And so, you know, we do, you know, have the ability somewhat to survive any potential escalation ladder, as it were, hopefully, you know, things don't even get that far in trade negotiations or trade tensions, rather, with with the United States. You know, meanwhile the Europeans, it's an entirely different story. And of course, here's another thing about geography, is that the United States is always going to view the defense of North America, and therefore Canada, as well as part of its core national interests. And we've seen this with the Monroe Doctrine now being reasserted. So to some extent, that has allowed Canada to be a relative free rider. Now when it comes to defense, you know, does Canada have to do more for for the defense of the continent? Absolutely. And Prime Minister Carney has has outlined a number of measures in which that's going to happen. But nonetheless, the approach of the Canadians for the past many decades has been to spend basically the bare minimum necessary on defense to convince the Americans that we're doing something. Those days are over, but nonetheless, we can, you know, be comfortable in the fact that the Americans are always going to take the Defense of Canada seriously.

But America may not always be committed to defending Europe. We will see the West has, in fact, not always been a thing. I mean, to go back to Zoltan's comment about the West being salvageable. That depends on what we mean by the West, if we mean by the West, Western civilization, then for sure, if we mean by the West something along the lines of the geopolitical construct that has largely existed only since the Cold War era, and that has largely survived due to a shared perception of external threat that may not necessarily, you know, be salvageable, especially in a multipolar World, or relatively multipolar world in which the United States is going to see its primary interest is lying elsewhere in the Western Hemisphere, in East Asia, etc. But

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the Europeans are rich. They should be able to defend themselves. So goes. You know, the the narrative among among those who hold that, that particular perspective, and so whether the West, in that sense, is eligible, I don't know. And it does mean that the Americans, vis a vis the Europeans, have escalation dominance, which is not the case necessarily vis a vis the Canadians.

And so that means, to go back to the original question that you know, the Europeans have to be very careful with what they do on the Chinese question. I think it's remarkable that, you know, the Americans have played their allies quite brilliantly here, in which, you know, the Americans can forge whatever type of deal they want with the Chinese, but the Europeans have to, you know, on behalf of the United States, seemingly maintain, you know, a relative deep freeze in their relationship with with the Chinese. Not predicting this is always going to be the case. But, you know, the Europeans do have to be quite careful about not angering the Americans on X, Y and Z, because they've just outsourced everything to the issue of Ukraine, and that's just not something that's that's sustainable at all. It's going to take a somewhat of a mentality shift among the European elite to change that, and I don't think that the current crop of leaders in Brussels certainly is capable of that. So long as the current commission remains in power.

Anatol Lieven 45:00

When it comes to Russia and Ukraine, Canada seems to be, you know, under two different impulses. Because, on the one hand, as you say, I mean, I find it hard to believe that even so called security experts genuinely believe in the Russian threat in the Arctic, in the sense of Russia invading Ellesmere Island. You know, you know, this seems to be grotesquely exaggerated. I mean more icebreakers, yes, and patrol craft and so forth. So in that sense, Canada can see itself as more secure. On the other hand, you do have a rather powerful Ukrainian lobby, part of which has indeed moved from Canada to Ukraine. How far does that constrain Canada from? Or can Canada hold aloof from the whole Ukraine business?

Zach Paikin 46:05

Yeah, that's that's quite a has been quite a difficult issue for us for quite some time, not just on the Ukraine issue, but on a whole host of foreign policy issues and international conflicts, in which, unfortunately, a number of immigrants to Canada do not check their identitarian and political preferences at the border when they immigrate to Canada. And the result of this is that it becomes very difficult for Canada to navigate the pressures of a multi polar world in which we have no option but to maintain good relations with leading powers such as China, India and others. And yet that becomes very difficult. I mean, just take, for example, the issue of India, where Sikhs represent 2% of India's population, yet they represent 1/3 of all the immigrants that India sends to Canada. And the issue of sort of Khalistani independence is just not a major issue among the Sikhs who live in India any longer, but remains quite a live and active issue among the Sikh diaspora in Canada. So again, that has definitely complicated our relationship with, with a rising power like India. You've seen Prime Minister Carney has now gone out of his

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way also to try to rectify the relationship with with India, after the downturn that we saw under Justin Trudeau as well, but on the Ukrainian Front.

I mean, this is just one issue where, in part for, you know, the domestic constituency issue, but also just for reasons related to our relationship with NATO, it's difficult for us to imagine Canada adopting a fundamentally different posture on this conflict for the foreseeable future. NATO has been really at the center of Canadian foreign policy for a very long time. In fact, you could say that 90% of our foreign policy is down to the three ends, NATO, NORAD and NAFTA. And so, you know, given how important NATO has been, we have often viewed NATO as a key what we would think of, even as a multilateral body. I think that's an abuse of the term multilateralism. When I think of multilateralism, I think of the UN I think of the WTO, but we view NATO as really a body where we can be at the same table as not just the US, but also the French, the Germans, the British, etc.

And so we have always been very eager to participate in NATO missions, and that has very much colored our perspective on the Russians as well. There has been some space prior to the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine for us to be able to cooperate on discrete issues in the Arctic, obviously, on cultural issues such as hockey, but I think it's going to take a considerable cultural change in the Canadian political elite to view the Russian issue separately. And there is a security threat there for us as well, in the form of missiles and the like. But now that security issues have perforated the Arctic, and the goal of the Arctic Council, of course, was always to insulate the circumpolar region from those security disputes that existed in other theaters.

Now that those security disputes have perforated the Arctic, I think we're going to have to think about what sort of not just deterrence but also de confliction measures are going to be necessary in the Arctic, and whether Canada can play a leading role there, amongst the Arctic and Baltic eight, I think is something that we should would start to think about already in Ottawa. I don't I don't think that those reflections have yet begun. I think the threat lens vis a vis Russia still remains, but putting the issue of just Ukraine aside and thinking about the security of Canada and the circumpolar region, that's one area where we can have some creative thinking, and where Canada has demonstrated creative thinking in the past on issues of arms control and cooperative security, back under the premiership of Brian Mulroney in the late 80s and early 90s, when the Cold War was coming to a close.

Anatol Lieven 49:26

But if it comes to radically new thinking, or at least thinking that we haven't seen for a century or so, I have read that the Canadian Army is now drawing up contingency plans for how to resist an American invasion, look involving guerrilla warfare, something along the lines of the Afghan mujahideen?

Zach Paikin 49:52

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I mean, I'm not going to make any fundamental predictions here. I highly doubt that this would happen ultimately, but we are 41 Million strong in Canada. And if the United States invades and only 1% of the population chooses to resist, that is still 410,000 Canadians are going to have to worry about in terms of their resistance and what they're going to be up to guerrilla warfare, God knows what. I certainly hope that nothing ever comes to that. You know, we've been best friends for a very, very, very long time. We have the world's longest undefended border. The United States should not take any actions that would endanger their own security. You know, by forget about military action against Canada, but, you know, ratcheting up economic tensions against Canada. Obviously, they have their own economic goals in the forthcoming Kuzma review that they're going to want to to pursue, especially as relates to the the auto industry.

But you know, let's be careful not to climb too far up the escalatory ladder here, because the relationship we've developed, the security order we've developed continentally in North America, is something to be incredibly proud of. And I'm concerned that, you know, this Trumpian discourse has permeated so much of the American right at this point that it's going to be difficult to restore the type of relationship we had before. And so we have some thinking to do in Canada, also about how, over the longer term, you know, not just how we're going to survive Trump over the next four years, but how we're going to manage this relationship carefully.

Anatol Lieven 51:16

Going forward, a question with regard to France in particular, despite, you know, this new tension with America, one sees that France has just seized a Russian ship in the Mediterranean, and France is still, well, actually, I haven't seen any More talk, but until recently, we're still talking about sending French troops to Ukraine. I mean, is this a symptom of the French establishment simply being on autopilot? Nobody has told them to stop, or is are these French policies now completely locked in because, I mean, I myself have written about this. You know, Russians are asking if the Europeans want a war with Russia, and I keep telling them no, but I can't tell them that there couldn't be incidents starting at sea, which would lead to very dangerous escalation. Is that? Is that danger seen in Paris?

Pascal Boniface 52:22

There are two different things, Anatol. First, the seizing of ships. It's there's also a huge for vacation from Russia, inside France, the red ants on the Jewish monument and so on. So time, two times France to react. But so it, I think that it was a way to show but first, Macron is still in power, and he's still a leader, and still one strong man inside Europe. You have to, you have to have a international agenda, because his natural agenda is very under threat.

Secondly, to send French troops. It's only after a peace agreement. It's not to fight a war against Russia. It's not during war time. It's only it's the formal, the formal proposal of European Union, the Coalition of willingness. It's if the war is over, if you're a cease fire, we need to send troops to protect Ukraine. I think that Russia will never accept that, and it will never happen, but it's in the No. It's nowhere to send troops during wartime, during the fights, because it will be the third

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world. And Macron has made a proposal one years and half ago, and he was absolutely criticized by everybody. So forget to send troops during the fighting. And so after Macron has also stated that we need to, perhaps, to talk with Putin. And so, in fact, European leaders are very disturbed, because everybody is talking with Putin except them.

And so the problem, if we want a peace agreement, you can have a peace agreement with Brazil or China, and it's very difficult not to speak with the main protagonist of the war. So we are split between the so called moral values. Putin is under arrest for the International Criminal Court, and we could not speak with him. But if we want to be realist, you make peace with people you are at war on. So we are not directly at war with Russia, but we help Ukraine, which is at war. And I think that if we want to have a weight on a solution, it just impossible not to speak with Putin. So I think that there is two solution ever Putin and. Trump will find together a solution. And if Ukrainian and Japan are under the table, very on the menu, I think it's probably the most probable option. You will have a direct agreement between Putin and Trump, and the Ukrainian will just be the witness of this agreement as the European Union. I mean, if we want to play a role, we have to talk not only with Zelensky, not only Christian but also with Putin. And for the time being, the leading movement, not the public opinion, but the newspapers, the media say there is no way to speak with the devil and even with a long spoon. So you have a strong pressure for the establishment not to speak with Putin. But so you have only two solutions. Ever you speak with him, ever you will absent of any solution.

Anatol Lieven 56:01

But the thing is that by keeping the possibility of European troops in Ukraine after peace open, I mean, this is widely seen as a way of blocking any peace agreement, precisely because Putin will not agree to any settlement?

Pascal Boniface 56:20

Of course, but I think that it will never happen. And so there is two social ever you have a broad deployment of Brazilian Indian and many global south country, but to send only European troops, it will never be accepted as a part of a peace agreement by Putin. So I think it's more to throw the flag than to have some things. At least it does allow European leaders to make something without Americans, and so to speak together and to say we could be able to propose something without Washington. Of course, I agree with you, it will never happen, because Putin will block any proposal in this sort, in this kind and so ever you have a cease fire, or you have European truths, but you can't have, I can't imagine Putin accepting NATO country troops in Ukraine.

Anatol Lieven 57:25

When it comes to Macron wanting to talk to Putin, the Russian response is, you know, we've talked and talked and talked and talked in the past, but you have never actually proposed anything concrete. You know, on the one hand, the Europeans want to play, you know, be seen

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to play a role by proposing to send troops. But as far as you know, I mean, are there any significant discussions of making compromises with Russia or concessions in order to to reduce Russia's demands, for example, in the field of of lifting or suspending sanctions?

Pascal Boniface 58:10

The problem is that we were blocked by our support of Zelensky. And for a long time, we have said that the war could be could be and we vote Zelensky, we conclude territories, and we stick to his war goals, which are unreachable. We become to become realistic and say that we need it. Will have territorial concession. And so it's a first step. And of course, the war will finish by Crimea will will be kept by Russia and part of Donbas. And so we start to become realistic. And I think that we need to make some pressure, because if zelensky is believe that we will pay weapons for years and years, and it will cost us a lot of money.

And I think that it begins to have Ukraine fatigue in some European Union countries, not only So, I think that the next step is to say about the problem is that Putin is not there is any concession from Putin part, because he thought that he could have the world Donbas, he could have the world things and all his own war goals will be accepted by Trump. So I think that at least, if Trump has made some pressure of Putin, we could have reached a better deal. But for the time being, as a deal, it's only in fact the Trump PEACE Plan is a Russian text translated in English, and, of course, for European it's very difficult to swallow.

Anatol Lieven 59:51

Yes, indeed. Well, thank you all so much. Thanks to the audience. I'm sorry I couldn't get to all of your questions, and I'm. We have several more webinars and book talks coming up in the next week. On the 10th of February, we have another webinar on the European Europe, on the European Union and its expansion and the expansion of the euro or not, which I hope you will be able to attend. So thank you all fascinating discussion on some very difficult issues, and I hope to see you all again soon. Thank you.