

Gaslit Nation Transcript

6 March 2024

“Trump’s Shadow Foreign Policy”

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[opening song, [‘Hedge Your Bets’ by Detroit Rebellion](#)]

Andrea Chalupa (00:02:00):

The song you heard at the top of the show was Hedge Your Bets by Detroit Rebellion. Detroit Rebellion is swampy, existential blues, garage, storytelling, psych, stoner, punk, jazz rock influenced by Detroit music such as The Stooges, John Lee Hooker, The White Stripes—yay!—Stevie Wonder—double yay! The Detroit rebellion started as a solo project. 10 plus years and 4 drummers later, it’s again a solo project. Detroit Rebellion is not from Detroit. The name honors the influential music of Detroit, as well as The Detroit Rebellion of 1967, an important but tragic part of American history.

Jeff provided this statement about the song: “I see a direct link between the decline of western civilization and western media and that's what this song is about. We need more discussion of this in public forums. Media has tremendous influence over how we conduct ourselves as a community, and it's going in the wrong direction. I write to sing the blues. Creation for me is the struggle to make sense of an insane world, and there seems to be no shortage of material.”

Andrea Chalupa (00:03:11):

We'll post a link to ‘Hedge Your Bets’ on our social media feeds and in the show notes for this episode on our Patreon page. You can find more of Detroit Rebellion’s music on Bandcamp at [detroitrebellion.bandcamp.com](http://detroitrebellion.bandcamp.com) or [detroitrebellion.blogspot.com](http://detroitrebellion.blogspot.com). Thank you so much for sharing your music with us, Jeff. And to all the *Gaslit Nation* listeners who make music, who are artists, submit your songs to us. The fascists that we're up against, it's a global war they're determined to wage against us. That's why *Gaslit Nation* exists—and Kremlin File who's joining me today in this week's episode—so the most important thing we can all do is fight for our minds, protect our minds, own our power, and be creative in the face of all their destruction. So for that, if you have a song out there, share it with the world through getting *Gaslit Nation*. Submit your music to us. It's very simple, very easy, and we love hearing your work. It's beautiful, it's powerful. There's always a connection with the songs that we receive and what we're talking about on the show. Just natural. It’s organic because we're all fighting the same fight together. We’re all in this for our shared liberation.

Andrea Chalupa (00:04:22):

And art is an important power in the front lines of that. Art is survival. So please submit your music. Look for a link on where you can submit your song at the very top of the show notes for this week's episode. Don't be shy. We love you. We love your music. Make art. Fight like hell. Alright? And as part of that

celebration we are having a Patreon party for our subscribers. It's a follow up to the Make Art workshop that I published back in November, where I shared my secret sauce of creating a screenplay, a movie from scratch; how to create a first draft of a script that reads like a third draft. It's my secret sauce. I go into this mindset every time I approach a new project, create a project. And the behind the scenes of making the show, as Olga Lautman who's here today with Monique Camarra knows, I've been writing scripts. I turned in 3 screenplays to producers in the month of January alone. Creative writing is—like Jeff wrote with Detroit Rebellion—creative writing is keeping me sane right now. So if you want to join me for a follow up to our Make Art workshop, I will be holding one live for our Patreon community.

Andrea Chalupa (00:05:28):

It will be recorded. And that will be on Thursday, April 11 at 7 PM Eastern. And you can come and workshop your projects. Ask me any old silly question. I'll bring my own silly questions, and we will sort through our projects together and get our projects out into the world together. That's what it's about. I will answer any questions about making art, as well as the business side of art, the self management process of art and so on, and just share an update on some projects I'm working on. It's gonna be a big, important Let's get our art out of the world workshop happening April 11, 7 PM Eastern. Be sure to join us for that. It's exclusive, a big thank you to our Patreon community that makes the show possible. And the *Gaslit Nation* 2024 Survival Guide... Tick, tick, tick, tick, tick the election's happening. We all need to do our part or we will wake up on November sixth devastated and everyone will be in the crosshairs of authoritarianism, no matter where you are in the world.

Andrea Chalupa (00:06:25):

If America falls, it's the domino effect all over the world for fascism. So we're gonna be debuting the 2024 Survival Guide in the end credits of this week's episode. I'm thrilled. We worked really hard on this. So please listen to that. I'm gonna be playing it every end credits until the end until election day so we all can get in where we fit in and be a part of the solution. And this, please know, this election is bigger than Biden. It's bigger than Biden just like the fascist movement is bigger than Trump. We need to really hack away a corruption at the root and the *Gaslit Nation* 2024 Survival Guide shows you how to do that. This week's episode is airing on Tuesday, March 5th, the 71st anniversary of the death of Stalin, soon to be outdone by the highly anticipated sequel, the death of Putin. And with us today to be our Stalin correspondent is Monique of the Kremlin File podcast. Hey, Monique.

Monique Camarra (00:07:22):

Hey, hey. [laughs] I have to laugh because that is just the best. Just the best, Andrea.

Andrea Chalupa (00:07:33):

[laughs] Yeah, so we're thrilled to bring you the latest in the authoritarian weather report all through a lens of... Well, that reminds me of a Stalin anecdote. So, all things stolen at this week's *Gaslit Nation*, joined by our friends at *Kremlin File*. And if you want to track the machinations of the modern day Stalin movement, the KGB of the twenty-first century, the NKVD, GP, whatever you want to call the Russian imperialist genocidal terror squad, you can check out Olga Lautman, Russian mafia expert extraordinaire,

Olga Lautman's Tyranny Tracker. Tyranny Tracker, where Olga collects a diary of real events that happened during the Trump years to remind us all of the hellfire we were all bombarded with. Remember that feeling where the last thing you did before going to bed, and the first thing you did when you woke up in the morning was to check Twitter to understand what that monster Trump in the Oval Office did that day; how close we were to a nuclear war, how close we were... Which group of people were getting targeted, which individuals were having their life destroyed by his Twitter account, and so on. So, Olga Lautman has an essential guide to that. It's Tyranny Tracker, a daily reminder to all of us of how bad the Trump years were, in case anybody needs a reminder, because there's too many people that are being cavalier with our very democracy right now. And we're gonna talk about that

Andrea Chalupa (00:08:55):

And I want to just give a special shout out, speaking of Detroit with Detroit Rebellion at the start of the show: Detroit native Terrell Starr of the *Black Diplomats* podcast was over last night, and we watched *Killers of the Flower Moon*, which we'll be discussing in a special podcast out before the Oscars this Sunday. I have to tell you, everyone listening: I waited for a very long time to see Martin Scorsese's *Killers of the Flower Moon* because I read some shallow, lukewarm review about it. And that's why I was like, "Okay, that that's probably some Oscar bait film whatever." No, no, no. *Killers of the Flower Moon* is one of the most extraordinary films I've ever seen in my life. It is, in my view, the finest work ever by Martin Scorsese. He leaves it all out on the field. This is like his monument to his entire body of work. It is a masterpiece, and it made me—just to give a metaphor of what it felt like watching *Killers of the Flower Moon*: When I was a little girl, I went to my friend's house and her parents served us chocolate ice cream. I was enthralled by this chocolate ice cream. I thought, Where did you get this? What's this brand? Where did you get this ice cream? It turns out that it was just regular

Andrea Chalupa (00:10:12):

It turns out it was just regular chocolate ice cream and that my parents back at home were feeding me the sugar-free kind, which tastes like shit. The regular ice cream tasted extraordinary. That's how I felt watching *Killers of the Flower Moon*, like all the other films out there are like sugar-free ice cream. *Killers of the Flower Moon* is like loaded chocolate, real, real chocolate ice cream. It's the story of the Osage people and the insidious, the charming white devil genocide carried out by white supremacy, and how they charmed and manipulated the Osage in the early 1900s. And it just shows you like the the insidious machinery of genocide, and runs on gaslighting. It is a mind fuck of a film that is artistically driven. Yes, it's 3 and a half hours long, but that time speeds by where your stomach is churning, hanging on the edge edge of your seat. I urge everyone to watch *Killers of the Flower Moon*, and bring a friend to watch it. Bring a friend to watch it. It is... I can't say enough about it. And I will go on and on and on about this because it is so layered, and it says so much about where we are today as a country.

Andrea Chalupa (00:11:23):

Alright, my ladies, *Kremlin File*, the girls that keep me honest. [laughs] Alright, enough for that. I just did like 50 minutes of announcements, Now on to you. Tell us how bad are things now? Alright Russian mafia Barbie, Olga Lautman, you wanna kick us off? You've got Orbán visiting Trump at Mar-a-Lago. Orbán is holding a dictator summit at Mar-a-Lago with Trump, probably looking for more classified files

that are floating around in, like, the pool filter. And they're having that dictator summit on March 8, Women's Day, because, of course. Orbán is openly influencing the US election, making statements on how he wants Trump to win, claiming falsely that only Trump can end Russia's war in Ukraine. The last these 2 assholes met was at Trump's Bedminster Golf course in August 2022, after the far-right Klan rally known as CPAC, which is sort of the unofficial Republican National Convention. So, Orbán is very much breaking laws, breaking international norms, by weighing heavily his thumb on this scale in the 2024 election, as dictators backed by Russia like to do.

Andrea Chalupa (00:12:30):

It's important to note that Orbán, his Parliament, his government was just rocked by a big old sex scandal where someone in his government pardoned a government institution. That was...

Monique Camarra:

The president.

Andrea Chalupa:

Yeah.

Monique Camarra:

The president covered up. Yeah, basically.

Andrea Chalupa:

Covered up a pedophile ring. And that got leaked and they discovered... There was a big push back against that. And that story is important. Orbán's pedophile scandal in Hungary is important because it's a reminder to all of us that QAnon, the big disinformation operation, basically painting the Democratic Party elites and their financial backers like George Soros as a pedophile Mafia... So really, the Republicans like MAGA queen Marjorie Taylor Greene and then other MAGAhats, when they really push QAnon, it's just projection. When the global far right pushes QAnon, it's just projection. They're the ones that are actually on the side of the pedophiles, as Orbán's pedophile scandal back in Hungary has reminded us yet again. So I wanted to kick that off with you two. So, Orbán's coming to Mar-a-Lago to campaign.

Monique Camarra:

Yep.

Andrea Chalupa (00:13:42):

That's what this is about. And what else is this about, Olga?

Olga Lautman (00:13:45):

Well, first let me start as far as with the Russian mafia, which obviously is, you know, intertwined with Russian intelligence services and the Kremlin. They have been known for trafficking women for decades. I mean, this is one of the biggest businesses for them. We have seen plenty of scandals between, you

know, Erdogan's yacht that had underage girls, you know, on it with Trump's business partners on the yacht. It's just, it's a very, very big business for that. So for the fact that Russia, you know, created this psyop QAnon to blame others, it's basically projecting what is happening there and has been happening for decades. As far as Orbán, I have been warning now for over a year: Hungary will be the cutout—one of the cutouts—for US elections. In 2016, Russia used their own agents, along with Americans, to attack our elections. In 2020, Russia used their agents in Ukraine to attack our elections and fabricate information bullshit on Hunter Biden. And at that point, I mean, I was watching this unfold. I was receiving information, you know, minute by minute.

Olga Lautman (00:15:12):

And at that point, Giuliani is the one who sought out Russian intelligence. It wasn't the reverse. It wasn't that Giuliani was co-opted or he was stupid. He actually went to Ukraine to seek out the help of Russian intelligence in order to attack our elections in 2020, which we see was the basis for this impeachment, which fell apart with the Smirnov indictment. 2024: Russia cannot use their own agents because, you know, it's much more difficult to move, although they've picked up speed on that. They can't obviously use their agents in Ukraine because those fled either to Russia or the Middle East, or God knows where they went. So they're gonna use Hungary to move the money and to, you know, have all these back-channel deals and whatnot. This is what I suspect, and I've been warning about it and seeing signs about it. We saw the Heritage Foundation, who was very against Russia—they were Russia hawks.

Olga Lautman (00:16:14):

Suddenly, now, like over the past year after they got a donation from a think tank—Orbán's think tank—suddenly they changed their tune and now they are, you know, pro Russia seizing whatever amount of territory that Ukraine wants, and whatnot. At the same time the Heritage Foundation also a few months ago organized a meeting and had Republicans with Orbán operatives to try to stop aid in Congress for Ukraine. So we can just see these are just the beginning signs. It's been happening over the past year and a half. We could see where it's going. So there's absolutely nothing, nothing, nothing good about two fascists on Women's International Day meeting in Mar-a-Lago where Trump, you know, had America's most classified documents sitting in ballrooms and God knows where else. I mean, toilet bowls, everywhere.

Monique Camarra (00:17:16):

Just to top off, okay, everything that Olga said: There are investigations prior to what we're seeing now of Hungarian operatives who were fiddling in Slovakian and Polish elections. And that's been documented. So this is a modus operandi. I mean, we know what the the model is. Other evidence as well is that basically the Hungarians are attacking US ambassadors... Well, not talking, the US ambassador, and also didn't want to meet with a bipartisan US Congressional delegation when they came to visit. So this shows us a certain way of operation where you have the official state—the way that you have ambassadors, all of the diplomatic corps, so on and so forth—and then you have on another level, a parallel level and probably the one that actually counts, these informal (if we can call them that way)—

Olga Lautman:

Shadow.

Monique Camarra:

Thank you, exactly.

Olga Lautman:

They're shadow operatives in government. That's what Trump is doing right now.

Monique Camarra (00:18:30):

Exactly. That was my point. So basically, this has always happened in Soviet history, for example. Just to throw that in there. On top of all the state organs, they had parallel organs all through, like the security services, so on and so forth, and also those that stretched out into the world. That was all I wanted to add on that one. It just goes really back to seeing how these authoritarian states and leaders put aside all democratic processes and ways that they're supposed to be meeting publicly, openly, so that their publics can understand what's going on. Instead, they're doing things behind, on binary tracks and channels.

Monique Camarra (00:19:13):

One other thing that came out, I think today: the Chinese will be opening police stations in Hungary. I already know in Italy there's about 11 of them. There's probably more than that. Okay? This was brought forward, and for the life of me I can't remember the group right now... Safeguard, if I'm not mistaken, put out a report last year about the police stations worldwide. But we know that they're not police stations. These are agents, so on and so forth, and in Italy it started in 2016, girls and boys. Okay, the first to arrive, if I'm not mistaken, and it probably has the largest amount. But in Hungary, they just... I just saw it. Andrea, you're right. It came out today. So I sat there and I said, "Great. So the guy runs away because he's got a, you know, I mean, I'm sure this was all in the make already, but he's got the pedophile ring that he that his own pick, Novak, suppressed and tried to cover up. He's got the police stations going on. And then, of course, he's in the States, making sure to dabble in American elections and see how they can... How his people can help out Trump especially.

Olga Lautman (00:20:22):

Well, as far as the US, the Chinese, as far as... If I remember correctly, we arrested quite a few running these police stations that were being used to harass dissidents and, you know, anyone who speaks out against the Communist regime. And I just want to make one little thing, speaking of back channels, my Trump Tyranny Tracker, I just posted last week about Kushner's backchannel, you know, proposal to Russia's ambassador to the US during the 2016 transition period, where Kushner decided for some whatever reason that it was a good idea to go to the Russian ambassador in the Embassy, and say, "Hey, can we use your, you know, embassy for communication so we could avoid CIA and NSA detection? Because, you know, why not?" And then, Flynn, who was at the meeting at that same meeting, had proposed setting up a third country for a further meeting for this backchannel. And then literally a month later, we had the Seychelles meeting, where Erik Prince, and Dmitriov, who's Putin's wallet or

money bag, and others from the Middle East, who they had the secret meeting that we would have never known about unless there weren't good journalists who who got tipped off and and launched an investigation

Olga Lautman (00:21:55):

So this is how dangerous these backchannels are. And this is exactly, you know, what continues to happen as Trump—and as far as I know, this is the first time in US history a candidate is able to basically run a shadow government, influencing foreign policy during a cold war in Europe, a cold war in the Middle East, and basically neutering than US sitting president because he has this much control over Republicans in Congress who are doing his bidding. So, I mean, I've never, ever seen a situation this insane, and I cannot... I cannot even express how dangerous it is, and how people in Europe, what they're thinking about as they see this unfold and what the future of Europe looks like. I mean, Ukraine, we already see what's happening; people are dying on a daily basis, towns are being lost because of what Trump and his Kremlin-owned cronies are doing in Congress. But this is now waking people up in Europe who just don't know, Will the US even be an ally next year? I mean, for all we know, if God forbid Trump wins, we could be attacking with Russia, Europe, and, you know, Poland and Germany and France, and frankly, wherever else. I mean, we don't know what Trump will do.

Andrea Chalupa (00:23:20):

If trump becomes President, and he decides that he wants to “denazify” Ukraine alongside Russia, will the US military, will our men and women in the military listen to him? Will they then go to war against Ukraine?

Monique Camarra:

That's a great question.

Olga Lautman (00:23:41):

We don't know, but I can tell you that there is enough in the military as we saw over the past several years, that have been exposed as Trump loyalists. Also, Trump has, you know, if you remember—and again, why I did this Trump Tyranny Tracker because media seems to be whitewashing everything Trump did—we had Erik Prince, who runs one of, you know, was running one of the most deadliest mercenary groups on the level of Prigizhin's Wagner Group, you know, who was, you know, unofficially part of Trump's transition team and involved with the Trump regime. So, I mean, between, you know, groups of forces that Trump can use who might execute these orders along with these mercenaries, we just don't know. I mean, it can really happen. And I mean with Erik Prince, as I brought him up, remember he was also infiltrating Democratic groups in order to get information for Trump. So, I mean, we're in very dangerous territory. I honestly don't want to answer whether our military will execute these orders. I'd rather just not deal with it, and everybody needs to vote and do everything they can to make sure Trump doesn't get back into office.

Andrea Chalupa (00:25:05):

Without question. I mean, there's no point of return from this. People... How do I say this? Countries that suffer under dictatorships have generations of a black hole of corruption to try to climb out of. It's a slippery climb. It's like one step forward to step back because the social fabric of society—the courts, the way business is done, it's all in tatters. It's all just smash and grab, because that's the culture that the dictator unleashed. The dictator and their family just smashed and grabbed. And so when you're just trying to survive in a dictatorship, you're looking out for Number One, and you're gonna steal whatever you can while you can't and fuck everyone else because it's better to rule than be ruled. And they're gonna do it to me, so I have to do it to them. There's no trust anymore in society. There's zero laws. The laws are just, you know, whoever is the top dog in the fight: the oligarchs. An oligarch runs your kids over when they're biking on a sidewalk? Too bad for you. No justice for your kids. Just shut up.

Andrea Chalupa (00:26:08):

And if you dare to try to fight for some justice, they'll kill you, too. That's how it works in a dictatorship. Even countries that are struggling after generations of, you know, in the decades after trying to get out of a dictatorship, it just doesn't go away. It's a black hole. The gravity of fascism is trying to pull us in that black hole right now, and we have to resist it and pull the other way.

Olga Lautman (00:26:31):

Andrea, I just wanna add one thing, because I don't think Americans realize this. We are having this podcast. We can freely speak, we can freely say what we want to say because regardless what the problems are in the US, there is freedom of speech. I do not have to worry the secret police is gonna come and shut me down, throw a grenade in my house, kill me, send thugs to beat me up. So we have this. Under Trump, you know, once he gets all the top positions filled in the Department of Justice under his tight grip and the military and everything, and puts all his loyalists in there, we won't be able to have a podcast like this. We're gonna have to literally, for people who don't understand the severity... People in authoritarian countries literally have to go and gather in, like, basements, and pray to God that one of the people is not an informant inside who will report them to security services. And this is, I mean something extremely frightening that Trump welcomes. He loves this. This is what he wants. He's always been a mafia thug. Then, showered with Russian money over the past 4 decades. He loves that power to say, "You know what? I don't want them investigating me. Shut them up by any means." He's not gonna tell them what to do, explicitly. Just say, you know, "Get rid of them, shut it up." And that's it. And then the person ends up dead. We don't want this.

Andrea Chalupa (00:28:05):

Stalin called them the enemy of the people. That was Stalin, who was one of the big originators of the enemy of the people term which Trump repeated often as president.

Monique Camarra (00:28:14):

Yeah, and Andrea and Olga, let's not forget that he's destroyed the GOP,, which is the very first step in any kind. You destroy the party from inside, get rid of all the opposition, left, right, whatever it is. But the first is the party itself. I mean, the GOP is unrecognizable. We look at it from over here, and we just say,



“What the hell happened?” And that was an erosion from inside and that's what he's going to accomplish and finish by the end of it basically by, you know... That's what's gotta be done.

Andrea Chalupa (00:28:48):

Let's talk about Trump's buddy, Netanyahu, who, right now, with a case of the flu, is a bit MIA but is making the time while launching a forever war against Palestinians, a war that he promises will be a long war, maybe lasting a decade, because Netanyahu's determined to die in power like every wannabe dictatorship. And Netanyahu is really pushing the courts, pushing back against the corruption cases against him, to try to delay those cases, delay, you know, that whole process to try to hold him accountable for his corruption until after his forever war, which, you know, just gives him incentive to continue the damn war. And on top of that, he's trying to block witnesses against him and so on. So, Netanyahu, you know, not making any time to get much needed aid to the Gazans, of course, who are facing a Holodomor-style famine. But also, you know, just thinking about himself first and foremost, like any narcissistic sociopathic wannabe dictator. And that's why he and Trump and the Kushner's already literally embed together. Like, he full-on stayed at the Kushner's home back in the day. [laughs]

Andrea Chalupa (00:30:00):

So what's happening now is Netanyahu's coalition of far-right extremist terrorists that are keeping him in power, they're in shambles, obviously, like deeply dysfunctional, as any dictatorships are. And you have Netanyahu's opposition like Betty Gantz, who is the former Minister of Defense and the former Deputy Prime Minister, the leader of the opposition, taking an unsanctioned trip which Netanyahu is howling about to Washington, DC., to meet with Vice President Kamala Harris, who, just at the Alabama Commemoration for the march there, the big bridge massacre in the Civil Rights movement, she called for an immediate 6-week ceasefire. There's some celebration over that and there's also some pushback saying that that's already been called for in so many ways by this administration. And so Gantz is going to meet with her this week, as well as Biden's National Security Adviser, Jake Sullivan, and maybe even Biden.

Andrea Chalupa (00:31:00):

Biden might, you know, open the wrong door of an office and go, “Oh, you guys are meeting here? Oh, good to see you, Gantz. Nice... Thanks for stopping by.” Because the whole issue here is we're talking about Trump having a shadow foreign policy, but for Biden to meet with Gantz could be seen as putting his thumb on the scale in domestic politics back in Israel, where Netanyahu is hugely unpopular, where there's calls for there to be an early election, and where you have a couple of ministers/government officials in this current government meeting with Palestinians just to try to get get some sort of progress going for, you know, a political off ramp in this war. So, Netanyahu needed to be pushed out yesterday. The guy is a threat; a longstanding threat to democracy in Israel and stability in the region, and an ally of Putin, like, a proud ally of Putin and Trump. So what do you think of this Gantz visit? What hope is there and what do you make of all this?

Olga Lautman (00:32:07):

Well, first, you know, you mentioned it might look like Biden is putting, you know, his thumb on the scale

domestically inside of Israel... I have another warning. And this again, we are in uncharted territories because we already know Russia's attacking. They have been and they will only increase their attacks on the 2024 election. I mean, 2016 is gonna look like, you know, child's play compared to what we're about to see. We have Iran joining them. We have China joining them. North Korea. And we have Israel, because there is nothing more that Netanyahu would want than to see Trump back in office. So we are really in unprecedented territories where we are gonna see so many nations who are authoritarian regimes uniting in order to try to unseat Biden, on top of the fact we have *New York Times* and our own media who's doing, you know, a hell of a job to try to... [laughs] They're more worried about Biden's age than the fact that we, you know, might live in a fascist country where they can't even print what they would want to and will receive talking points in the morning of what they're allowed to cover.

Olga Lautman (00:33:24):

So, that in itself, you know. So for Biden, go ahead, do what you have to do because he is the sitting president, we are providing aid to Israel, and the fact that Netanyahu has blatantly... I mean, I think Biden has tried in every which way. And again, this is... We're in very unprecedented territory because Israel has always been an ally of the US. Biden quietly tried, Sullivan quietly tried, the CIA director, Burns, quietly tried. Then they made public statements. At this point, the Netanyahu government is not listening at all. And I think this, you see this frustration spilling out. I mean, the fact—this is the most humiliating thing I've ever seen—the fact that the United States has to airdrop aid into Gaza. I mean, this is unbelievable. This is not something that should be happening with “an ally”. So I think this is the latest signal from the Biden Administration, like, you know, really, like enough of this. Enough of ignoring, enough of, you know, you take our warnings and throw them out the window. And that's it. And I mean, it really can have very serious repercussions going forward in Israel.

Olga Lautman (00:34:45):

And Israel has always been a key ally in the region, just because they are the eyes and ears of what is happening with the Saudis, with Iran, with Syria, with Yemen, and frankly they, you know, are monitoring the whole region. In this case, you can't have that as a trusted ally if your trusted ally is completely ignoring what you're telling them to do while taking money from you. I mean, we're paying for this on top of it.

Andrea Chalupa (00:35:19):

Where's the stall in connection, Monique? Our Stalin correspondent.

Monique Camarra (00:35:23):

Oh, dear. [laughs] Think fast on your feet. No, I don't know. I don't know if there's a Stalin connection.

Olga Lautman:

There is a Putin connection.

Monique Camarra:

We know about the Putin connection, yes.

Olga Lautman:

There is a Putin connection because I can tell you as someone who is working on military components making its way to Ukraine illegally, bypassing sanctions, guess where a lot? I mean, obviously, we've read about China, Taiwan and whatnot—Israel. There were many Israeli companies who were shipping parts to Ukraine besides the fact Israel never took a stance on Ukraine, and then frankly, you know, looked the other way until October 7th, when they were like, “Oh, wow! This could happen to us, too, now.”

Andrea Chalupa (00:36:09):

So I wanna ask you about something that Bernie Sanders passed. Or he's advocating for. So, he writes: “Today I urge President Biden to implement Section 6201 of the Foreign Assistance Act and make it clear to Israel that if aid access to Gaza is not immediately opened up, we will impose consequences under this law and stop military assistance to Israel.” What are your thoughts on that? Because Netanyahu's out of control. We know that he's using this war in power. Like, it's not about October 7th anymore. The fact that there's reports, verified reports, that the IDF under Netanyahu has killed some of the hostages, and that it's estimated that maybe half of the hostages are maybe still alive. We don't even know that. It's just this scorched earth strategy that is endangering the very hostages themselves that Netanyahu claims to pretend to care about. And you have the hostages' own families leading these desperate protests in Israel to try to get their family members free and be the actual priority here. And Netanyahu's riot police are roughing them up.

Andrea Chalupa (00:37:34):

And a lot of people who are, including family members of survivors, people who were lost on October 7th, are being terrorized by Netanyahu's authorities, by Netanyahu's growing terrorist movement in Israel that just feels unchecked and emboldened here. It just feels like the joker in Gotham run amok. You know, like there's no Batman there to stop them and that Biden—I know you listed all the ways Biden has been trying to put pressure on there, but there's... How do I say it? In the past, over our decades-long relationship with Israel, when the US—which is core to Israel's very existence—when the US wants something from Israel, the US has an ability to get it. And I feel like enough isn't being done here. And I don't know if it's either members of the foreign policy team are complicit themselves, like Antony Blinken, as we've documented, has his own connections to Israel that are very deeply personal. Biden himself has said that he is a Zionist. He went out on Seth Meyers and said that he's very much on one side of this conflict here historically. And on top of that, you have this timid foreign policy team that's wringing its hands every time Putin makes a nuclear war threat.

Andrea Chalupa (00:38:42):

Putin has his way with some of these people that are advising Biden's foreign policy, and therefore they've slowed down aid even to Ukraine that Ukraine needed to have a meaningful counter-offensive and to be stockpiled by now to survive this MAGA Congress blocking its aid, you know? So there's a lot here that we're dealing with, which is sort of... When I see what's happening with Ukraine now and Netanyahu going unchecked, it's kind of like two sides of the same coin. You know what I mean? And so it's just, you know, Biden had his stellar foreign policy moment in uniting NATO, creating a sea change in

the foreign policy establishment of Germany, which was deeply entrenched with Russian money and Russian interests and Russian lobbyists, to the extent where they had a former Prime Minister who was on Russian payroll and proud about it. And so it's sort of like he's losing that ground now. He's losing one of the big feathers in his cap. And if you wanna look at, like, why his approval ratings are so low and continue to be low, and people are rightfully panicking over that, as much as they want to tell themselves it's too far out from the election and a thousand people being polled doesn't mean anything, it's only Republicans that are old and sitting by their rotary phones and there to pick up a phone for pollster, where all the rest of us who are actually gonna vote for Biden are too busy and don't pick up unanswered phone calls. I know all the things people are telling themselves over these polling numbers.

Andrea Chalupa (00:40:06):

But the reality is we have to address the massive elephant in the room, which is that we see Trump and Bannon and other coup plotters running amok and then we see their allies globally getting away with mass murder—Netanyahu and Putin. And of course people are gonna look to the President of the United States. I know he's not a wizard. He doesn't have a wand. He can't be all things to all people and he's he's fighting on a lot of fronts right now in a democracy that's in tatters. When he took over from Trump, that was a fully gutted White House. American democracy was on life support, deliberately put on life support by what Trump and Putin did to us. Just look at SolarWinds, that cyber attack that was like a pearl harbor cyber attack against key American infrastructure and corporations that Putin unleashed in the 2020 election to go with, you know, Trump's January 6th violent attempted coup.

Andrea Chalupa (00:41:00):

American democracy was on life support. So Biden had inherited a lot, and I understand that and I recognize that. But there needs to be sort of... How do I say this? More executive actions being passed and enforced just to protect us on the domestic front. There's more that could be done there. Merrick Garland is a big political liability dragging down Biden's approval ratings. And then you have Ukraine being kind of left out high and dry. And then Netanyahu just being unchecked. What I'm saying is it seems that Biden and his core team, they showed us they could do extraordinary things as they did with uniting NATO in those early hours of the total war by Russia in Ukraine. But they haven't made any grand sweeping efforts since then. And in fact, it's not so much Biden's age that... I think when people complain about Biden's age, which is a bullshit meme on par with Hillary Clinton's Emails, I think what they're really saying is, "Where's where's the boldness? Desperate times require bold action. Where's the boldness?"

Monique Camarra (00:42:07):

Well, I'm going to leave the first comments to Olga, because the two of you are American and I'm not. So I like to add, maybe, to some thoughts that you have. I agree, okay, Andrea, I would have liked to see a little more action. But, Olga, what's your first thoughts?

Olga Lautman (00:42:26):

Look, it's very natural to blame Biden for this, and trust me, I agree. I yank my hair out, too, with the foreign policy we have. But I think it's far deeper than Biden and I think it's far deeper than any one

leader. I think the problem is that American mentality, they do not understand. They're living in some weird, twisted version of a cold war mentality where we're still, you know, supposed to like apparently go hide under, you know, our desk from a nuclear weapons threat and we have to do everything not to antagonize the bear. And I think this is a huge problem. And this goes way beyond Biden, because anybody I talk to... I mean, for me it's as clear as day as what Russia is, what Russia is capable of, and how you have to frankly respond to Russia. It's always been as clear as day. I've said things, you know, a decade ago where I looked like some kind of, you know, hyperbolic Russophobe, which is the furthest thing from the case, where now people are coming to the conclusion which is, Yes, this is something that we have to like weigh as an option. So I think it's more than Biden. I think it's just this Western thinking. Westerners do not understand—and rightfully so, except maybe people from the older generation who actually remember World War 2.

Olga Lautman (00:43:52):

Other than that, everyone's been immune to it. They don't know what an authoritarian regime is. They don't understand what tanks rolling through your streets are. They don't understand this; not in Europe, not in the United States, not with this generation. And this is even... like I said, the problem is bigger. This is why you have people, you know, even on the far left, the tankies who are sitting from their mother's basement and carrying on how wonderful Stalin is, and how wonderful Lenin is. They don't understand what they're even talking about.

Monique Camarra:

No.

Olga Lautman:

They don't understand what it is like to live in a repressive, oppressive regime, where you get murdered or thinking the wrong way, asking a question—not even thinking, asking, “Well, what is this?” You’ll go to the gulag. They don't understand. And I think that's the problem. So as far as with Biden doing more, yes, but I think this has a lot to do with the hesitation of the United States, or, like, you know, just in general the apparatus of all our intelligence agencies coupled with the, you know, fear through Europe of escalating anything more and for Russia to actually roll tanks through other European countries, particularly NATO. So I think this has to do with that. As far as, you know, with Netanyahu, I think right now, at the same time, Biden could do more but at the same time there are talks behind the scenes with Qatar, with Egypt and others. So, I mean, until these talks come to a final conclusion, you can't really do much because then it's like you're going into negotiations, and then what? To blow them up because you may sign an executive order?

Monique Camarra:

Yeah.

Olga Lautman (00:45:40):

First, you have to exhaust these talks because I mean... And it's not just talks like as far as we don't know what the outcome is. We've seen these countries, you know, have these negotiations where there

was—granted it was ridiculous—but a few days ceasefire and hostages were released, and Palestinians were released into Gaza. So we've seen that it actually works. If, you know, people are talking about some miraculous talks, and there's been zero action resulting from it, then I understand. But we've already had two sets of times where the Qataris, the Egyptians, the Israelis, Americans, the Jordanians and the Saudis sat down and actually resulted in something, you know, some kind of hostages being exchanged for it. So I think until all options are exhausted, especially that there is a meeting right now. ongoing, Biden can't just stroke a, you know, blow up this negotiation and sign an executive order. But I do think this is a very good lesson that we, as a country, should learn going forward of who our allies are, and up to what point will we allow our allies to go on our money before we put an end to it? And, you know, again, this goes back to the same Washington thinking that Russia you can't provoke because they have nuclear weapons. Israel is an ally. This is the same thinking for decades—

Monique Camarra:

Yeah.

Olga Lautman:

—and this is causing paralysis in actual events that are happening right now. And we really need to reframe our thinking, you know, as the United States, as a Western society, as a democratic society, because you cannot say our values are human rights and at the same time allow genocides to go unchecked and whatnot because you're scared to provoke one party or another.

Andrea Chalupa (00:47:47):

It's certainly a combination of that. But you also have to think about where corruption factors in where people are, you know, these power players are all feeding from the same trough. I just did a round table discussion with a group of Russians, Russian activists, and one was pointing out, you know, all the news reports we've seen that Russia's economy is doing fine—

Olga Lautman:

That's a lie.

Andrea Chalupa:

Well, then, the sanctions were just bullshit.

Olga Lautman:

That's a lie.

Andrea Chalupa:

They found a way around them. And on top of that, you have the DOJ which announced early in Merrick Garland's tenure kleptocracy capture where they were going to go after the kleptocrats. And you think, Okay, this is an important frontline in the war against Russia's genocidal global terror. They basically have, like, three campaigns so far not done. And on top of that, you have all of this massive war chest of seized Russian oligarch money that's just sitting there, and they're ringing their hands over how much of

that should go to keeping Ukraine afloat. And on top of what Biden could be doing to push faster when Netanyahu is slaughtering children, like tens of thousands of civilians in collective punishment—which is a war crime—in Gaza, and kids are being starved to death, which is one of the most painful, excruciating ways to die. And you know what Biden could be doing? He could be passing sweeping sanctions, as he did of a handful of terrorists who were causing West Bank violence that has been racking up for years in recent years. So there's a lot more that Biden could be doing. There's no... How do I say it? It's all carrot and no stick. And it's almost to the point where it's like, they're complicit. They're complicit. And I'm not alone in seeing that. I'm seeing Ukraine being left high and dry, and I'm seeing Palestinians being left high and dry, and I'm seeing Israelis that believe in democracy being left high and dry. And there's a vacuum of power right now in the world under US global leadership that I haven't seen since the Obama Administration. And it's incredibly troubling

Olga Lautman (00:49:49):

That I agree with you. I'll push back on one of the points you made as far as kleptocrat capture and, you know, as far as that. People don't understand. They think, you know, they want an indictment because something looks like it is on the surface, and they want an indictment yesterday. That's it. If we follow that system, we will be Russia, where someone says, "Oh, look, this person looks guilty. Go arrest him." And that's that.

Monique Camarra:

Yep.

Olga Lautman:

I mean, these investigations... I mean, if you ever read a Department of Justice investigation, this is not some shit thrown together in a minute. This is very meticulous work with no political pressure, no global pressure, nothing. It is just purely following the facts, following the evidence, following the account numbers, following the shell companies. And I mean these types of investigations take time. I mean, I work on smaller investigations, and sometimes it takes, you know, several months to actually get a picture. And then, not only that, you need to make sure these investigations are rock solid and ready for prosecution because the United States Department of Justice is the gold standard in the world. I mean, if a French court rules something people are like, "Huh, who did they buy?" If the Department of Justice rules something, you know this is very serious, and there is a reason behind the fact that now people are worrying about secondary sanctions in India and Turkey and United Arab Emirates and other countries, because they see, you know, like, no, we don't wanna get caught up in this US legal system, because then this is gonna screw us.

Olga Lautman (00:51:35):

So this is the only thing I will push back on because it takes time. They have been following the oligarch money. There are constantly investigations. I check the Department of Justice homepage and the klepto capture. They are going after sanction evaders. They just arrested a few weeks ago two of Kostin—he runs one of the biggest banks which, like, cover for security services. He runs one of the biggest banks in Russia. They arrested two of his associates in the US actually through the klepto

capture. So they're doing their work. I mean, and that's how it should be. The Department of Justice should work without political pressure, without civilian pressure. They should work based solely on the facts, and whatever it takes to, you know, get the proper authorization to listen, you know, to phone calls, to tap cell numbers, to intercept communications. They need to go through proper channels through the courts to, you know, make sure they present enough evidence to get this.

Olga Lautman (00:52:41):

As far as the money being tied up, I agree 200%. I don't understand what we're doing. You know, they keep signaling, "Yes, we're gonna move the money." I think the US actually already started taking steps and moving the money towards Estonia, Europe. But the thing that people don't understand, they think the US says it and we're like, "Just that's it." I mean, we still have to deal with Europe and Europe is not one blanket. Europe, you have countless countries. Each country has their own interests. Some say, "Yes, take that seized money, give it to Ukraine." Others are like, "Okay. Well, this will set a bad precedent for the future because if we just do it in this situation, that means in the future we're gonna have to take people's money and start, you know, handing it out." So there's a lot of concern and just because the US says, "Yes, it's a good idea" doesn't mean that everybody drops everything they're doing, and jumps along and says, "Woohoo, you know, our parent told us yes" and that's it. I mean, this is not how it works.

Olga Lautman (00:53:43):

And we have, I mean, very complicated, you know, discussions happening behind the scenes between United States officials, European officials. And then you see the whole shitshow happening in Germany.

Monique Camarra:

[laughs]

Olga Lautman:

Right now, I mean, Germany is pretty much holding everything back for everyone besides a scandal that is breaking that Russians are, like, popping champagne bottles over with the intercepted leaks. On top of that, they're hesitating with delivering long range missiles. They don't wanna do this. They're doing, you know... So it's a bigger problem. But yes, I do ultimately agree Biden can do more, should do more, and I'm the first to scream about his foreign policy and Americans to begin with, because Obama, you know, under him, Russia basically walked in, took 7% of our country, and was like, "Okay, next."

Monique Camarra:

Yeah.

Olga Lautman:

You know, like no one even cared that this happened. You know, Georgia lost, what? Almost 20% of its territory?

Monique Camarra:



20 percent, yeah.

Olga Lautman:

Nothing. No response from us. Syrians. Russia helped Assad massacre over half a million Syrians. Zero response. We had a bunch of red lines that were apparently invisible because Russia kept hopping over them and no one did a thing. And then the most important, the US election. The US government knew that Russia was in the process of attacking us in a very sophisticated, multifaceted attack to get Trump into office. I mean, the fact that we were worried about what McConnell was going to say instead of protecting US national security... I mean, that is one thing I'll never be able to answer.

Andrea Chalupa (00:55:26):

Well, listen, my friend [laughs]... I have to say it's like, I hear you on all that, and in terms of the DOJ, you know, I have a friend, as you know, who's a federal prosecutor. So I know how tirelessly our federal prosecutors are working and I know that the system does, the US government does include a lot of patriotic men and women who are fighting the good fight, and they're underfunded doing it. And they're up against deep pockets. And it's tireless, thankless work. That's real. That exists. But I do have to say when you have Germany, which went from being incredibly... How do I say it? The big disruption that Biden led in Germany was huge. It cannot be overstated. He woke up Germany and Germany had to confront itself, face itself. But now that you have Germany that is feeling emboldened to go back to its old habits of being in the pocket of the Russians.

Monique Camarra:

Mmm <affirmative>. That's the SPD. Well, the Greens want, in fact, there's a big discussion going on now that they have, remember that they've got a coalition government going on. So right now, there's a big huge discussion because the greens are hawkish and they want to get stuff done. They want the Tauruses. We also have OKD, Merkel's old party, that wants the same thing; the conservatives, the Christian Conservatives, Christian Democrats. So this is what's going on. It's the SPD that's the big problem, which is Schultz and his party and all of the people that are in, so many that are still with historic ties to Russia. Now, this is unprecedented. What you, the both of you, what I'm getting okay from this discussion is that what we're living now is absolutely unprecedented. Let's put the Second World War aside. What we're living in this moment hasn't been triggered since the Second World War. This is what we're up against.

Monique Camarra (00:57:29):

People with a historic memory of that time understand what the hell is going on and what needs to be done. Our systems, all of our international systems, democratic, that are based on rules and international norms, we've followed them and we're used to following them. These are two systems. What we're up against is an ogre that has decided to take up any rules. They never have followed any rules. But it's not just now Russia. We have all the other countries that are following Russia's path. And they have been since they've been satellized or influenced from the Second World War on, okay? So this is what we're up against. And we don't know... We're too slow to act. We're using democratic norms to

fight autocracy and authoritarianism—and may I just add totalitarianism because that's what we're talking about—and this is a problem we definitely need to rethink.

[outro music, [‘Hedge Your Bets’ by Detroit Rebellion](#)]

[outro theme, roll credits]