

Funding the Future

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The obsession with Russia in the defence review is wrong. The real risk is from fascists wherever they come from, and Russia is a long way from being the only threat in that case.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZx5Ykx1nTM?si=V-wkwuesMTH4EBYc>

This is the audio version:

https://www.podbean.com/player-v2/?i=ppyu8-18c8ca2-pb&from=pb6admin&share=1&download=1&rtl=0&font=Arial&skin=f6f6f6&font-color=auto&logo_link=episode_page&btn-skin=c73a3a

This is the transcript:

Who is going to defend us from fascists? I ask the question because the UK has had a defence review, and the underlying assumption of this defence review is that the great threat that we face is Russia.

Now that's been the underlying assumption of every single defence review in the UK since 1945. And so far, Russia has not launched an attack on the UK.

I'm not saying it won't.

I'm not saying it will not launch attacks on our neighbours, because clearly it has on Ukraine. And it might on the Baltic States, for example, and we are allies of these places.

But my point is that Russia has changed dramatically in that period, and that the state that we now face is not the state that we did until the time of the fall of the Communist Party in the USSR, as it then was.

Now we are facing a fascist state.

Then we faced a communist state.

To pretend that they're the same is completely untrue, and to pretend that Russia is the only threat in the world because it is currently a fascist state is as untrue.

If fascism is really the biggest threat that we face, as personified by Russia at present, but as it was personified by Germany in 1939, we are not naming our enemy correctly if we say it is Russia.

The enemy that is the greatest threat to the UK is a fascist state, and fascism is on the rise everywhere in the world right now.

Donald Trump is, in my opinion, a fascist. What he's doing in the USA by removing human rights, by removing the rule of law, by undermining democracy, by threatening judges, by expelling people, by falsely imprisoning people, by removing their right to protection under the law; all of that is the action of a fascist.

And we have fascists in Europe.

We have fascists in Hungary.

We have a far-right leader in Italy.

We have a far-right political party that looks to be remarkably close to being neo-fascist in the UK, in the form of Reform. And the Conservative Party aren't very far away either these days.

These things are, all of them, collectively, a threat to people in the UK. Our freedoms, those things that it is said that people fought for in World War II, our right to free speech, our right to be who we are, our right to decide our futures, our right to reflect diversity and equality and inclusion in our societies, the right to protest, whatever it might be; all of those things that we stood up for, they are all in jeopardy right now.

Even the Labour Party has people in it who say we should ignore diversity, and inclusion, and equality because Reform has, and therefore Labour must as well. But, to do that is to acknowledge that fascists are right, because fascists are the people who promote the idea that we should live in a white, male-dominated world. That's one of the core ideas within that political philosophy, and it's even in Labour.

So, shouldn't our defence review be naming the real enemy of freedom in the UK,

because the role of government is to protect our freedoms.

It's not to protect the geographic space.

It's not to say that come hell or high water, we are right.

The role of government is to protect our freedoms, to be who we want to be, and fascism is threatening that.

So where's the UK policy for defence against the USA, or against Hungary, or against the risk that is now developing once more in Poland, or anywhere else, come to that?

That is what worries me. We have a defence review that names Russia as if it is the single ogre in the world, when it isn't. And I'm also ignoring all the problems that exist in Asia, because they are massive as well, and fascism is alive and well there as it is in Europe and in America.

Put all that together, and we have a defence review that, to me, simply doesn't record correctly who the enemy's going to be that we've got to defend ourselves against. And as a consequence, it's actually targeting all the wrong things.

Will 12 submarines defend us from fascism? My suggestion to you is that it won't.

But cyber defence will.

Having a proper politics will.

Upholding the rule of law will.

Making sure that we have a functioning democracy will.

Making sure that we can explore these ideas around the world will.

Supporting our soft power through having a proper overseas aid policy will.

Making sure that we bring foreign students here so they can see the advantage of all of this will.

But building submarines won't.

Defence is something that I believe in, but I believe in defending the rights of people, and this government, with its defence review, is, I think, failing us badly because that's not its criteria for success.