

Is defence about more than weaponry?

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This week, the world exploded, but what really shocked me wasn't Trump.

Trump was predictable. The chaos was published in advance. Project 2025 made the method and the objective plain: disruption as strategy, empire as the goal.

What has truly appalled me is this: despite vast defence budgets and vast intelligence capabilities, Western leaders have appeared totally unprepared. They clung to the "rules-based order" as if rules might still have meaning to a man who rejects legality.

So, in this video, I argue something many will find uncomfortable:

Defence isn't fundamentally about armaments. It's about legitimacy.

If people do not believe a society is worth defending, then no quantity of weapons will save it. And neoliberalism, which is designed to reward the few, cannot now demand sacrifice from the many.

That is why I think the only credible defence policy now is a politics of care: a society that values everyone, delivers for everyone, and earns loyalty by legitimacy.

This demands pragmatism, compromise, and coalition. The world we must create will be messy, but that will be its strength, and not its weakness.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZjVSGpEBt1M?si=AsLKSCG7GQPrZkfO>

This is the audio version:

<https://www.podbean.com/player-v2/?i=nhmqb-1a28790-pb&from=pb6admin&share=1>

This is the transcript:

After a week where the world exploded, we need to rethink everything.

Let's be honest. I'm tired of Trump. I'm tired of his confusion. I'm tired of the chaos. I'm tired of his threats. But the truth is this: Trump isn't what has really got to me. What has got to me is that our supposed leaders were not prepared for this chaos, and they still don't grasp what is happening. NATO has been asleep, and it needs to be wide awake to rise to the challenges that we are facing.

This feels like a moment of crisis because it is. This year already feels like a rollercoaster that cannot guarantee it will get us back to the start safely. That matters because exhausted societies don't resist the threats that they face. They retreat, they comply, they accept the unacceptable, and none of this was a surprise.

Trump was predictable. I called him out long before his return. I said he was a fascist. I took the Greenland and Canada threats seriously before most people did. I realised what he was going to do because Project 2025 told us what was coming. It was all published in advance. It was around 900 pages; you just had to look at it, and you knew as a result that chaos was not going to be a byproduct of what was coming; it was the method, and the aim is empire. The so-called 'Western Hemisphere' is to be turned by Trump into a white male Christian theocracy led by a president who wants to be a king.

So, what shocks me isn't Trump. We knew that this was on its way. What shocks me is this: despite vast defence budgets and vast intelligence spending, our leaders apparently appear to have been totally blindsided by what Trump has done. They had warnings, they had evidence, and they still didn't prepare for what he's doing.

They believed instead in what they called the 'rules-based order'.

They assumed that those rules would hold despite Trump returning to office, saying that he was going to ignore them all.

They assumed that someone like Trump wouldn't have the nerve to break them, and that belief has now been shattered. He very clearly has no respect for their rules-based order.

That takes me to my core point of this video. If defence is important, and it is, it is not just about having armaments in the right place at the right time. That is always the

last resort when it comes to defence, the thing that you rely upon when everything else has failed. Defence is, in fact, not about armaments; it is about legitimacy.

Defence begins with a commitment to something worth defending. People defend a system when they believe in it so strongly that they will sacrifice their material well-being, and sometimes even their lives, to protect it.

That system that they're willing to defend has to integrate ethics and political vision.

It has to be capable of delivery.

It has to be accountable.

It has to be based upon sound economics.

And above all else, it has to work for everyone and not just a few.

Without legitimacy, in other words, defence will always collapse. People don't man the barricades for a system that never cared about them, and that is what has been cruelly exposed in NATO.

Rules and orders were never enough. Our leader's belief in them was false. And neoliberalism was never going to work either. It was designed to reward a few and not to protect the many, so it cannot now demand loyalty and sacrifice from those from whom it is demanded. If we need a new defence system, we must begin with the definition of what is worth defending.

And my answer is simple; it is a politics of care; a society where everyone is treated as having value, and everyone can take part. Why else would people want to defend something? What would be their purpose in doing so?

But I'm worried because I can already see the retreat into rules and order happening again. I see purity politics at work, people defending labels instead of outcomes, and, for example, I've been told this week that I'm wrong to treat MMT flexibly, and this might be a microcosm, but it's an indication of what is important at this moment.

I'm not wrong to be flexible about how I interpret MMT. MMT is like a spade; it's useful because of what it can do. It's not an ideology to defend. It is literally a tool to use, but the purists don't see that. The purists are, as a result, a threat right now in all spheres. They are becoming the enemy of the good by doing what the left always does, which is to pick on enemies within rather than counter the threat from without, and in this moment, pragmatism is not betrayal. Pragmatism is all about survival.

I've also been told this week that they should not have welcomed Mark Carney's speech at Davos, but it was courageous. It was also right to some degree, and if he can see that neoliberalism is ruptured and that a replacement is required, then he's on the

same journey as me. That makes him a fellow traveller, even if we do not agree on everything.

My point is, right now, we will need to compromise. Creating a new world will be messy. It will require working with people with whom we do not always agree.

Perfection is the guarantee of paralysis at this moment.

Progress is made this way.

Change happens this way.

Strength is created not through purity, but through the creation of common ground.

So, I am as fatigued by pointless opposition as I am by Trump, and it fuels my tiredness because I fear the need for compromise is not understood at this critical moment, and that incomprehension is just as dangerous right now as our leaders' incomprehension of Trump.

If you expect purity from me, then you are mistaken. This is a messy world. Almost 68 years of living on it has taught me that, and accommodation is now vital for success. The world we need will be built on recognising ourselves in others, even when disagreement exists, because what we have in common is far greater than what divides us.

So here is my conclusion. If you want rules and order, this channel is not for you. That system has failed. I'm not here to perpetuate it. But if you want progress towards what is good, then we have work to do. The politics of care is not a soft option; it is the only credible defence policy we have left. The new world we need is going to be messy, but that will be its foundation, and that will be its strength. That's what we need, a world where all our messiness can be combined to create something bigger than all of us.

What do you think? There's a poll down below.

Poll

[poll id="303"]

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