

Why Europe must act now: the post-NATO world has begun

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We are living through fascism. That is the first message of this video.

We are therefore living through unprecedented chaos. That is the second message.

And the US is no longer our ally — which means NATO is over. That is the third message.

Trump's incoherence is not simply personal. It is being weaponised as policy, backed by the machinery of the American state. The result is a dangerous collapse in the world order, where coercion replaces diplomacy, and conquest is normalised.

In this video, I explain what this means, why Europe must face strategic independence, and why we need clarity, naming, and countermeasures — now.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bJB11QDs-zc?si=dEuq9Tcswt8ew3QX>

This is the audio version:

https://www.podbean.com/player-v2/?i=e5hn8-1a243ea-pb&from=pb6admin&share=1&download=1&rtl=0&fonts=Arial&skin=f6f6f6&font-color=auto&logo_link=episode_page&btn-skin=c73a3a

This is the transcript:

We are living through fascism. That is the first message of this video.

We are therefore living through a period of unprecedented chaos. That is the second message of this video.

The US is no longer our ally, and as a result, NATO is over; that is the third message of this video.

So what happens next? Well, the first thing I've got to warn you about is that this will be a long video. I'm sorry, but we are living in a complicated era, and there are a lot of things to talk about, but precisely for that reason, stick with this; this is really important. We have to work out what we're going to do, or we are in the deepest of trouble.

Let's put this in context. We are living in a period of historic confusion. This may be the most confusing moment in political economic history, not just in living memory, but maybe ever, because the rate of change is so high.

Events are moving faster than institutions can think. The rate of incoherence, particularly from Donald Trump, is now a political force in its own right, and that incoherence is very obviously dangerous.

We must, in this context, say what is happening. There's no point pretending otherwise. Fascism is rising in the USA. There is a fascist president in that country. Democracy there is being hollowed out; dictatorship is following. State power is being weaponised against the people of that country.

This is, however, unlike the 1930s. In that decade, there was, of course, the monstrous rise of Hitler, but curiously, what he did was predictable. He wasn't as irrational as Trump by a very long way. The sequence of escalation that Hitler followed was pre-announced and, effectively, entirely logical. Now the pace is unprecedented, and unpredictability is itself being used as a weapon for destabilisation. That's why this is unprecedented. We have not lived through an era like this before.

Trump's defining feature is, in fact, his incoherence. He appears deeply confused, very often. Only this week, he accused Norway of controlling the Nobel Peace Prize, and they don't, and he appeared to confuse Norway with Denmark, and they are, I can assure you, separate countries. The fact is, he can't even keep the basic facts right. His statements are contradictory and impulsive, but the machinery of state in the USA is being used to validate his claims.

We are living in a period where black is white and right is wrong, and everything else is, according to Donald Trump, whatever he thinks it is, and that is why we are living in such a dangerous era, because confusion has literally become policy. Erratic threats become announcements, and then announcements become strategy and strategy

morphs into coercion at a moment's notice, and coercion is becoming dangerously normalised, and that is the threat that we have to face.

Let's just for a moment use Gaza as a symptom here. A peace initiative has been floated. It's called the Board of Peace, but it very clearly isn't because it's all about clearing Gaza of Palestinians. It's a weapon of war still, but there is already a coercive demand being sent out by Trump to other countries, insisting that they join, with a price tag of \$1 billion attached. He is claiming that this is how he will deliver world peace, when actually this is all about a straightforward land grab and creating the opportunity for redevelopment potential. This is nothing more than about power and property.

The world order has been corrupted to its very core as a consequence. We haven't got political leaders who are now worried about delivering peace or prosperity, or healthcare, or education, or whatever else it is that people want. They're just looking after their own commercial interests, and this is what we're going to see time and again right now.

The moving threat is the problem, and the threats do not stop; each one is more extreme. Each one is less coherent, and yet each is backed by US state spokespeople and agencies, plus the armed forces, so far. The only certainty is that if Donald Trump were a Russian asset, this is what he would do. I don't know, he's a Russian asset. Nobody is for sure, but the fact is that if he were, he would be doing nothing different from what he's doing now.

The consequences are potential strategic collapse in the West, and of course, he may also be doing something else. He may simply just be trying to hide. The whole reason for his presidency was that he did not want to go to prison, where he should by now be for the consequences of the insurrection that he's helped stage on 6 January 2021. But because he managed to persuade the US people that he should be president instead, that conviction hasn't happened, and instead, he's tried to hide other issues from the US people instead.

Domestic policy failure, personal scandal, and corruption risk, of course, around Epstein. Distraction is therefore being used as a governing method. Crisis creation is being used as political cover, and this is policy in its own right. Confusion runs everywhere because that is what Trump needs to prevent the fact that otherwise, we would all be noticing that the US Congress has passed a law that requires him to deliver the whole of the Epstein files by now, and maybe 1% is at present on the table.

Whatever it is, the geopolitical conclusion of what is happening is now being forced upon us. He might be trying to hide from the Epstein files, but he is collapsing NATO. It is in effect over; there's no point pretending otherwise anymore. Even our mainstream news commentators are now saying it. Gary Gibbon has on Channel Four News. By the end of this week, the likelihood that there will be anything which looks like NATO is very unlikely, and that is just extraordinary. Something that has existed for 80 years is over

because the USA is no longer a reliable ally.

Europe must face the fact that it is strategically independent now, whether it likes it or not, and that means it must have its own defence policy, its own economics, and its own approach to democracy all at the same time, and that unity does not exist at present.

And in the midst of all of this, Greenland is not a stunt. Greenland signals Trump's territorial ambition. Remember, this is a man who has always defined himself by his ability to create a bigger and bigger property empire. Now, property empire for him means dominating what he calls the Western hemisphere; the Americas, in other words. This might be because of his own deep-seated paranoia that he could never keep his father happy, and his father created the empire that he is now trying to expand, who knows? The fact is that, whatever the reason, Trump is now signalling his contempt for international law, and he is seeking to normalise conquest through coercion.

And this, of course, won't stop with Greenland. Canada is vulnerable to the same logic. Steve Bannon has already said so. Mexico is also vulnerable. Why not? There is a threat because of drugs and because of migrants, and others could follow as well. If Trump can't install puppet governments, which is clearly one of his chosen techniques, and one that is incredibly common amongst fascist dictators, then he will use the power that Steve Miller, his deputy chief of staff, has talked about, which is that "might makes right". That's what the Trump regime - and the word regime is, right, by the way - is all about.

This is chaos without purpose. We've had chaos before. We know about that. We can live through it. In my lifetime, there have been moments of severe stress, but we haven't had this lack of structure. At the same time, we've never had so much real-time visibility of what is going on.

And the problem here is that Trump has actually got no declared enemy. There is no consistent end goal to what he's doing, and that is why I claim, suggest, whichever way you wish to put it, that this is chaos without purpose. There is just an incoherent policy matched to an incoherent enemy list.

He admires Russia. He admires authoritarian power. He seems to get on with China, even though the relationship is a bit more remote than that with Putin, but what he definitely does is want to undermine Europe. Perhaps that's because he really recognises that is where the power is. But the point is, he's weakening the very alliances that actually sustained US power for decades and even centuries. The point is, he doesn't know what he's doing.

We are back to incoherence again, and this is important because the incoherence suggests that all the ploys that are currently being used by the likes of Prime Minister

Keir Starmer in the UK are ridiculous.

He wants to do diplomacy, but Trump is no longer in that game. He doesn't want to talk, he wants to threaten, and he wants to grab, and this situation can only roll and develop. We are still at the early stage of the sequencing. It's important to remember that we're not at an endgame as yet. We're right at the beginning, and even so, our institutions are already lagging. That is apparent in Europe. That is apparent in the UK. That is apparent in most countries. Delay now is however, a strategic failure, and our leaders have to get their heads around this.

In response, we need three things, and these are perhaps my key messages from this video. First, we need clarity. Second, we need naming. And third, we need countermeasures, and so let's look at those three.

Clarity means that we have to talk about what we are defending. If we say we're defending democracy, it must be real democracy. It must not be a captured democracy, where the wealthy, for example, run countries for their own benefit. Oligarchic power is not democratic. It is just another form of dictatorship, to be blunt, and that is the direction in which far too much of Europe is already heading. We have got problems because of the rise of neoliberal power that has already been supplanting our democracy.

If we're going to be defending something, it has to be the rights of people, and that is what democracy is meant to be about, and not just the rights of people to put a ballot paper in a box every now and again, but civil rights, human rights, legal rights, the rule of law, the right to healthcare, the right to education, the right to a job, the right to be protected from climate change and more; that's what we have to be defending our people from. Our leaders have to say that they must be defending this very real form of democracy, or they're not going to get the coherence around the defence strategy they need.

And we must be defending economies. That's important because people need livelihoods, and there must be work for all. But again, I stress the point that they cannot be doing this if they say they are going to defend the economic structures that now exist because they have failed us. Neoliberalism is dead in the water. It's gone; it has no further ideas as to what it can do to deliver well-being for people. So we need an economic system that delivers for everyone, and that means everyone and not just the wealthy. This must be an economy, not just for rentiers and oligarchs, but for literally everyone, wherever they are in society.

And finally, we must defend peace, but it must be peace without fascism, which is why we must name the enemy. Peace in Europe cannot include authoritarian sabotage either, which is why we must also name the enemy within. If Hungary is a fascist state, and it very often looks like it, then it must be named as such. Democracies must set boundaries, and fascism must be drawn outside them. Appeasement is not diplomacy,

in other words, and calling out what we're opposing is an essential component of the peace that we are looking at.

Without clarity, we cannot act. Confusion will destroy solidarity. It will destroy legitimacy. Confusion creates the space for opportunism, and politics requires a shared story of purpose. That's precisely what I've been talking about. And politicians must choose what side they're on. If they serve neoliberal interests, they will converge with the US destination; that is inevitable. Where Donald Trump has got to is the obvious endgame of neoliberalism. That destination is corrupt and represents coercion. We need a new political framework, and we need it urgently, and we need to be clear about what it is.

A politics of care is not optional now as a result. We need politics organised around common interests. Care means dignity, wealth, security, and trust, the last word being particularly important and what is being lost in the world right now.

Care is the opposite of authoritarian cruelty. It is the basis for democratic legitimacy, and that means Trump must be called out. We must stop pretending this is normal politics. We must stop laundering what he is doing as if it were populism. We must stop treating it as theatre. This is power being remade by Trump in the form of coercion, and we have to say so.

We have to say democracy is over in the USA. The USA is no longer functioning as any form of democracy. It is a dictatorship, and I'm not the only person saying that; Robert Reich is in the USA, and I admire his courage for doing so.

Enforcement bodies are being used as political weapons. People are calling them Gestapo-like, and I think that is justified, and we have to say these things openly, and we need to hear our leaders saying this because this is essential. If we're going to maintain the principles of democracy, we have to name those who are undermining them, and the USA is. You cannot fight for what you refuse to name. If you do not name the enemy, you cannot mobilise. You cannot build alliances, and you cannot create public consent for action; this is absolutely key.

And then once we've done these two things, we've identified what we want, and we've named the enemy, we must put the countermeasures in place. Europe and its allies must act as if abandonment is real. Let's get on with it. Let's face facts: NATO is over. The US has gone; we can't depend upon them anymore. Whatever we once thought, the USA is no longer there.

Our defence planning must change.

Our trade planning must change.

Our intelligence systems must change.

Our dependence upon US companies must change.

Our dependence upon US technology must change.

Our institutional planning must change.

Everything is different, and we must recognise the fact that the cost of this will be significant.

This will not be painless either. If we are to recognise that the rule of law is collapsing and we want to put in its place, worldwide, at least a functioning European system, coupled of course with countries - and many countries around the world want to maintain this system, including old allies like Canada, Australia and New Zealand, but also Japan and India and most countries in Africa, and a lot of countries in South America - then if we want to do those things, we have to bear the cost of doing it.

I'm afraid to say that means that we must recognise that there is going to be a significant period of economic pain as a consequence. If we are to rebuild value, we must invest in it, and that investment will have a cost. In the meantime, disruption is virtually guaranteed. I'm sorry, this is going to be deeply uncomfortable because even without a physical war, economic warfare, which is the most likely outcome of the disputes that we're currently facing - at least I hope that's the most likely outcome of the disputes we're currently facing - is still brutal.

Trade war is still war by any other name.

Supply chains will fracture.

Inflation risks will arise.

Investment will stall under uncertainty.

There will be unemployment unless governments act.

This moment feels like July or August 1939. The atmosphere around us is familiar. Life is going on at the moment. But the tempo of change is faster, and I don't expect there to be a phoney war once everything collapses, which it could do literally within days, so fast is the process of change at present. Something horrible feels terribly close right now. The point is, we need to manage that next stage.

So, let's have some conclusions. The first one is that we must stop comforting ourselves. This is not a temporary turbulence. We are now in for an era when there is regime change. There has been in the USA. It's unlikely to be restored as a democratic power for a long time to come. There is a global fracture in the international order, and we must plan accordingly.

Secondly, Europe must grow up fast. Strategic independence is now essential, and defence capability is necessary whilst our combined industrial capability has to be coordinated to deliver for the common good of European countries above all else, whilst democratic legitimacy must be reinforced, and in many countries it's not good enough at present, and therefore we have to literally, as I say, grow up fast. Smell the coffee, literally listen to the mood music of the people of Europe, and deliver the peace that they want.

Thirdly, we have to recognise that neoliberalism is now a security risk. It is our economic order that has created the weaknesses that Trump is now exploiting. Inequality already weakened democracy. He just saw the crack and pushed himself into it. Austerity has undermined resilience, and that's what fascists are exploiting. Oligarchy has already invited authoritarianism, and he is there waiting in line, and there will be others after him if he were to go. What we need to say is that none of these are acceptable and that care is an alternative and an essential economic and political necessity.

So, my fourth conclusion.

We must build democratic solidarity.

We need to build alliances around democratic values.

We really need to say what we mean and mean what we say, and go against the fascist enablers wherever they come from, including within Europe.

We need to strengthen our public institutions.

We need to put legitimacy back into the democratic state because people need defence, and only the democratic state can really provide it in the way that they desire.

Let's be clear, and this is my final conclusion. This is the test of our time. The era of comfort is over. I'm sorry to say it. I don't want to say this. I don't want to feel like this. I don't want to face the future that is obviously coming our way, but I have to talk about reality, and the reality is that whatever we knew, we will not know again, at least in my lifetime.

We are facing chaos.

We are facing disruption.

We are facing rebuilding.

And in all of that, there is a message of hope because we could deliver something better. That was what happened after World War II, in particular. We rebuilt better.

The era of political economy is back. The era of care is available if we reject cruelty. We have to choose. We have to choose where we're going. Europe has to choose where it's going. Europe's allies, and I've already mentioned some of them, they exist around the world, have to choose whether to come with us or not; whether to succumb to Trump or not, whether to succumb to Putin or China or not. We could build back better, to use a phrase that somebody else once put into the common language.

This is our opportunity. For all my doom and gloom, we could actually be looking at the prospect when we get through this era, and we will, that we could have a better world. The world we want, the world where care really matters. Cling to that hope, because there's not much else to cling to right now in an age of such confusion.

Let us know what you think. Let us have a comment. We do read them, we do look at them, we do summarise them. We sense your mood, and there's a poll down below. Give us a vote.

Poll

[poll id="298"]

Tickets are now on sale for the Funding the Future live event in Cambridge on 28 February. [Tickets and details are available here.](#)