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Jonathan Groubert: Bright minds! The podcast from the John Adams Institute is brought to you by the members of the John Adams. Why not become a member yourself or, even better, a patron and enjoy all the extras and benefits Find out more at john-adams.nl, John john-adams.nl and click on become a member. From Amsterdam this Bright Minds, the podcast from the John Adams Institute, a treasure trove of the best and the brightest of American thinking. And Back in 2015, the Russian chess grandmaster Garry Kasparov, a man used to thinking many moves ahead, looked into his crystal ball, and said this:

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Garry Kasparov: He is not done with Ukraine. He will come back because his goal was, is and will be, to topple the pro-European Ukrainian government.

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Jonathan Groubert: Seven years ago, Garry Kasparov came to Amsterdam and predicted the Russian invasion of Ukraine. He also described Vladimir Putin's psychology, and motivations in a way you hear speculated about in every current affairs program these days. Back in 2015, Obama was President, Russia was actively bombing targets in Syria. Syrian refugees were literally washing up on the shores of the Mediterranean, and Gary Kasparov, living in exile in New York, was touring his book *Winter is coming, Why Vladimir Putin and the enemies of the Free World must be stopped*. And the predictions came with Cassandra like precision. He saw Putin ruthlessly cowing all domestic opposition and the coming of a resurgent Russian nationalism that would spread beyond its borders. After the Maidan Revolution and the overthrow of Putin crony victor Yanukovych in 2014, Kasparov knew Putin simply could not allow a free and democratic Ukraine moving ever closer to Europe to exist. After all, a successful Ukraine could give Russians ideas. This is a longer talk and interview, but it's so timely. I'm letting it run at nearly full length. So we'll start with Mr. Kasparov's talk, followed by a wide-ranging discussion with Dutch journalist Michel Krielaars. But first, for the John Adams, this is Garry Kasparov.

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Garry Kasparov: Thank you for inviting me here today. Thanks to John Adams Institute for organizing this event. I am glad the Dutch are accepting both refugees and exiles, which I am. Also, I feel here closer to the home than from New York, where I live, when I hear that every speaker now profoundly says Kasparov, which is Russian pronunciation, while Americans always said Casperov, and I understand that you know, just, for many of you I am still best known for chess, which has the Dutch defense, than for politics, where I'm more concerned about the lack of Dutch offence.

I was, I was told by a young woman listening yesterday at a smaller event that quote; "Your message is depressing, Mr. Kasparov, but I'm not depressed because of how you said it." I will take that to heart here today. I don't want to scare or depress anyone. The book is called winter is coming, but please don't blame the weatherman for dark forecasts. I hope to share my analysis and my experiences and my opinions, and your reaction is entirely up to you. I'd like to begin with an interesting anniversary before moving on to the book and to current events in Russia, Europe and the middle east. It's an example that reflects a little of how I like to see the world.

A year ago today, on December 12th 2014, the brass price of barrel of oil dropped below \$60 a barrel for the first time in five years. For the most of the industrial world, this was good news, promising cheaper fuel. I wrote at a time that, while celebrating, we should also be very cautious on the international front. Many of the world's most repressive regimes depend on high energy prices to maintain internal stability, including Putin's Russia. With oil dropping so low, these dictators would need to find other ways to justify their eternal grip on power and the typical recipe: foreign aggression. Putin has already spent most of that year invading eastern Ukraine, but I wrote: He will soon need a new front. Contrary to Putin's expectations, the Ukrainians had fought very hard and if he continued there, the price of in Russian lives lost there would get too high.

The Baltics, another possible direction of, of, of, his attack would be even riskier because NATO had already begun preparations there. So, I was thinking south to the Caucasus, and Putin did go south, but even further, all the way to Syria. It should not have been such a surprise, since the middle east has so many of the ingredients Putin is always interested in; gas, oil, key pipelines. Second, a Russian naval base, to quote unquote protect from outside enemies. Third, Syria has a messy border situation with a NATO country, Turkey, and NATO is the only enemy big enough to satisfy Putin's propaganda in case of total economic collapse in Russia and, last but not least, a growing refugee crisis that would strengthen Putin's main allies in Europe, the ultranationalists.

The way things have gone in the middle east are an excellent case study of many of the themes in my book about the nature of dictatorships, and their relative advantages and disadvantages when matched against the free world. The impossible mix of rivalries and alliances in the region and how the violence there has spilled over into the rest of the world, is also illustrative of conflict and power politics in the post-cold war world. To deal with this crisis, we must think deeply and we must think strategically. We must plan for the long term and build lasting institutions instead of running around in a panic, demanding an immediate response to every item in the morning news. My book is titled *Winter is coming*, and I assure you this is not merely a homage to the great series of books and television shows, *Game of thrones*. The title reflects the idea that there are cyclical patterns in history or seasons. Of course this is more of poetic metaphor than in political science theory, but it does provide a useful framework to examine the back and forth action, reaction, character of all events and especially foreign policy. The dark winter of the Cold War ended with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the collapse of the Soviet Union, the flowering of spring with European unification and the summer of blue skies, albeit with a few dark clouds, in the Balkans and Africa.

But the existential threat we had lived with for decades was over. Hundreds of millions of people have been freed from totalitarian communism. It was time to celebrate. In this regard, my book's title is a sort of long-delayed response to the title of another book, for instance Fukuyama's famous: *the end of history* from 1992. To simplify greatly, he saw the fall of the USSR as a victory in the last great battle for the development of human society, the triumph of capitalism and liberal democracy, the forces of light winning over the forces of darkness. I spoke with Professor Fukuyama last year and I was delighted when he agreed to contribute a blurb for my book. After 23 years since the end of history, he agrees that history is making a dangerous comeback, but I cannot criticize his whole full 1992 vision,

simply because I shared it myself from the other side of that fallen wall. I had long dreamed of that day and, whenever possible, done my small part to bring it close. Unfortunately, history does not end and evil does not die. It may be bad, battled back, cut down like wheat, but it grows back in the cracks of our complacency.

That growth is one of the stories in winter's coming. The first story is the rise and fall of Russian democracy, from Gorbachev's retreat from Europe to Putin's invasion of Ukraine. How did we go from the jubilant crowds in Moscow, tearing down the statue of Felix Dzerzhinsky, the founder of the KGB, to just nine years later, electing a former lieutenant Colonel as the president? The second element is my personal story as a witness and sometimes participant in the events from a rebellious young chess champion in the USSR, to a, well, a rebellious old chess champion in Russia, and to my current activities as the chair, chairman of the Humanized Foundation based in New York, with activities supporting individual freedom and dissidents from North Korea to Venezuela. The third story in the book is what the rest of the world did and did not do, as Russia and other former Soviet nations failed to embrace democracy. It's a story of how the free world failed to press its huge advantage over its enemies after the iron curtain fell. This complacency allowed dictatorships to slowly grow powerful and the force of terror to prepare an attack.

By the way, I'm aware that terms like "free world" and even "enemies" can sound old-fashioned to some, but enemies don't care what vocabulary you used to describe them. Enemies try to kill you, to terrorize you, to undermine your institutions and your way of life. Enemies hate you no matter how much you try to engage with them or how often insist you are not at war with them. Pretending our enemies do not exist or finding new euphemisms to describe them will not stop them or make us safer. Let us not fall into the propaganda habits of dictatorships, let us end the culture of denial and call things by their correct names.

Now there are once again enemies, not only at the gate but inside the gates, and after 25 years of complacency, Europe is culturally militarily and rhetorically unprepared to fight them off. The beloved European soft power tools of economic and political engagement do not deter or weaken an aggressive dictator like Vladimir Putin. They encourage him. The openness and charity that represent the great European Union experiment at its best also makes it all the more vulnerable to terrorist groups like al-Qaeda and ISIS, and the disruptive impact of immigrant groups that do not return that openness, or in fact resent it.

During the Cold War, the security focus of the European Union and nearly all of its members was external. The Soviet Union was a tangible threat, with an oppressive grip of half the continent, an aggressive ideology and a massive military nuclear arsenal. The existence of an obvious enemy reduced security matters to a simple binary for the EU and for the European nations without complicated, complicated colonial legacies. The United States often via NATO, set their agenda and spend untold fortunes on defense buildup to keep the USSR in check for decades.

An immune system that rarely comes into contact with pathogens never gets strong enough to fight off dangerous diseases on its own. Many Europeans resent it and are loathed to admit it still, but for decades the United States has functioned as a sort of

antiseptic for Europe and much of Asia, protecting it from threats with the side effect of allowing Europe's own immune system to atrophy. But the US has been steadily retreating from the world under President Barack Obama, who has over-fulfilled his mandate to be the anti-George W Bush that Americans and most Europeans felt was needed, after years of painful and costly engagement in Afghanistan and Iraq. Obama's policy of American retreat and retrenchment has been in its wake as extreme as W Bush's intervention policy was, with secure consequences no less dire. This is especially true in Europe, which has been unable to respond coherently or cohesively while facing so many threats: the weakness of Europe's Defense Institutions has been rudely exposed. If the grand experiment of Europe is to survive, it must adapt to face the new challenges. Waiting and quietly hoping that the next U.S. president will come riding to the rescue on a white horse, only perpetuates the conditions of willful helplessness. Plus, Obama still has thirteen months in office, a span that looks to become increasingly perilous.

So, what is to be done? Everyone asked for solutions, as if we're here to solve a chess problem, but we cannot fall victim to the solutions now trap that leads us away from strategic thinking. To use some chess terminology, dictatorships have an advantage when it comes to rapid tactical maneuvers. There is no parliamentary authorization necessary, no poll numbers to worry about, no critical media. Dictators cannot worry about long term consequences, only looking strong and staying in power today. The one thing they know is that they cannot afford to look weak or get distracted by planning too far ahead, or their subordinates might begin to wonder if it's time for a change on the top. Even the most long-lived dictators rarely look beyond tomorrow's battles. It's hard to look into the future when you are always looking over your shoulder. Putin, for example, may well be a quagmire in both Ukraine and Syria, but he cannot slow down at all. He needs even more action, more conflict, and more mud in the water instead of pausing to clean up his messes.

Democracy, in contrast, can be very slow to act tactically, due to their layers of political alliances, public and government, governmental accountability and systemic checks and balances, not to mention the cautious evaluation of public opinion. The strength of the free world is strategic, not tactical. Common goals, political and economic stability and strong institutions allow for long term planning and continuity. We have the ability to build frameworks to solve problems and meet challenges, all be it theocratically . When our institutions are weakened or outdated, we cease to play strategically and are drawn into the dictator's preferred battleground of tactical callus. This is what we are seeing today, with confused responses to Putin's aggression and to the civil war in Syria and the resulting waves of refugees.

The European Union is a wonderful example of a successful modern institution that promotes democracy and free markets, but it was never intended to be a military alliance. We must build institutions capable of fighting this new war against democracy and world order, or that order will not last much longer. This is not a new cold war. It's a shooting war for Europe already, whose massive casualties from the streets of Paris to the skies above Ukraine. This is a war against modernity by forces that want to turn back the clock. You're already fighting it, whether you admit it or not, and you are, you are on the front lines until you take the fight to the enemy at the source.

The John Adams Institute reflects centuries of collaboration between Europe and the United States, and that collaboration must be reborn today. Allies must share values, not just borders and common interests. It is repulsive to suggest an alliance with Putin's Russia and Iran, both sponsor of terror and the murderous Bashar Al Assad regime. Their regimes are based on hate and repression and violence and nothing else. The free world can no sooner ally with such regimes than a patient can ally with the cancer that is eating at his bones. All across Europe there are voices calling to lift sanctions against Russia, despite the continued occupation, annexation of European territory that was taken by brute force. Do you negotiate with a cannibal by serving him pieces of your body or of your neighbor's body? Do you think Putin will stop on his own, and suffer the violent consequences nearly every brutal dictator suffers when he falls from power?

No. My mother still lives in Moscow. She is 78. She was born under Stalin and so has seen and heard every type of propaganda, as I am sure we can imagine. She says. It's even worse today than before in the soviet days, because there is even an illusion of the, of a better future. Of course, I have not a positive word to say about communism, but at least it attempted to present a positive image of the future, how, however wrong it was. Today is all darkness and hate. Russia is surrounded by enemies, with only a mythological hero, invincible, indispensable Putin to defend it. Like most dictators, when he started Putin needed friends, and he found many of them in the West. Now that he has completely wiped out any opposition inside of Russia, he needs foreign enemies, not friends. This means he will be increasingly dangerous, until he is gone. There is no point of pretending he will be a friend. If only you appease him enough.

The free world has an overwhelming economic and military advantage today, as never before in history. It does not need Putin's help or Iran's help, and like the alliance with Stalin to fight Hitler. We have the cause and we have the might. What is lacking is the will. Our new institutions must remember the lessons that won the Cold War. Engagement and attempts to find common ground with aggressive dictatorship will only undermine our cause. Globalization is a powerful tool for growth, but it also provides autocratic regimes with resources for repression. The United Nations was designed to avoid conflicts between superpowers, and today it has become a platform for dictatorships and many of the world's worst human-rights offenders. Our new institutions must exclude the dictators, must isolate repressive regimes, and must act to protect our interests, our lives and our values.

I have been called a warmonger because I say that confronting evil is better than waiting until it grows stronger. Winter is coming is the story that the evil can grow until it threatens us all. As I wrote in 2006, Putin was then a Russian problem. Who would become a regional problem and then everyone's problem, unless he was stopped and Putin could have been stopped, or at least limited years ago. But he was encouraged to expand by receiving no resistance. Bashar al Assad could have been ousted relatively easily four years ago or even two years ago, and hundreds of thousands of lives could have been saved. But Europe and America didn't see why they should take risks or take real actions. Now the consequences are arriving in your cities. I desperately want to avoid great war, but already read enough history books to learn that, failing to stand-up in small conflicts, inevitably leads

to big ones. History tells us that appeasement has caused far more deaths than deterrence, but deterrence is hard and appeasement is easy like falling asleep in the snow.

It is time to wake up. It's a fight, that's worth fighting and it's, if it's worth, fighting, it is worth winning. Nearly every EU nation has been underpaying its minimum NATO requirement for defense spending for years, and of course that must change immediately. Europe needs a plan of action that addresses the causes of the security crisis, not just its symptoms. There must be unity against aggressors and public acknowledgement that military action abroad can be necessary for security at home. Winter is coming, yes, but if we act, we can make it shorter and make the cold less bitter. Every day it will get more difficult and the price will go up.

There are many steps to take, but the first and most important is admitting there is a problem instead of hoping it will go away on its own. It will not. Europe must admit that there are some challenges that cannot be met with endless dialogue and bureaucracy. It is time to put down the pen and pick up the sword. 200 years ago, John Adams feared that Europe was abandoning America to its fate. He worked tirelessly, including here and Amsterdam, to bridge that gap, and in many ways he succeeded. Today, it's America that is retreating behind its Ocean walls, leaving Europe on the front-line against Putin and against terror, and dealing with refugees born of terror, Europe must both defend itself, and must also call upon the United States today, much as Adams called in Europe two centuries ago. We should also remember the words of John Adams in the letter he wrote to his wife, Abigail, in 1777, but the letter he addressed very explicitly to history and therefore to us here in this room today. Adams wrote: Posterity, you will never know how much it costs the present generation to preserve your freedom. I hope you will make a good use of it. If you do not, I shall repent in Heaven that I ever took half the pains to preserve it. Let us not disappoint this great man, let us make good use of our freedom and protect it. Thank you.

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Jonathan Groubert: And with that the Dutch journalist Michel Krielaars, himself a Slavic world specialist, took to the stage for a wide-ranging conversation, from the Ukraine's Maidan revolution to the possibility of Russia ever having a Maidan revolution of its own.

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Michel Krielaars: What really was his stake for Putin when Maidan started? Was it the protecting of his own kleptocracy, or was it really; I've got to defend these Russian-speaking people in the Eastern Ukraine whose life are threatened? We know Putin as a KGBer, he isn't interested in human lives at all. It's power politics.

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Garry Kasparov: It's Putin, puts us on, the interest is sustained power. And he saw, and by the way, rightly so, Maidan, as an imminent threat to his power in Russia, because Ukrainians are so close to Russians. So there's, there's, two nations that were close, you know, in history and, by the way, they're important to remember that Kyiv is still very much Russian-speaking city. Most of the top Ukrainian talk shows they run-in Russian, mainly in Russian, because here are many Russian journalists who moved in and seeing Ukrainians, you know, standing up against corrupt Yanukovich regime, Putin's puppet, and winning this battle, even sacrificing their lives. You know, and, and, it's like sending a powerful message

across the border, and Putin and realize that if Ukraine succeed, if Ukraine would succeed, as the, as a democratic state, which could, you know, join Europe and could become sort of a strong hold of European values next door. That will encourage Russians to follow their path.

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Michel Krielaars: Was a Maidan possible in Moscow. Or is it still possible in Moscow? With its strong anti-protest rules, laws.

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Garry Kasparov: It's, there were two Maidans in Ukraine. The first one was, I mean it was peaceful and almost bloodless. Second one, of course, had fights, you know, and many human lives were lost. But let's not forget that Ukrainian political system differed quite dramatically from Russian one from the very beginning. Yes, the nations were close, but in 1994 the first Ukrainian President Kravchuk lost elections. It's a huge, you know, psychological blow for, for people there, because they could see a peaceful transition of power.

In Russia, even under Yeltsin, the government never lost crucial elections. They could lose parliamentary elections, but in 96 it pushed hard to make sure Yeltsin, Yeltsin wins. So, Russia has not experienced yet a peaceful transition of power. Ukraine did, and for president, losing elections or for of course losing parliament elections became a norm. So, the Ukrainians grew up in an atmosphere where, I mean was there corruption and was all the problems, but still supreme power was not a sacred cow, and Ukraine never ceased to have an independent parliament that always had the 30-40% of opposition members.

In 2004 there was a major faction of opposition parties in 2013 and 2014. So, there was still a huge chunk of members of the parliament who were on the opposite side. And of course Ukraine never ceased to lose independent TV stations. By the way again, first thing mentioned restoring Sovjet and second one: to kill Live, Live, Live TV. Since Putin took over 2000, no more live TV in Russia, so it's only nine O'clock News, which is just, you know, Kremlin's mouth piece, but also dictators know where the danger comes from.

So, Maidan, and its classical Ukrainian form, you may call classical because now the word Maidan is international. So it's being part of the Russian language or any other language. It's a form of protest which is based on, on different opposition groups, including those in the parliament or even in the government and in media. So Maidan is a product of soft, authoritarian rule. Russia today is a full-blown one man dictatorship. You know it's, it's you know Maidan in Russia would be one million people storming Kremlin. Unfortunately we really past a moment where we could have a peaceful transition through the mass street protests. Maybe, but again I don't want to sort of to get into this debate now. Maybe in December 2011, maybe we had the chance. But let's not forget that even at that time Russia did not have these components like you know, truly independent opposition in the Parliament and free TV that could cover the protests on the Moscow streets.

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Michel Krielaars: But after Putin's return to power in May 2012.

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Garry Kasparov: let's be clear, to return Kremlin. He was in power all the time, even behind the curtain.

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Michel Krielaars: he crushed the independent media. He crushed actually...

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Garry Kasparov: what was left of independent media

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Michel Krielaars: TV Dohst, but it's only on the internet.

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Michel Krielaars: But again, but Putin's views of the opposition were shaped by events he saw. Arab spring, what's happened to Gaddafi? I'm sure you know, you know. His nightmares are connected to this, the final moments of Gaddafi's live.

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Michel Krielaars: The protests in Moscow were shouting; "Putin, this will be your end too!"

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Garry Kasparov: And also, also, he saw hundreds, probably 120 000 on the streets of Moscow on December 24, peak, maybe even more on February 4th. Now just. But it was already big enough, not, you know, powerful enough to, to storm kremlin and just to force you know police to change sides. But he saw it and, he decided that again, It's KGB reaction, you know. You have to crack down the opposition, so it's they're 2 options. One is you start mass repressions like Stalin, but Putin's regime is not, is not in a position to do it. It's different.

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Michel Krielaars: It's a modern dictatorship.

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Garry Kasparov: It's modern dictatorship, it's got more sophisticated methods. First you go after leaders of the protest and then you also grab, you know, bystanders, those were there accidentally also to send a message that anybody could be there. So you mix this kind of attacks against protestors and, I mean, you send very chilly message. But after what's happened with, with, my dear friend and colleague, Great Boris Nemtsov, last February was gunned down in front of Kremlin. That's a chilling message that you no longer can criticize Putin openly in Russia. Even if your former first deputy Prime minister of Russia, and as many believed at one point, even Yeltsin (inaudible)

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Michel Krielaars: Because it was a rule inside the power elite never to kill a former member of your bench.

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Garry Kasparov: He was not an ordinary member of the elite. Again, this was one of the top bureaucrats of Yeltsin's Russia and shooting him, especially in front of Kremlin. So it was a demonstration that Russia reached a point where the Capo di Tutti Capi, boss of bosses, dictator, cannot longer be criticized openly. That was Boris (inaudible), without listening to

all the advice that he would rather do it, you know, from outside of Russia, because we were already reaching the point where elimination of this powerful (inaudible) regime was already very much on the Putin's agenda.

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Michel Krielaars: And Putin said afterwards that Nemtsov not very well known inside Russia. So maybe, but we still don't know behind, we'll probably never know.

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Garry Kasparov: The problem about Mr. Putin's comments about whether Boris was well known or not or about any other member's opposition. I mean it's very difficult to, to, measure because he never participated in a single debate in his life. You know the only debates that, that, that, we could we could have in Putin's Russia is; the debate was riot police on the streets and it was always one-sided, so actually the only experience of elections for Putin, it was 1996 when he was the Deputy mayor of Saint-Petersburg and Sobchak and he, who was a huge favorite in these elections.

He led Putin run his campaign. Sobchak lost elections and I think Putin realized that elections could be unpredictable and as a KGB officer he doesn't like unpredictability, so he worked very hard to make sure it will never happen again. You know, as, as you know when being asked repeatedly about, you know my chess experience, vis a vis, what people mistakenly call Russian politics. Whether my experience could help me, I always responded that you know it was absolutely useless. Since in chess, where fixed rooms and unpredictable results, in Putin's Russia, it is exactly the opposite.

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Michel Krielaars: Who actually, in your book, you write continuous about it. There is a very small group which actually rules the country. It's not a government, a huge government, but tens of men, actually it are 4-5 persons.

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Garry Kasparov: Maybe more, definitely you can look at the Forbes list, and mysteriously can discover many Putin's friends. You know that nobody ever heard of these people 20 years ago. Now they are Billionaires. Moreover, their sons and daughters are billionaires. So you have a kind of new aristocracy in Russia that you know the inheriting all these positions. You look at the top. You know companies like Gazprom, Rosneft, and you discover, you know, the relatives of Putin's entourage sitting here and there. So it's...

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Michel Krielaars: Got real decision makers, Bortnikoff, Patrochev, Ivanov.

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Garry Kasparov: No, they're not very even now. I think it's just it's, it's, we reached a point where there's, there's, no even an inner circle making a decision. The decision was made by one man. It's a full-blown one man dictatorship. It's, Putin reached the state, you know where, you know we could say Hitler, Stalin, Mao Zedong. So I'm the country, I'm the state. So this is the Louis the 14th, so it's the. He doesn't see countries separate from his own interest. He can be influenced by these groups, but he's now like a spy. You know that, you

know that it's, it's, it's, it's, built, you know, in the center of the system and everybody's trying to sort of to find. You know, checks and balances around, around, around, him.

So that's why it's, it's, all about one man decisions. Naturally they have the interest of protecting this rule, but still you know we have to see the difference because not all of them believe that they burn all the bridges. Putin has burned all the bridges and they know that. So the question is at what point Putin could look weak enough for some of them to challenge him. The problem is that Putin knows that. That's why he always creates, you know, an image of an all-powerful geopolitical player. It's very important because it's the real power comes from, you know, from, from, abroad. So it's like you know you have to suck energy from, from, the world's most powerful countries in the world to, to, to, to, look stronger and bigger.

So for Putin the main counterpart was Obama. Typical what he did after the Turkish air Force shut down Russian bomber. Actually it's amazing. The Russian press called pitifully called defenseless bomber, defenseless bombs. So, Putin didn't talk to Erdogan, he talked to Obama because for Russian television is very important. He doesn't talk to subordinates, he talks to the big boss and I have to give him credit for staging a phenomenal event in New York at the end of September, when he went to the United States to participate in general assembly of United Nations. He was invited to also deliver speech there and Wallstreet Journal asked me to write an editorial.

I suggested I could do it before he spoke, because I said, I said, it's, it's, I could tell you what will be will be said there because it's irrelevant. At the end of the day, Putin's trip to New York was not about delivering the speech was not about even discussing something with Obama. It was all about the picture and he did extremely well. You remember the moment he has put in shaking Obama the hand. Reluctantly, I bet you, he spent hours in front of the mirror practicing.

It's, it's, it's, it's, it's, very important because the picture on Russian television, Putin had to go to New York because the general assembly of United Nations, he's invited has to speak, then goes to the belly of the beast. He has to meet Obama, the present United States politeness, he has to shake his hand and the next day Russian planes bombed American backed opposite opposition in Syria. Who is. who is more powerful? This is a pr stunt that Putin is so good at, and unfortunately the western leaders. They don't understand by. By playing, playing, in his hands they are making him stronger. Since no one in Russia, whether you have some generals or some Oligarch, who are just very uncomfortable with Putin's rule. They could see it's a sociopath who's just bringing country down. But no one will ever challenge a man who is so lucky, so powerful and looks indispensable for the war politics.

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Michel Krielaars: But actually the war in Eastern Ukraine failed because there was, there were several other plans...

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Garry Kasparov: It's important why it failed because Putin expected, you said they probably believe his own propaganda, that ethnic Russians in Ukraine would join Putin's invading armies and will proclaim Nova Rossia and New Russia from Lugansk to Odessa. Contrary to

these expectations, majority, I would say, when a lion share of ethnic Russians in these regions they joined Ukrainian Army, fighting Putin's invading force, and he just realized that further advance in Ukraine could be too costly because it would remind Afghanistan, body bags. So he looked for, for, a new angle to create problems. But I can bet you he is not done with Ukraine. He will come back because his, his, goal was, is and will be to topple the pro-European Ukrainian government.

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Michel Krielaars: So, failure in Ukraine. The economy was already bad before the Ukrainian war is deteriorating. Second huge problem for him, inside the Kremlin he has enemies. A palace Revolution is always possible in that world. So what's his, But what is his way out? Will he become more narrow-minded?

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Garry Kasparov: There's no way out and he knows there's no way out. He can create problems. You know, hoping that, you know, he'll survive while others, other others go. That's why I said you know stocking conflicts and calls is his, his, only, if you may call, logical policy. Because you said economy is in terrible shape. Oil is under \$40 a barrel. He will probably run out of money next couple of years so that the difference to narrows. But it's just he's definitely, you know, running with money.

But when somebody is short in funds, whether we're talking about a family or corporation or country, you know you should look at what he or she does with the budget, because it gives you an indication about the plans. So what Putin does was the budget, when the first time, he, he doesn't have a luxury of spending money for everything you know, cannot throw them right, left and the center. What are the three items in Putin's budget that are safe from any cuts? And, moreover, you know we could see money being poured into this era: military, security apparatus and propaganda, while cutting on everything: education, culture, health care. You know this is housing. So this is a war budget.

So this is conscious plan of Vladimir Putin. and you could hear Russian Minister of Finance saying: oh, two more years and we will have no other, we have only two tough choices to make. One is raise taxes. Second is to cut expenses. You know social Expenses, healthcare. He didn't even mention military, which is now the biggest growing expense in the Russian budget, because everybody knows, you know, as long as Putin stays in power, military security and propaganda are untouchable.

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Michel Krielaars: But does it mean that it's seriously possible that there will be war in Europe? You told us that there's already a war in Ukraine, which is Europe.

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Garry Kasparov: It is Europe. And again Holland, you, this Holland, already paid a huge price for not even paying attention and just, you know, ignoring the potential dangers in...

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Michel Krielaars: An escalation?

00:39:40

Garry Kasparov Exactly, escalation is.. Putin's response to economic crises in Russia would

be always escalation now at one point when, say, old Prize goes to 25 or 20, and Russia is going bankrupt. I can bet you he'll find a way to cross Estonian and Latvian border. He doesn't care...

00:40:04

Michel Krielaars: And then, he plays poker that NATO won't interfere?

00:40:06

Garry Kasparov: I'm sure I'm sure there'll be a lot of people here saying that you know maybe we have to compromise because it's business. Of course there's business and of course there're so many people that you know are just, you know, looking for, for, finding just another common ground. But common values was Putin. And also, don't forget. You know, so far, Putin's aggression, Putin's aggressive acts in Syria. As I mentioned, they really created a major crisis in Europe and he could see the consequences: more refugees in Europe, more power to the ultranationalist groups. If nothing happens and you have more refugees and you will see their ratings going up. So how? How many percentage you need you know for Marine le Pen actually to become a formidable presidential candidate.

00:40:50

Michel Krielaars: So his goal in Syria is to create more chaos...

00:40:53

Garry Kasparov: Exactly. And if you do nothing, then you have Libya, there's total chaos there and, and, the methods of creating conflicts and sending refugees to Europe, you know, causing damage due to, to, European institutions and helping the ultranationalist groups can work. And then if you have ultranationalists calling shots, or at least having influence in Europe, they're all in bed with Putin. Some of them are like Marine le Pen, are bragging about receiving credits from Russian controlled banks. So and they all have the same interest of dismantling European institutions for different reasons. But Putin is quite good in being an opportunist and grabbing an opportunity when, when he sees one.

00:41:31

Michel Krielaars: Michail Chodorkovski, former oligarch, living now in exile. He last week, he said that revolution is necessary and inevitable in Russia. Two days later, he received summons from the Moscow prosecutor, who charged him with two murders and several attempts. Attempted murder.

00:41:51

Garry Kasparov: What a surprise.

00:41:53

Michel Krielaars: What a surprise! Do you agree with Chodorkovski, who is supporting the opposition or the remains of opposition in Russia, that a revolution is necessary, Inevitable? Because....

00:42:03

Garry Kasparov: I don't I don't like the word necessary. You know, because it's it's you know. It was my, for the last few years we had always debated with Boris Nemtsov. Who, who, kept saying that Russia would not survive one more revolution. So we had to do everything to keep this protest not violent. And we did. We had no violence from outside. There was

not a single broken window during our demonstrations. The only violence that it came from from, from ,from, police, and my response to him was: Boris. I agree with your with your philosophy: a revolution in Russia would not, you know, lead to democracy next day. It would lead to cause and turmoil, but the problem is that we are no longer calling the shots, we are no longer able to stop it, because what regime has been doing is steadily destroying democratic institutions and, and, building this, you know, fascist like dictatorship. All the powers in the hands of one paranoid man, who will create conflict that could not resolve other in any other way but uprising in the streets.

So I think eventually Chodorkovski agreed with, with, with, with. You know, my concerns, because this is not even forecast, it's it's, it's, more like a concern, because I don't want to see the revolution there, because I do understand that the end of Putin's regime will not lead to democracy. And also, you know when, when I saw people in the free world being so surprised by, you know, Libya and other Arab countries after Arab Spring ended up with the turmoil. Now my reaction was that: do you expect countries after 20, 30, 40 years of dictatorship to sort of move into democracy overnight if dictators overthrow? because dictator stays in power, he is, you may call it successful because he succeeded in eliminating the opposition. You know all the layers of opposition.

You can think that you know he. You know he creates a desert, a political desert, and longer he stays in power, the dryer the desert is. Now, what kind of creatures can survive in a dry desert? Snakes, rats, scorpions. So it's that's why revolution offers you a chance. You may blow it up, you can grab it so things could be different, but there's no way. You know you can just move on. You know with, with, with democratic process and, and I'm just, you know, terrified to hear these western power discussing elections in Syria. I mean, god's sake, elections. This is the state doesn't exist anymore, so it's you have sectarian wars that are older than most of European states. Yeah, and so we just have to understand certain realities. And I'm not trying to be a naive, you know, idealist. You know saying, oh, we do this and that and that. But all I know from history. You know, by looking at these dictatorships and the and the end of these brutal regimes, that the longer we wait to oppose them, the higher the price we pay.

Two years ago, you know, confronting a Assad in Syria was difficult, but today the same methods would be unbearable. So basically, at every spiral, every layer of conflict you will, you will have to come back with more force, more sacrifices. So that's why, if something happens we Putin today, I'm not telling you tomorrow we have you now, so great democracy, we still have to go through very violent transitions. He stays in power 1, 2 or three more years. The outcome will be the same. He is not going to die quietly in bed again. That's maybe it will be quiet in his bed, but way before his expectations.

00:45:43

Michel Krielaars: In the West. Many people say Russia is not ready for democracy. The population is too servile, too much dependent or too much looking up to people in power. Do you agree with point-of-view so that's also a reason to accept a regime like Putin's.

00:46:01

Garry Kasparov: I'm, I'm always, you know, annoyed to hear the stories about genetic

determination. These nations are ready and these nations are not. So we have enough, you know examples in world history, modern history, to refute this notion.

So if you look at the map of Korean Peninsula and you look at the North, you can come to the conclusion that the Koreans, they are born to be slaves and they deserve their the three generations of brutal dictators. Unless you are aware there is South Korea, with the same Korean brothers and sisters, not even cousins, who built probably one of the most vibrant economies in the world and stable democracy, you go a little bit, you know, just you know, offside there you look at China, which everybody's competing China, continental China, I mean it's just so successful. But how about that tiny piece of China called Taiwan? Same Chinese? But it's it was a market economy. Now it's, it's,- also stable democracy and you could see that you know the very same people, given a chance, could build very, very different arrangements.

And you know you also have. You know this. Let's go back to Russia, Ukraine. So is this between Russia and Ukraine and the Soviet Union there was there was no border, there where administrative borders. Even after 1991, you know the borders in east, eastern part, eastern part of Ukraine or western part of Russia. They were very nominal, so people can go back and forth. So we just, you know, even with domestic passports, so they didn't have any visas, of course. So you have Belgorod on one side, the Russian side and Charkiv on the Ukrainian side, so about 200 kilometers between these two cities.

So, same people, all of them ethnic Russians, all of them, have the same, same, context, all of them, you know, just you know, and many of their probable relatives, but young boys from Belgorod. They are part of Putin's invading army and they're contemporaries from the other side of the border, Join Ukrainian Army, to defend their country. So it's not elementary to all these people that are just doomed to live on a dictatorship. I think it's about conditions, it's about, you know, and it's also about those who are, you know, who are in power. So you're still talking about relatively small minority of people who could influence the events. And I think that we have. We have enough talent in the country. It's whether it's in the country or outside. There's so many Russians now living outside, many of our young, you know young. Many of young Russians were educated in the free world, they run businesses, in the free world. So I think that Russia will have hundreds of thousands of talented individuals, relatively young individuals, and I would like to see more of 30-40 years old people, you know just calling, calling, ruling the ruling to show so and making sure that we can know we can restore the true greatness of our county.

00:49:06

Michel Krielaars: Thank you very much, so there's still hope left, the hope which is the beginning of the 90's.

00:48:12

Garry Kasparov: I'm an optimist by nature and, as I have to compensate for my, you know, dark forecast.

00:49:19

Michel Krielaars: Thank you very much.

00:49:25

Jonathan Groubert: Garry Kasparov speaking with Michel Krielaars in Amsterdam, where the John Adams back in 2015. Here at the John Adams, our thoughts are with the people of Ukraine. We hope for a swift end to Vladimir Putin's senseless war.

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