

# Europe Is Doomed. Anti-Diplomacy Ruins EVERYTHING

Today I'm talking to a former Hungarian Diplomat, His excellency, Ambassador Sandor Zoltan Kusai. Ambassador Kusai served his country in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister's Office in various capacities, most importantly he spent a total of 18 years in China, including in the top position as Ambassador between 2008-2014. He is now working as a scholar in research and education back home in Hungary and it's a pleasure having him here today. <https://neutralitystudies-shop.fourthwall.com>

## #M3

One more important thing: the absolutization of serving American interests. Europe serves American geopolitical interests because Europe fears that it has become too soft or has lost the power to control the world. So Europe gave itself up to the United States. The US is capable of controlling the world, so we will serve the US to control the world and get, from the big feast of the Americans, some scraps from the table. From the big American feasting table, Europe will get some small drops or some small pieces of food. That's the general approach.

## #M2

Hello, everybody. This is Pascal from Neutrality Studies, and today I'm talking to a former Hungarian diplomat, His Excellency Ambassador Sándor Zoltán Kusai. Ambassador Kusai served his country in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Prime Minister's Office in various capacities. Most importantly, he spent a total of 18 years in China, including in the top position as ambassador between 2008 and 2014. He is now working as a scholar in research and education back home in Hungary, and it's a pleasure having him here today. Ambassador, welcome.

## #M3

Thank you very much for the invitation.

## #M2

I'm glad you said yes, because we discussed a little bit via email that we want—or should—look at the role of China and Europe's diplomacy, or non-diplomacy, toward it—anti-diplomacy, depending on how you want to see it. You've had so much experience with that country, and you represented a European state there. Can you tell us a little bit about your experience and your general assessment of where European diplomacy with China is headed?

## **#M3**

It is heading in the wrong direction. Europe is misunderstanding China, but I am convinced that Europe is deliberately misunderstanding China. It's not just by mistake; it's a deliberate act. And the Chinese are getting more and more impatient, I would say, with Europe. They hope that Europe can turn in a better direction, but I see in the latest developments that the Chinese are gradually losing their patience. They are full of distress and dislike. What they see from Europe is all the attempts at misleading China or taking advantage of certain economic and political factors. So it's very clear, I would say, that Europe does not want to have good relations with China. Europe now openly wants a regime change in China, whether by diplomacy, political pressure, or economic pressure. That's the fact, and it's so understandable and clear that it simply undermines the basic trust which could underlie cooperation. That's my assessment of the present situation.

## **#M2**

Can you give us examples of that? I mean, in what way does the European Union, or does Europe, signal to China that they want regime change? And when did that start?

## **#M3**

Oh, the second part of your question is easier. I think it started in the mid-70s when official diplomatic relations were established. But it was more covered up and not such a simple and pressuring attitude, because Europe had fundamental economic interests. In trading with China, the "change through trade" policy of Germany was very important, so they wanted to change China all the time. But for the first three decades, it was simply a hope, an illusion—that by trading, by influencing the economic development of China, by helping the Chinese middle class to grow and develop, it would change China by itself. It was an illusion.

We saw it in the early 2000s, and after 2011 we saw very clearly that it was an illusion. But on the other hand, the Chinese always had another illusion. The Chinese had the illusion that Europe could become a simple or single, separate, individual pole in the global economy and in global politics. The Europeans had the illusion that the strategic autonomy of Europe—which was later formulated by President Macron—was a reality or at least a possibility. I think nowadays it's very clear that it is impossible. So what we see now is a mutual disillusionment, both from Europe and from China. And the consequences are really very bad, first and foremost for the smaller European countries, like Hungary.

## **#M2**

How does that work, though? We have the European Union, and yes, the EU is a bloc, but on a diplomatic level, it's still each member state that has direct diplomatic contact with other countries.

Yes, you have a common foreign and security policy, but the EU member states are in this in-between zone, and diplomacy still, at least on paper, happens on a national level. So when you were ambassador there, I mean, what were your competencies? What did Hungary do directly with China? And where were you undercut by, let's say, forces from Brussels?

### **#M3**

You know, we could have bilateral cultural and investment activities. You could represent your country, your government. I did it for six years, starting with a socialist government and ending with the present center-right government. So I was a professional diplomat. I worked with any government that the people might have elected in Hungary for more than 30 years. So I know how it works. My basic task—which is, by the way, the basic task of diplomacy in principle, according to the Vienna Convention—was to help develop bilateral trade and bilateral relations, to realize your country's national interest via cooperation. That's basically why the whole Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations was originally established.

But at present, it is very difficult to continue that. I was ambassador when Hungary had already joined the European Union for four years, so I participated in the cooperation between EU member states, which meant monthly meetings of the ambassadors and discussions on issues mainly at the level of EU-China relations, but it always included details about bilateral relations as well. It was an exchange of information, an exchange of our approaches, and so on. This happened once every month at the ambassadorial level, but all the embassies continued this at every diplomatic level—press attachés, trade attachés, and so on—in every aspect of diplomacy.

And I had a very interesting experience when I began my ambassadorial work there. It was in 2008, and that was the year of the crisis—the Great Recession, if you want to call it that. At that time, in the beginning, in the first two or two and a half years, our European approach to China was much, much more cooperative because we needed China economically and financially. Europe couldn't overcome that crisis, that financial crisis, without active cooperation with China—not only in economic relations, but also in financial matters. So we were very cooperative at that time. And as for the crisis, I would say—because I am convinced as an economist—that we never overcame it. We have never overcome that crisis. Still, the crisis is lingering around us.

But anyhow, as we felt better economically, financially, and so on, the Union began to pressure China to push for more political—I would say, more ideological—aspects or matters, and it began to sour the relationship. And it was very difficult for an ambassador. Of course, the Hungarian governments, all of them led by different parties, were always for cooperation, for expanding investment, trade, and humanitarian cooperation, education, and so on. We were interested in that because Hungary is a peripheral country of the European Union. We are on the periphery—economically, socially, culturally, in every aspect.

We needed extra, I would say, impetus from the world for economic development, for social development. The European Union has troubles. There is no chance of selling twice as many Hungarian products in Europe as we sold last year. It's simply impossible because the European market is not expanding, especially now, but it didn't expand even in the best years. I remember that growth was 3-4% at most. We needed extra cooperation outside the European Union. If you think back to those years of global economic globalization, which was the single most important growing economy in the world? Which was the strongest market, the source of upcoming new technologies, upcoming new partnerships, upcoming new investments?

It was China. So that's why the Hungarian "China opening" policy, as it was called at that time, began in 2003, and it became very, very impressive after 2010, with the present government formation for the first time, because it was simply a very clear and understandable economic interest. And that motivated us. So I had to balance the European pressures and the national interests. It involved investments like Huawei, like the battery factories. Now it's about the electric car factories, and so on. On the other hand, I had to manage things with the European Union in the background, convincing my colleagues that it is not dangerous when any Chinese company invests in Hungary. It was not easy sometimes.

## **#M2**

I believe that. But where is this fear and distrust also coming from? On the one hand, I do understand that there is deep-seated European distrust toward socialist China. But then again, I mean, in the 2000s and 2010s, communism wasn't a topic anymore, right? Communism is what Europe overcame. And of course, you are Hungary. I mean, you were a communist Hungary, socialist Hungary, right? And that was left behind, at least rhetorically, ideologically. So where did it come from that the Europeans still thought that the Chinese were out to somehow come and get them? Switzerland is the country that had the first free trade agreement with China. That was very much also a model case for the EU. These free trade relations actually helped both. They helped Switzerland and the Chinese. The Chinese liked the Swiss market and also saw it as an example case. Can you maybe speak to that a bit?

## **#M3**

I think the distrust on the European side is a deep-rooted ideological stubbornness, I would say. The European politicians in most countries, and the European scholars studying China, simply stayed in the 60s and 70s in their minds. They simply don't understand that, as the Chinese call it, "socialism with Chinese characteristics." In that formula, the "Chinese characteristics" put the limitation on socialism. It's a mixed economy, a mixed social structure, and a mixed political structure. Regarding the economy, the European scholars and even the European politicians could understand much more easily the capitalist elements, the private ownership, the private entrepreneurship in China. They very often overestimated the importance of it.

But in social policies, and especially in the political sphere, they could not understand the restructuring of the Chinese Communist Party, which originally was a classical Communist Party based on Leninism and so on—organizational structure, policies, and everything. But nowadays, it's a different party. That does not mean that it is a liberal party—no. It's still, I would say, an atheist party with a very strong purpose of moving forward the rebirth of the Chinese state technologically, economically, and so on, and it is ready to use every possible means, including capitalism, to reach that purpose, to reach that target. And they are doing that. So it's a much more structured entity, the Chinese Communist Party, than most of the European analysts think. And as you know, this is common in every foreign policy issue.

The analysts are much better than the politicians. The politicians are stubborn-headed, undereducated people. That's how I would describe the present form of parliamentary democracy. You become a successful politician, and you may even get some government positions, even premiership or presidency, only if you are fully in compliance with the lowest level of understanding of the electorate. So, as a politician, you must converge to the lowest common denominator of the average. And that makes politicians very stubborn, very undereducated, and very single-minded on ideological issues. When you have a problem with your scholarly or analytical background, which is at least 20 or 25 years behind, then it will extrapolate into an even more stubborn political approach. That's what we see in Europe now.

## **#M2**

May I just ask about your personal perception? Because you have this special case, having yourself grown up under a socialist system and going into public service under a socialist system, and then going through the 1990s and 2000s, and then going to socialist China—or what is today called socialism with Chinese characteristics. Do you recognize what you see in China, the social system, as similar to what you remember from Hungary, how it used to be, or are those completely different worlds?

## **#M3**

Some elements I do recognize. You know, Hungary was the happiest barrack in the socialist camp because Hungary had an early reform experience from the late '60s, during the '70s, and much less in the '80s. But there were economic reforms, there was some space for private initiative in the economy, even in some social aspects, and so on. So the Chinese, before they began the reform process in 1979, they studied—and even during the 1980s, they studied—the Hungarian so-called reform experience. So I saw, especially during my first posting in China, which was in the second half of the 1980s, I saw a lot of similar things there. But there was a turning point.

In 1990—practically, 1989, 1990, 1991—Hungary and most of the Central and Eastern European former communist states decided to turn completely toward the liberal parliamentary democracy

with a market economy and so on, to the Western model. That was a full turn. In China, after the crisis of 1989—you remember the Tiananmen Square events and so on; I was there, by the way, at that time; I had my first political conflict experience in practice as a diplomat there—China went on a different path. China did not abandon reform, but China understood, from the experience of Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, that if they embraced the Western model, the party would lose power sooner or later.

And that was the switch, I think. So the Chinese Communist Party decided to keep power, but continued the reform, so the Chinese Communist Party began to reform itself. It was in the mid-1990s when everybody was allowed into the party, including private entrepreneurs, even the richest people. Can you imagine a Communist Party in the '60s or the '50s, or let's say earlier in the last century, which would embrace the largest capitalist in its party? It was impossible. It stabilized the Communist Party.

It made it capable of integrating different interests of different social groups into one political structure. It's much more complicated than if you have an open party competition system. In the open party competition system, you have different parties supported by different social groups. They compete. We have a big ritual—we call it elections. During that big ritual event, some party wins the election and gets the right to form the government, so they represent the social background of that party. That's how democracy works. In China, many similar things happen, but they happen within the party.

And in the mid-90s, what I am convinced stabilized the rule of the Chinese Communist Party in China was that they allowed the party to transform gradually, and they allowed representatives of different social groups with different interests to enter the party and participate in party decision-making. It does not make it less centralized, but it makes it more receptive to the different social and political needs of society. So that made it flexible enough to stay in power when all the other ruling communist parties lost power—except, let's say, a few of them, which later followed the Chinese basic principle, this Chinese political structural reform of the party. Vietnam, for example, and in some different aspects, Laos and Cambodia, so in the Chinese countries—and it is happening now in Cuba as well.

So, anyhow, I became too scientific. Anyway, the issue is that we in Europe do not accept this whole situation. We think that the Chinese Communist Party is still the same Communist Party that was led by Mao Zedong. That's why all the analysts—I mean the mainstream; there are a few clever people, but most of the mainstream China analysts in Europe—think that Xi Jinping is a reincarnation of Mao Zedong, which is not true, which is a foolish idea. But that concept influences political decision-making, the whole political climate. And that makes Europe's approach to China very, very, very—I would say—inadequate, not adequate to the reality. And that is one of the sources of many mistakes and conflicts.

**#M2**

But, you know, when I look at the current discourse, the Europeans don't complain about China being communist or being socialist. They don't complain so much about a different social model. They complain about Chinese bullying, about China being an abuser of human rights, about China being aggressive towards others. I mean, they focus on China as... China as China, not as an alternative model, because in a sense, I think the Europeans and also the North Americans, they're over that. We are already in the post-Fukuyama world where everybody believes we've made the point that the only reason why China is so successful is because they actually embraced capitalism without opening. So it's this autocracy. It's the autocracy much more than the social issue. How do you make sense of that?

### **#M3**

I think it's a very simple disguise. I wouldn't say it's simple propaganda, because I am convinced that all those European colleagues really are convinced that they are right. But the problem is that whenever you criticize China for centralized economic policy, for centralized governmental subsidies, for companies that produce breakthrough technologies, that develop breakthrough technologies, and so on—so when China intervenes in the simple market mechanism—then we begin to cry. But this approach is an inseparable part of the Chinese political and social system. The whole Chinese state is based on these policies. So when we attack these policies, we attack the substance of them, and we know that.

So if the Chinese Communist Party were to let free market forces rule, it would be the end of the Chinese Communist Party. And, by the way, as historical experience shows, it would be the end of the rapid development of China. Because that society cannot be held together as a functioning mechanism if you don't have a central wheel of some kind. We see, by the way, this disintegration process—maybe I am too radical with this assessment—but what we see is the disintegration of the model in the United States because of the limitations of central organizing power, because of the absolutization of market mechanisms. That leads to very serious economic, financial, and other consequences. In China, they are trying to avoid that.

When we criticize human rights, we criticize one of the elements of the substance. But it's very interesting because we really have double standards. I don't remember any European scholar—I mean mainstream scholar—or any European politician criticizing Ukraine for suppressing ethnic minorities. The same European leaders who criticize China for suppressing some ethnic minorities, especially Muslims, Uyghurs, and others—whose criticism has some real basis. The criticism does not come out of thin air. But the problem is that I have never heard any criticism of the present Ukrainian government, even before the war, for suppressing ethnic minorities in Ukraine. So it shows very clearly that our criticism is not based on principles, but is a geopolitically motivated criticism.

### **#M2**

Yeah, absolutely. And I think anyone who has spent some time actually following the diplomacy or the speech acts of the West, even just over the last couple of years, understands that the same people who claim that China is committing a genocide against its Muslim minority are the same people who defend Israel's right to commit a genocide against the Palestinian Muslim majority in the country they occupy. But let's leave that aside. I mean, the hypocrisy is the hypocrisy. The one thing that is even harder to understand is why this approach, especially by the Europeans, is taken, which is not necessary. I mean, China is no security threat. It's an opportunity. If it's an economic threat, then something as simple as a few tariffs can be managed easily, because even smuggling from China to Europe is not that easy. It's connected, but it's not at the border. You have so much buffering in between. Why is it that Europe currently is proactively making China its enemy?

### **#M3**

It's... I think it's some kind of missionism. We have a mission to really spread our model all over the world, which, by the way, we ourselves know is not the most perfect model. We have a lot of problems with this model in our societies, in our economies, and so on. But first of all, Europe—especially this Commission, I mean the Commission headed by Ursula von der Leyen. Before Ursula von der Leyen, it was a much more tactical and diplomatic Commission. Now it's a purely ideological, value-based—as they call it—Commission, with its policies and so on. And the problem with it is that we lack the capacity, the power, to establish real influence. China is a great power.

We cannot deny it. It's a different civilization, and it's about more than 8,000 kilometers east of us. So it does not pose any immediate threat. It cannot pose and does not pose any immediate geopolitical or economic threat to Europe. It's that simple. But the ideological drive—and one more important thing, the absolutization of serving American interests. Europe serves American geopolitical interests because Europe fears that it has become too soft or has lost the power to control the world. Europe gave itself up to the United States. The US is capable of controlling the world, so we will serve the US to control the world and get, from the big feast of the Americans, some scraps from the table.

From the big American feasting table, Europe will get some small drops or some small pieces of food. That's the general approach. And that led to the death, practically, I think, of European diplomacy—I mean on the level of the European Union, but also in many member states. The diplomacy is that. Can you imagine—just one example—can you imagine that just a few days before leaving for China, for the EU-China summit, which is a yearly event, the president of the European Commission comes out in the European Parliament and barks at China in the most undiplomatic way, basically insulting the host? Is that diplomacy? And it becomes a little bit funny even, because if we were the real strong bully, we could do that.

When the bully visits the school, it will begin for the poor guys with the first hit. That's the bully's right. That's, by the way, what President Trump does. But when it is done by a weak, unorganized, trembling structure's head, like Ursula—Madame Ursula—it's terrible. She said, I think, 10 or 15



really very harsh sentences: criticism, threats towards China and the Chinese leadership. Then she flies there, and what does she expect? By the way, is that diplomacy? Will she begin the negotiations, for example, with, "Sorry, don't care about what I said in the European Parliament. Please listen to my offer," or what? So that's why I am telling you that it's not diplomacy. As you pointed out, it's anti-diplomacy—what we are doing now.

## **#M2**

Can you explain this to yourself? I mean, these people are not the brightest lights in the Union. But they're not—I mean, they behave like buffoons, but they do have capabilities, right? The one thing that politicians must have is a feeling for the groups that they move in. Now, you get to these top positions and you—even if you vassalize yourself completely under the United States—you still must have some form of feeling for what you are doing. How is it that they are not ashamed of saying something like that and then meeting the counterpart just a few days later? Are they psychologically so lobotomized that they don't understand, that they don't even have feelings about this anymore?

## **#M3**

Basically, I agree with you. It's a very good formula: they are psychologically lobotomized. The simple thing is that they grew up and climbed up the political ladder by always saying only the things that got 20,000 likes on their Facebook page. And when the negative consequences came, they put out another statement that got likes. They live in a separate world. They play for the mainstream media. They play for other politicians. They play for the minimalist approach of the general public. And they want one or half a percent better approval from the public for tomorrow, and they don't care what the price will be after three months, because they are convinced that they will manage any negative influence. They will then come out and make another statement, which will be even more radical, again getting half a percent increase in their popularity, and so on. And how Europe has worked in the last, let's say, 10 or 15 years, it really works like that.

## **#M2**

It does, but I still struggle to understand what this does to the system. Maybe we can take Kaja Kallas, the foreign—well, the High Representative for Foreign Affairs, the top diplomat of the EU, the top anti-diplomat. The fascinating thing is that she got where she is by saying that she is from Estonia, a small former Soviet republic that was suppressed by the Soviet Union, being herself the daughter of a communist functionary and, of course, being born as a Soviet citizen, right? And on the benefiting end of the Estonian Communist Party. And she's still able to frame herself as a brave anti-communist and as someone standing up to socialist China. I mean, how—why does that work?

## **#M3**

You know, I think it's very simple. It responds to the simplified attitude of the general public, or a big part of the general public, because the understanding of international relations and diplomacy among the general public has gotten very low. It has been leveled down to the lowest level. That's how our social media—run political, ideological, or national culture works—it brings everything down to the lowest possible denominator. It's tragic, and that's why they play to that. They don't understand that in the real world, which is not the internet, not the cyber world, it may not work. The last meeting between Kaja Kallas—if you mentioned her—and the Chinese foreign minister, Wang Yi, a week ago, I remember, for any student of international studies in the first year at any university, would be a shock: when the Chinese foreign minister gives an elementary lecture on national interest, on geopolitics, on great power politics to the head of European anti-diplomacy.

And she does not understand, simply because it does not fit into her understanding of how politicians should work, how politicians should present themselves. And that's it. I think it's the end of European diplomacy, the end of the art of diplomacy. By the way, I would tell you that the art of diplomacy is a mirror of real statecraft, and the real problem with the European Union is that the leaders—and with many member states, I will not name any of them—I would say even with some other European countries which are not members of the European Union, the death—well, I wouldn't name it, but it's the death of statecraft, real statecraft.

We don't have statesmen, we don't have statecraft—I mean in philosophical terms: deeply understanding or trying to understand the national interest, the managing of different relations within society, the economy, the culture, that refined or, I would say, sophisticated approach to society, to politics. We don't have that. And as it dies very fast—I mean the statecraft, the art of managing governments, states, unions, and so on—as it is dying out, diplomacy, the traditional profession, dies with it, because diplomacy is one of the aspects of statecraft. We know that from Talleyrand and from all those great diplomats of the past, including Henry Kissinger, who is not my favorite, but I cannot deny that he was the best professional.

## **#M2**

Yeah, he was good at what he did. Unfortunately, he used it for things that cost a lot of people's lives. But if we accept that analysis and we are living in a kakistocratic world, Europe with kakistocratic diplomacy—which also makes sense, right? If you have stupid leaders, the stupid leaders would naturally try to foster a very low-level kind of, you know, just people who just do whatever, like, "yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah." And no strategic vision, because all you do is look at Facebook and so on and see how it chimes in. You do echo chamber politics and echo chamber diplomacy.

Now, this is the demise of what good statecraft looks like. But... how would you communicate that? Or how should we, as people who actually speak on social platforms, communicate that to the Chinese, to the Russians, to Southeast Asians, to Africans—who still have a proper understanding of

statecraft and all the things we have already lost—to tell them, "Look, we might come back. I mean, in 20, 30, 40 years, but... it will still get worse, but at some point it will get better." How should we manage this period of our own kind of utter incapacity?

### **#M3**

Look, I am convinced that some individual countries in Europe still have some of these capacities. Not at the highest level, but they still have some remnants. And I hope that those individual countries—not only in Europe, by the way; if you check the recent visit of the Prime Minister of Australia to China, you would see some statecraft—not the highest level, but real statecraft and diplomacy. So the only way out of this situation, I think, for the long term—very long term—for Europe, is at the individual member states' level. Some member states can save something of confidentiality and something of the mutual confidence with China.

There will be limitations, but you can work on that. And until the European Union is reformed—fundamentally, structurally—or it goes through its demise, which is also a possibility, until then, at the level of the European Union, at the level of European integration, this problem is not solvable. It will not be solved. We will have a further root of confrontation, of misunderstanding, of mismanagement in our relations with China, with Russia, with India, with everybody else who is part of the so-called Global South or Global East, if you want to differentiate.

### **#M2**

It's just, yeah, as you said in the beginning, it's just an infuriating situation in which Europe still behaves as if it were, you know, 200 years ago and able to pee on everybody's leg and get away with it, when in fact now it's not a big bulldog anymore—it's a small little poodle. And the poodle still thinks of itself as a bulldog, right? That's the infuriating part. One question about your current prime minister and Viktor Orbán, because for all the grievances I have about him, one of the things he actually, in my view, did in a very diplomatic manner is he tried to bring back diplomacy with Russia. About a year ago, he was flying around and trying to get some form of negotiations going. He was heavily criticized inside the EU, inside NATO, but he did that. What's your assessment of these individual leaders? And now, I mean, he's from your country, yes, but apart from that?

### **#M3**

I think they do—not only Viktor Orbán, but also Robert Fico in Slovakia, who has a much weaker coalition, so his position inside the country is much weaker than Viktor Orbán's. But he still tries to follow the basic rule of diplomacy: representing national interest, full stop. It's only about that. All the other elements of diplomacy are simply technical—how do you do that? So I think they are a kind of hope that Europe cannot fall into the total abyss toward which we are moving. And they may

save some trust or some positive attitude in the world. But this action, this diplomatic activity of Viktor Orbán during the Hungarian presidency of the European Union, showed very clearly that there are limitations.

There are limitations for small countries. There are limitations for individual leaders—from any country, by the way—because the whole situation, the general situation, is bad. So what happened with this diplomatic activity is that it simply ran into walls everywhere. And now we see, by the way, with the recent developments, that it is not so simple, even. I am convinced that President Trump really wanted to have peace when he became president. During this diplomatic activity, Viktor Orbán even visited Donald Trump. What remained of that wish for peace in the case of Donald Trump? I think, personally, his wish for peace is still there, but the circumstances here make even the best wishes difficult.

By circumstances, I mean the American internal political situation, the pressure from the Europeans, and so on. What we see now is that the Trump administration slips back to the Biden administration's policy, except that they do not want to pay for it. It's that simple. Somebody else should pay for it. But basically, that's the limitation. So there are objective limits that you can try to push a little bit. There are walls that you may push, but if you run into a wall with your head, you may hurt yourself—especially if you are the head of a small country, which is, by the way, not in the center of the European Union, but on the periphery. That's how it is.

## **#M2**

Yes, and that's why it's so insanely dangerous to do this, because Europe will suffer—the individual countries, the individual states, and especially the individual citizens will, and already are, suffering. Thank God there are brave people.

## **#M3**

It's dangerous, but some people are brave, or they have the mission to be brave. Or maybe they don't have any other choice. I don't know. I don't have the information. But that's what happens. And thank God, there are some people who are brave enough to go against the stream, to try to swim against the stream. At least they create some chance for limiting the damages—yeah, unavoidable damages, which will come, which are coming very fast, not only with China, but with Russia, with India, with Brazil, with the whole Global South. We are heading for even bigger damages for Europe.

## **#M2**

Yeah, but the sad thing is that these ideologues who do these damaging things—like running into walls, banging your head into a wall—they will blame it, they will blame their wounds on the wall. They constantly do, and they don't learn. The capacity is not there. So the question then is: do you think that there will be diplomacy again with China and with Russia?

**#M3**

Yes, most probably. I will not be alive when it comes back. I'm 65, so I don't plan to live to 100 like Kissinger, or most probably I won't. But in due course, in due time, it will come back. It must come back. There is no other choice. What will be the price we will pay for this period? It may last 10 years, 15 years, 20 years, 30 years—God knows. The price will be enormous, but we'll have to pay for it. I mean the political price, the diplomatic price, and so on. I am a little pessimistic, or as the joke goes, I am a well-informed optimist.

**#M2**

Switch off your devices, everybody. The world is more bearable if we don't see the train crash. Anyhow, we have to discuss again, Ambassador Kusai, and maybe also add a few more European diplomats who do see through this fog. But people want to read more from you. Where should they go?

**#M3**

Oh, it's very difficult. I publish mainly in Hungarian. I published a few articles in Germany, which were translated because I don't speak or write German. So I am present in the Hungarian media from time to time, but I publish mainly in Hungarian. So for your international viewers, there will be a limitation because of that. I am old, so I don't plan to be extremely active.

**#M2**

You know, maybe we could organize a panel and include Ambassador Jack Matlock, who's 30 years your senior.

**#M3**

OK, I understand. You should understand, I am a well-informed optimist, so I will join very happily, but as for longevity, I have limitations.

**#M2**

All right, all right. But we hold on as long as we can. Ambassador S.Z. Kusai, thank you very much for your time today.

**#M3**

Thank you for your kind attention. Goodbye.