



# The Solari Report

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November 7, 2019

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## The Emerging Multipolar World: The Unraveling Accelerates with the Saker



**Guest:** the Saker: [Vineyard of the Saker](#)

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The Saker is an ex-NATO military analyst who lives in Florida. His family was Russian emigres to Switzerland where he grew up. He was educated in Europe and America. [About the Saker](#)

### **Discussion Topics:**

1. US withdrawal (even if partial) from Syria
2. Russia - next Kingmaker in the Middle East
3. Israel's unenviable situation after the end of any hope for an "independent Kurdistan" in Syria
4. Zelensky in Ukraine: Do Nazis matter? and: What has happened since Zelensky's election, and what can happen next?
5. The attempted coup (via the impeachment canard) against Trump: Why the Dems are a clear and immediate danger to the USA
6. North Stream II: What that means for Ukraine, Poland, the Baltic States, and the rest of Europe?
7. The Tulsi Gabbard phenomenon: Real or not?
8. New Russian weapons: Why anti-ballistic missiles?

### **Related Reading:**

#### **Sakers three books:**

The Essential Saker – [From the Trenches of the Emerging Multipolar World](#)

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**The Essential Saker III –** [Chronicling the tragedy, farce and collapse of the Empire in the era of Mr. MAGA](#)

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**C. Austin Fitts:** Ladies and gentlemen, welcome back to The Solari Report for our quarterly review with the Saker. The umbrella topic today is ‘The Unraveling Continues’ because the shift to the multipolar world is clearly happening.

So, Saker, you’ve been busy this quarter and I suspect it’s going to get even busier. You have published and written a great deal. So, welcome to The Solari Report, and it’s great to have you back.

**The Saker:** Thank you for having me. It’s a real pleasure every time.

**Fitts:** I don’t even know if I should call it the ‘withdrawal’ from Syria, but I want to start with the **US changes of policy in Syria** – whatever exactly they are. So, tell us what has happened in Syria over the last quarter and what it means.

**The Saker:** I think that with the US withdrawal from Syria, we could almost say that it is the loss of the US influence in the entire Middle East. Syria really was the climax of the US attempts to reform and make a new Middle East, and every single effort that the US made failed. The situation in Syria gradually became so bad that I don’t think it’s an issue of whether the US withdrawal will be complete or whether some will stay. I don’t see a policy here. I’ve been saying that for a long time. This is not policy; it’s purely reactive.

What we saw is, on one hand, the West’s entire plans failed, and that is all that we had. We had newspapers in Germany who wrote about the collapse and the complete failure of the West. That is an essential thing because in some way, we can see the Middle East as the center of the world, and there are resources there. It’s a volatile situation and an extremely dangerous situation with nuclear weapons there being held by states which are engaged in different levels of war.

The US was by far the biggest power that could really decide things there, and that entire policy collapsed. It was Der Spiegel (a German magazine) who wrote the capitulation of the West. The West Empire did, indeed, capitulate to an alliance of regional powers. I think that is a large development.

**Fitts:** Let me ask several questions. One of the debates or issues was that the ISIS fighters who had been captured were now somehow released. Is that the case?

**The Saker:** That is a big canard and it was actually used by both sides. The Kurds were trying to play a card with it, the US was trying to do the same, but this was just a wrapper around the important elements of the ground. The important element is that the Syrian army recovered an immense amount of territory – almost without firing a shot. Now they are fighting a little, but it was a huge victory.

This entire idea that the ISIS fighters would all be running around free was more of an attempt to try to find an argument to keep the Kurds in charge, and that obviously failed.

**Fitts:** Then we see Erdogan flexing his muscles and saying that he is moving in. So what did Turkey do?

**The Saker:** I think that Turkey did what everybody knew Turkey would do. Everybody has been predicting that for several years. The Turks had always said, “We are not going to accept the creation of any kind of **independent Kurdistan in Northern Syria**. This is a threat to us. If this problem is not solved, we will move in.”

Well, the Kurds were warned over and over about that. Their best and only chance was, of course, to side with the Syrian government forces. As soon as the Turks moved in, that is suddenly what they started considering.

It took that Turkish move to get them to be serious about negotiating with Damascus. The beauty of that is it is rather clear that the Russians, first and foremost, but also the Iranians, let the Turks do that. **The Russian-Arab Defense** are actually concentrated North of Syria, and there was even an incident reported that a pair of Turkish F-16’s were not intercepted, but they saw Russian Su-35’s coming in and had to turn back.

It looks like the Russians carefully tuned that operation to get the maximum political bang and minimal destruction and violence and actual shooting, and I think it worked.

**Fitts:** Then we see Trump say that he wants the Syrian oil. The implications were that we had enough troops on the ground to keep working certain oil fields. What was the truth there?

**The Saker:** First, this is a crucial thing that I always repeat. **The US, Saudi Arabia, and Israel do not have a credible ‘boots on the ground’** force. They have a very bad time as soon as they engage somebody who is capable and willing of resisting like the Syrians or the Iranians or Hezbollah. So, this entire boots on the ground thing; there is a reason the US evacuated when the Turks started coming in. It’s not that they are so powerful. The Turks were somewhat easy about it. There was an instance or two where they actually fired at US forces. So that is silly.

Second, recently the Syrian Arab News Agency (SANA) published photographs showing that already part of the oil rigs are passing over to the Syrian government forces. So, it is unclear how much of these oil rigs – wherever they are located – are still ‘protected’ by the United States, but it is probably going to result in nothing. And how would they export from there? They are going to be attacked by everybody, and everybody will see it.

I think that it was just Trump’s usual bluster.

**Fitts:** You had a great interview that you published of **Assad** in October, and I used a quote on the commentary from it:

*I say that **Trump is the best American President**, not because his policies are good, but because he is the most transparent President... Trump talks transparently, saying that what we want is oil. This is the reality of American policy, at least since WWII.*

**The Saker:** He is right.

**Fitts:** I thought that if you look at the transparency that Trump is bringing – good, bad, or ugly – it is definitely ‘stirring the pot’. We seem to be getting closer to having a real discussion about what is really happening. I thought that was a really interesting interview.

**The Saker:** I will say something in defense of Trump here. I am very critical of many things that he does, but the point is that he did not go to war in Syria so far, but he might do it in the future; never say never. But so far, he hasn’t done anything like that. He has not gone to war with the DPRK; he has not gone to war with Iran; he has not gone to war with Venezuela; and he is not going to war with Syria.

This might change, but I prefer a President who has a lot of bluster and silly statements but who doesn't start a war than a very slick salesman who pretends to be peace-loving and a very democratic person, and then suddenly he starts wars all over the place.

I think that there is something to be said objectively that Trump did right, and what he did right was he did not start these wars yet – 'yet' being the key word.

**Fitts:** Right, although if you look at how many soldiers he took out of Syria, the next week he put more than that into Saudi Arabia. It's not that our commitment to the Middle East has dropped in terms of numbers of soldiers.

**The Saker:** Yes, but you know that these numbers of soldiers are irrelevant because there are already very large forces there, and it makes no difference.

What have these forces achieved? Adding a couple of thousand men is purely PR militarily speaking. In the Middle East, there are two levels that are completely different. One is what the public is told and shown, and it's all a 'Kabuki' of messages sent left and right, and then there is the military reality. For instance, my favorite example is the Israelis will say that they bombed Syria hundreds of times. Well, where is the results on the ground from all of these bombings?

**Fitts:** Didn't they kill many civilians?

**The Saker:** Yes, but militarily that is useless. You can kill as many civilians as you want, but if anything, that just strengthens the result of the other side. We have seen that over and over again. In terms of achieving something, what the Israeli air force did in Syria, we will never know exactly what they did because most of that is kept highly secret. But the point is that it made no military difference.

Then when the **Russian air force started up in Syria**, it made a difference. There is a reason for that. There are always those two levels, and what Trump did by sending those troops to Saudi Arabia is just a Kabuki, "We are going to stand by our allies."

I hate to say it, but there is really nothing happening.

**Fitts:** If you go back to 9/11 and the ‘**seven countries in five years’ plan**, for some reason they wanted to control seven countries in five years and get them into their version of the central banking system. They spent many, many years and \$7 trillion that we know of – and I am sure there was much more covertly – and all they managed to do was create a huge mess.

**The Saker:** I think it’s even much more serious than just saying that it’s a mess. The real core reason for the tensions and hostility between **Israel and Iran** from the Israeli point of view, – which I never believed and I still don’t believe that Iran had or has or ever will have a nuclear weapons program-and I believe that the Israelis know that it is not true. But the real problem they have with Iran is that it is an Islamic republic which is openly defying an Anglo-Zionist empire, openly denouncing Israeli policies in Palestine, and getting away with it and actually being successful.

When this whole ‘seven countries in five years’ program began, the real target was always Tehran, and the real goal of Israel was to hit Iran so hard that Iran would not have that status of local power.

Now see what happened. Iran is now beyond any doubt the number one power in the Middle East. This entire plan removed Saddam Hussein, the biggest enemy of Iran, gave Iran a big chunk of sympathetic forces in Syria and Lebanon, etc. It is a complete failure of the crucial objective controlling Iran.

**Fitts:** So how are the sanctions impacting Iran now?

**The Saker:** That I don’t know because I hear completely contradictory things. I think sanctions do have an impact. From what I understand, the sanctions on Iran are extremely hard. But Iran is trying to move out from that zone and move into economic ties with China to try to stay out of the US-controlled zones. My understanding is that, of course, there is a very real impact, but not enough to stop anything.

**Fitts:** I believe this comes down to the relationship. You have written very eloquently about **the growing ties between Russia and China**. If Russia and China can create payment mechanisms to trade with Iran without the dollar system being able to bite, and they are willing to do it, essentially we are engineering Iran into their arms. That is going to be the saving grace. That is the only way that they ultimately economically thrive given the sanctions.

**The Saker:** I completely agree with you. I always say that I am a big supporter of sanctions against Russia and that I want them to be stricter because these sanctions help Russia move out of the sphere controlled by the US.

**Fitts:** Absolutely.

**The Saker:** It makes Russia do the right things. And Russia, China, Iran, and Turkey are also participating in that as well as India. So, all these states are trying to find mechanisms to either use local currencies or find some way of bypassing the systems controlled by the West.

**Fitts:** You are going to turn Russia into an ‘agricultural juggernaut’.

I will give you a little-known interesting factoid. One of the reasons Russia has been able to really build a much more self-sufficient economy is because the **‘Rape of Russia’** resulted in Russia not having any debt and not being able to access the debt market. So as ugly as it was, it got them off the debt model. That put them in a position to then build more self-sufficiency with the sanctions.

The more America has done to harm Russia, the stronger Russia gets in terms of its model. It is very interesting to watch.

**The Saker:** Absolutely, there is no denying it.

**Fitts:** I have to turn to one of the bright spots in the last three months of news. **Netanyahu lost the election** and failed to put together a coalition government, and he is now waiting to hear whether or not he is going to be indicted. I have no idea. That would be great news to see Netanyahu indicted.

**The Saker:** He needs to be indicted for the right reasons, and unfortunately, that is not going to happen. Most importantly, he is guilty of the ultimate crime in international law, which is the crime of aggression.

The entire Israeli society is guilty of that, but whether it is him or another person, it is not going to get better over there.

**Fitts:** If you have another person, will that person have the network? Part of the problem is that Israel is not Israel; Israel networks into a whole international network of people who want to own big equity positions on the Silk Road and the global economy, and make money on the national security state and on and on.

Netanyahu for many decades was very seriously networked and had very strong relationships with everybody. I don't think that whoever replaces him is going to have the kind of relationships with the big money people in Beverly Hills that Netanyahu had.

**The Saker:** It's the devil you know versus the devil you don't know. The changes were not started in the past. Sometimes you have labor come into power and actually be more aggressive than Likud. There's not much hope.

**Fitts:** I am talking totally as a bystander who is just observing, but it seems that if I was Israel, I would feel very, very afraid because they have made a big mess politically in the United States, have created huge anger throughout the Middle East, and were really the leader of the 'seven countries in five years', and have been massively in violation of many international laws many, many times. They have been the 'bull in the China shop', and have been able to talk the Americans into doing amazing things. Now they're just hanging out there, and the plan failed. They are now a little 'guy' sitting in the Middle East, and have a lot of people fed up with them.

**The Saker:** If they look at their 'kind-of' ally, Saudi Arabia, they are now clearly courting Russia and trying to get Russia to provide assurances, guarantees, or technology or military systems. They are trying to make Russia a partner because they also know the writing on the wall.

The Israelis talking to Russia is easy, but the other thing that they really cannot do is talk to Iran, and this is what they should do.

**Fitts:** Why won't they do that?

**The Saker:** Because of their ideology. Their ideology makes it absolutely impossible for them to admit they are not the greatest, smartest, biggest, and sole democracy in the Middle East and a superpower, and all the rest of that racist nonsense they believe in. If they wanted to negotiate with Iraq, they would have to admit that their policy of 'we can strike anybody at any time' didn't work. They have been in violation of international law for decades. They are by far the state that is completely rogue that openly has only contempt for international law and nearly much the rest of the planet. This is not a good negotiating position.

If they can't just terrorize everybody by unleashing violence, then they don't have anything left. What will they negotiate with? What would be their negotiating position?

They are in a really bad situation now because, exactly as you said, their grand strategy has completely collapsed. That is huge.

**Fitts:** One of the reasons I go back to this Assad quote is because I believe the **Israelis interfered enormously with the US elections**, and that was why Trump won. Yet Trump's transparency, and the canard about the Russians engineering the election has really brought out a massive amount of information and background about how the Israelis and that network do engineer elections. And Trump hasn't given them their war.

I wonder if the strategy of backing Trump is working for them. It is going to be interesting.

So, let's turn to **Ukraine**. US politics aside, what is really happening on the ground in Ukraine now?

**The Saker:** What is going on is something extremely interesting and, in a way, tragic. **Zelensky was elected** with a huge mandate of the people. Clearly, the will of the people was to stop the war. That was the first thing. Then there was this big issue: Can he take the first initial steps to start building some kind of mechanism to finally act on the Minsk agreement and the Steinmeier formula. What we saw is that a comic can be brilliant in stand-up comedy, but they are not made to be a leader.

Basically, he was 'speaking from both sides of his mouth'. He tried to get some things done, and he did. There was an exchange of prisoners and that worked. But the separation of forces has been several weeks, and it is still going on. It appears that he doesn't have control of the situation. There is no real state functioning there, and there is no policy either. There is a complete collapse. I think that Ukraine is in freefall right now.

The key problem is that, like the Israelis, for ideological reasons they cannot negotiate directly with the Novorussians. Their thesis has always been: It's Russia, Russia, Russia. But to actually get anything done, you need to talk to the locals.

They are not willing to do that, and those willing to do that are immediately denounced as ‘traders’ and ‘agents of Putin’ and you can actually face criminal charges for even saying that you have negotiated with these people.

**Fitts:** It’s increasingly looking like there are more people who want to fight than eat.

**The Saker:** I think they are different people. The majority wants to eat, and the minority wants to fight, but the minority which wants to fight has the guns. The majority doesn’t have guns and that is the real tragedy.

**Fitts:** Let’s look at **US politics**. It took us two and a half years to realize that the idea of the Russians rigging the elections was absurd, and everyone knew it all along. But that was the tactic the Democrats were going to use to **impeach Trump**. It didn’t work, and it failed. If anything came out, there is a real case there were serious laws broken in trying to package it together and get it to work.

Now we have a new one, and that is a whistleblower who is accusing Trump of inappropriate behavior vis-à-vis getting Ukraine to investigate what appears like Biden’s multiple law breakings vis-à-vis Ukraine and his son, Hunter Biden.

Tell us about Ukraine in US politics. What in the world is going on?

**The Saker:** What is going on is exactly as you said. **Ukraine is used by the Democrats** to try to remove Trump from power by saying that he did something inappropriate.

If you look at the summary of the conversation, I don’t think we ever were shown the word-for-word transcript – if it ever was made – but from what the transcript that was released said, I certainly don’t see anything wrong by asking a country what the citizens of the United States are doing there. It is done by all of the countries. They all exchange that kind of information and that is no big deal. There is nothing original here.

It is fundamentally an attempt to find another way to say, “Not my President,” and reject him and try to hurt him for the next elections. I think that is all the Democrats want. They know the impeachment is not going to pass the Senate, don’t they?

**Fitts:** I think they do, although you have real dissatisfaction with Trump among some of the moderate Republicans. If you look at all the moderate Republicans, they are resigning for multiple reasons.

I think there is a part of the Republican Party that is frustrated with Trump, and they have some legitimate complaints. Trump can be his own worst enemy, and if you look at the situation with Ukraine, I have to tell you that there was a way to handle it that wouldn't expose him. He did it in a way that exposed him and he wasn't thinking smart. That is what it appears to me.

**The Saker:** I think that in most cases, Trump doesn't come across as very smart, but all the grievances that I hear against him – including my own, and I have a long list of things which I am unhappy with him – they are political. Political grievances are not a reason to engage in an impeachment. That is what is so shocking to me.

I am appalled to see that the Democrats are actually willing to break the laws of this country for pure political gain. They are hurting the country while trying to hurt Trump. It is ridiculous.

I really am shocked by that.

**Fitts:** I was in Europe trying to understand what in the world was going on. I was in the Netherlands, and then Switzerland, and then France. Everywhere I went, as you watched it, it seemed like they had either lost their minds or they were regressing to childhood.

In other words, these were people who were incapable. **The political process had lost its ability to deal with the real problems.** So, all they could do was fight over control and make things up so they could fight over control.

If you look below the surface, there are many things going on that indicate the people really running the bureaucracy are moving ahead and dealing with real problems very silently and secretly.

Congress has been cut out of voting for the wars. It has been cut out of voting for appropriations now with FASAB 56. If you look at something like the Paris Agreement, it has been cut out of the treaties. What exactly does Congress do?

If it doesn't appropriate, if it doesn't vote for the wars, and it doesn't approve the treaties, what does it do?

**The Saker:** I think it is in the business of impeaching Presidents now. That is what they have been most active at. Have they done anything of true importance? When was the last time that Congress passed something really relevant that would actually make a difference here?

**Fitts:** October 4, 2018, the General Accounting Office, now called the General Accountability Office, acting on behalf of Congress and the Office of Management and Budget adopted **FASAB 56** and completely turned the entire management of money by the Federal government 180 degrees. It was one of the biggest things that Congress and the White House have done in 100 years. It's almost as big as going to war in World War II.

What they essentially said is that the executive branch can spend whatever they want however they want, and they can keep it secret, and they can keep it secret from us. That is my interpretation of it.

If you look at that exact moment, we now see massive changes. I think that the Ukraine story is in the middle of it. If you look at the groups of people who I believe were laundering the money that was being pulled out – remember we have \$21 trillion missing, and that money went missing during the Clinton, Bush, and Obama terms with the biggest pots going missing during Obama – and you look at who the number one donor was to the Clinton Foundation, it was Ukraine. I think they were laundering a large amount of that money through Ukraine.

As soon as they passed FASAB 56, I think it was responsible for Jeffrey Epstein's death because he was a critical part of those networks.

You are watching a clean-up of those networks happening one way or another, and the fighting that is going on covertly; we now have nine New York policemen who have been suicided. I don't know if that is 9/11 or the Weiner laptop or the Epstein case, but there is a street war occurring which is very hard to understand or see. I think that when FASAB 56 passed, Jeffrey Epstein was a dead man.

This is a very revolutionary change because it says that the White House can do whatever it wants secretly globally. It's an infinite amount of secret money for secret armies.

**The Saker:** But really it's not only the White House. First of all, through that process – this cleaning up that you are mentioning – we see there is no separation of power in the country anymore. They are not keeping each other in check; they are working together hand in hand.

Congress votes itself out of its own powers and oversight authority. So, what we are seeing is the only possible conclusion from that is that the real power is neither the Congress nor the White House, but it is somewhere else. That is actually helpful. That is to some extent in the same trend as when the concept of the one percent came out.

The real power is much lower than one percent, but conceptually it shows there is a power of a tiny minority. We see that again.

So, the real question is: **Who is running the country?** They are showing their true face by their actions, and I think that is a very good development.

**Fitts:** I think there are two things happening: One is that I think the reason Congress and Trump are talking about things that are irrelevant is because the real power has left – exactly as you say. So now FASAB 56 has turned over complete power to the deep state. The question is: Who are they?

The 'who' question is very important. One of the things that we are seeing is that as soon as that passed, numerous people fall – Weinstein, Epstein – and all sorts of stories come out on Google, Facebook, and now ABC News/Walt Disney and whistleblowers. It looks like the 'pilgrims', as Cynthia McKinney would say, are very much going after the Ziocons. There is a real political struggle here. My guess is that FASAB 56 gives the deep state – particularly the central bankers – much more power and control. Now the people who run the central bank can absolutely control the bureaucracy on the fiscal side.

**The Saker:** The good news is that when there is a crisis – and there is most definitely a crisis, just not of the empire or a profound one – the elites who typically run the country that is in a crisis turn on each other. We see some very, very nasty fights taking place between various groups. But that all brings them to the surface, and that is very helpful.

**Fitts:** That is what it looks like to me. The people who were leading ten years ago are going at each other with knives. It's far from over. That is one of the reasons, with the 2020 elections, even though the people running don't have the power to actually change things, they do have the power to bring transparency to things.

Let's skip ahead and talk about **Tulsi Gabbard**. She is one person who is trying to bring real transparency on the real issues.

**The Saker:** Personally, I like her very much. I like most of what she says, but not all. She also had a moment where she was trying to prove that she is not a Russian agent. She did vote once on a Zionist resolution which left me unhappy with her, but I would say that by and large, she is heading in the right direction.

We said that all the secret documents about 9/11 should be released, and she said that because of Al-Qaeda and the attacks. She didn't go into the 'truther camp', but she at least raised the possibility of an investigation.

She is distinctly different from everybody else so far. I would not endorse her, but I am watching her with great interest. Particularly what fascinates me is the way that the liberal media reacts to her.

You have a woman who is an ethnic minority who is a liberal and who served in the military. She would be the perfect candidate. If the Democratic Party was really what it pretends to be, they would immediately endorse her, make her run, and she would do terrific. But no, they are turning against her and bashing her more than the Republicans do. That tells you plenty about what the Democratic Party has become today.

**Fitts:** Everybody – with rare exception – is on board for more war. It is interesting. One of the reasons Trump won was because he promised that he wouldn't be like that. He certainly talked war, but if you look at what he has done, he has been able to pull back from going towards war. The people who backed him are not getting the war they wanted.

The dependency on wasteful war is just off the charts, and Tulsi Gabbard is the only person bringing that up and trying to get people to face it.

Let me turn to the **North Stream**. Much of what we are watching are the politics of energy. Energy is very interesting now because, for the places in the world – and it's far from everywhere – that can do renewables, the prices are dropping dramatically. The shale prices are dropping. The US is trying to be more energy independent. So, the energy position is shifting, but the dollar is still very much tied to the trade in energy. So when you talk energy, you not only talk about the energy and the price of energy, but you are also talking about the currency.

So, we see the final approvals going forward for **North Stream II**. Russia has enormous oil and gas reserves. Russia's ability to deliver that gas to Germany and Europe is critical. So, tell us about pipeline politics. What is happening now?

**The Saker:** I think that it is critical for Europe because European gas extraction is going down, and they want a reliable and cheap solution for their energy needs.

For Russia, I think the future is in the south and the east in terms of energy policy. That is where I think the economy will eventually be the most active and the strongest growing.

It is far more important for Europe to achieve the North Stream II than it is for Russia.

**Fitts:** Isn't it mostly Germany?

**The Saker:** Yes, because the European economy is mostly Germany.

**Fitts:** There was an announcement that Germany is planning on doubling its budget for the EU.

If Brexit really continues to happen, I think Germany is just going to keep emerging as the clear leader of Europe.

**The Saker:** Yes, but they have a political problem. They still are very much under the US thumb – more than the French, for instance. Look at the German political leaders. I don't think that any of them have credibility.

Europe desperately needs a new generation of politicians to finally start looking after European national interests and not just sheepishly executing whatever order comes out of DC. That is not happening yet, and now, Europe is in complete disarray because of that.

Somewhere the Europeans, the Israelis, and the Kurds all made the same mistake. They completely relied on the United States for their future, and the US defaulted on all three. Now all three are in a very, very serious crisis. It is going to be extremely hard to change course and act on past mistakes.

**Fitts:** The question that keeps coming up wherever you are – and all year long it came up when I was in Asia and it came up when I was in Europe and it came up in the United States – is the question of who is really doing this. Who is really in control?

I will never forget being in Italy and somebody saying, “They run, we elect them, and then they do what the last guy did, and then it was a complete waste of time. What we want to know is: Who is really running things?”

I think that is one of the good things about Trump. He is getting people asking about the real questions. Who is really running it?

**The Saker:** And I would say the same thing in Europe. The disaster of the immigration crisis proved that European leaders are completely unable to stand up for their own obvious self-interest. They are executing somebody else’s agenda. So, that sense of being ruled by an up-top elite I call the ‘Nomenklatura’. The Soviet Union had a list of officials who were considered part of the official state elite. That is what we have in the West.

The West is run by a class, not by a group of people; it’s a class. It’s ‘Nomenklatura’, which is transnational and it acts on a very specific ideology and world view which is not at all what the people in the West elected these people to do.

**Fitts:** You almost wonder if they don’t have the time or the tolerance to understand the world in all of its complexity. The easiest thing to do is just to centralize control and let everybody live with whatever the damage is done by a model that is too centrally-controlled and too simple.

Let's turn to the **Russians**. The Russians have been working hard to build new weapons. I try to watch and understand the debate about what weapons people really have. If there was one piece of intelligence that I wish I had, it would be an accurate briefing of who has what weapons and what the state of play is in the weaponry. But that is your background and expertise. So, talk about what the Russians have been doing in terms of military prowess and what it means to the balance of power.

**The Saker:** The most interesting thing that happened with Russia is it happened with a very small military budget. Depending on how you calculate it, it is less than one-tenth of what the US has.

Russia has deployed some very, **very sophisticated weapons**, and in all sorts of different fields, ranging from strategic strike drones to fifth-generation fighters to advanced air defense systems to hypervelocity missiles and coastal defense systems. It is very impressive to see the quality of what Russia produces.

The problem with Russia is the quantity. She still has a hard time having sufficient weapons because now Russia has to produce much of everything with import substitutions. The sanctions hurt the Russian military too, by the way. The severance of contracts with Ukraine was bad for Russia, but Russia has recovered and has done a remarkable job. Now it's just a matter of quantity.

**Fitts:** You have **Russia drawing closer to China** and doing a variety of different agreements with China, and then Russia becoming the new peacemaker in the Middle East. What do the weapons contribute to making those two things happen or improving Russia's standing in the world?

**The Saker:** I think it's a combination of several things. Definitely the Russian weapons are designed to fight and win and not just to make somebody rich through military budgets, but it is also Russia's commitment to their allies. The way Russia saved Syria is something that everybody in that region noticed. It was a very sharp contrast to the US guarantees to their allies.

It's a combination of these two things – **the political will and the weapons systems** – which are very, very effective.

The reputation of the US weapons system has been vastly exaggerated by a very efficient propaganda machine. When ‘push comes to shove’ and there is actually an enemy on the other side that has reasonable capabilities and is reasonably willing to fight, they will suddenly see that they are not military weapons at all as we saw by the strikes on Saudi Arabia.

Even the Houthis could do that, and they are a supposedly weak party in the region compared to the multi-billion dollar military budgets that Israel or Saudi Arabia or the United Arab Emirates has or any of them. Yet they are succeeding because in their case, it is mostly Iranian weapons and Iranian know-how and advice. Yet the Iranians seem to be doing very well against the US in that standoff.

**Fitts:** Can you say a little about what you’ve written about the Russian-Chinese partnership and why it is unique?

**The Saker:** It is unique because there is no formal alliance as of yet. Instead of entering a treaty or creating some kind of organization, Russia and China took the fundamental strategic decision to act in a symbiotic relationship. Russia provides China exactly what China needs, and China provides Russia what she needs. The combination of the two is like little puzzle pieces; it’s a perfect fit.

I think that what we are having here is something that I can’t even think of a previous example in history where two ex-empires decide to go into a symbiotic relationship, and one which is not – for now – being spelled out in the context of a formal treaty or alliance. I would argue that it is actually a deeper relationship.

**Fitts:** It is a very practical relationship.

**The Saker:** For instance, Russia has offered to help China build antiballistic missile systems around the Chinese capital. So, we are talking about extremely advanced projects. They are working together on airlines. These are huge prospects for collaboration, and I think that it is only going to get deeper and deeper.

**Fitts:** Right, and it is happening financially, too. We see creation of offices in the two places that can swap gold and do other very meaningful transactions and things.

What it appears to me is that they are completely focused on highly practical project-by-project, step-by-step things. The interesting thing about that kind of partnership is that when you are helping each other get something done on all the practical needs that you have day-to-day, you end up building a web that is very hard to tear apart.

In other words, you have so many interdependencies in a practical way, and you do it so quietly that it is a real merger of interests, and it is very, very hard to tear apart.

**The Saker:** I think that is absolutely crucial. In the future, very vertical pretend alliances like NATO where it is essentially being run by one party, are a thing of the past. If you think about the Cold War between the Soviets and the United States, you are playing a zero-sum game; anything that is good for one side was considered bad by the other.

After the Cold War, I think that the US stayed in that paradigm mentally. The Chinese and the Russians did something different. Instead of trying to oppose the US on every single point on the planet, they instead decided to build in their own little part of the world an alternative – an economic alternative, a political alternative, and a military alternative. That is what we are seeing. We are seeing a multipolar world emerging which is not directly challenging the empire, but it is just offering us an alternative, and that is very, very powerful and hard to stop.

**Fitts:** I believe the most important part is the **prospering of the Russian Orthodox Church**. If anybody is protecting and nurturing Christianity globally, it is the Russians. Is that not true?

**The Saker:** I would say that this is a simplification of reality. I think that Russia is officially and very openly protecting the rights of people and ethnic groups and religious groups to have their own civilizational model and their own values, and not be told that there is only one right way and only one form of human rights. But I don't think that it is necessarily Orthodox exclusively or even mainly.

There is still a minority of people in Russia who are profoundly religious. For most people, if they see themselves Orthodox, they are culturally Orthodox. So, there is a strong sense of sympathy for conservative Christian traditional values in Russia, but I wouldn't put it as one religion or one country that is the sole defender of Christianity worldwide because that is not quite the case.

**Fitts:** I would say that Putin has been one of the few leaders who openly defends traditional Judeo-Christian values. What we have seen across most of the politicians in the West is an assault and an effort to destroy Judeo-Christian values.

**The Saker:** I'm not sure that I know that there is something called 'Judeo-Christian values', but the West is in a post-Christian phase already. Russia is different because Russia was under communist rule in the same way as Russia during the Middle Ages was. There really was no renaissance in Russia. Historically, this allowed Russia to not be a post-Christian society.

I think that it is a question mark of where Russia is headed. Indeed, there are two possibilities that Russia will become a majority Christian country again, but it is still a process. We are not there yet, and it's a moving target.

**Fitts:** Let me turn to the 2020 campaign. Is it okay if I ask you questions about the 2020 campaign?

**The Saker:** Absolutely.

**Fitts:** One of the things that I find appalling is the extent to which the debate is on things which are irrelevant and off-topic to what is really going on and to what is really important. One of the things that we have decided to do is every week publish a poster. We call the meme, 'My 2020', and the first poster was some young person standing there saying, "As far as my student loan debt, take it out of the \$21 trillion."

Every week it's something that ties the \$21 trillion back to pension funds not having money or Flint not having a water system or something like that. The one that is up this week is a really handsome black man saying, "I don't need affirmative action; I want the \$21 trillion back."

So, it's to focus people on the financial aspects. That is one issue.

I'm a great believer that real solutions require transparency, and for the first time in many, many years, I am seeing an interest in more and more Americans in understanding what the real issues are.

For the 2020 campaign, I am not saying that elections are important in America, but they are a time when Americans get together and discuss issues. It is an education process for many, many Americans because they spend so much time on it.

If we were going to try to inject into the 2020 campaign some real discussions about the really important issues, what would you recommend the top three to be? What would you inject into the discussion?

**The Saker:** First of all, would be **respect for the rule of law**. That is something that applies to the country inside, with civil rights and all the violations that we see by the state of these rights, and international law. Right now, I see the United States has given up on both of them, and we are seeing the 'law of the jungle' on both levels. I think it profoundly affects the country. So, that would be one issue I would definitely bring up. I would ask politicians straight to their face, and hammer in that if something is illegal, you can't do it.

I think this is next to the topic of peace and imperialism as the two most important ones. The economy of the political system and everything here relies completely on constant fear and warfare. That should be denounced and is the key reason for the collapse.

**Fitts:** And it is getting worse, not better.

Let's assume that we will either have Trump win the election or a Democratic candidate, and we don't know who that would be. If the Democrats win, what is your expectation? If the war machine wants war, where will they go to war and how will they go to war?

Remember that they don't necessarily want war, but they do want war spending.

**The Saker:** I think that **if the Democrats win there is going to be war in the Middle East**. That is all they know how to do. They don't have any concept at all of negotiating. It is going to be war in the Middle East, and I think that is a very serious danger, unless the candidate is Tulsi Gabbard, which I don't think is going to happen.

All of the other candidates' rhetoric is complete messianic, supremacist, imperialist, and every bit as sick as we have heard from the worst Neocons. That is mainstream now.

**Fitts:** So, Hillary Clinton is saying that she might run. I doubt it, but let's just pretend that Hillary Clinton or Joe Biden becomes President and they want war in the Middle East. What does war in the Middle East look like?

I don't understand what that looks like other than dropping a nuclear bomb.

**The Saker:** There are other options in theory. For instance, the option that the Israelis would want is to have a strong air campaign against Iran to 'disarm' and take care of the nuclear program. In reality, they want to destroy as much of their economy as possible and make the Iranian people pay for voting for the 'wrong people' and supporting them. That has always been the biggest risk in the Middle East, and that still is a risk. If that happens, the entire region will explode immediately.

**Fitts:** And if it explodes, what happens?

**The Saker:** I do have to say that I don't think the Israelis have that kind of military. If we go down that road, you are going to have Iran backed by Hezbollah and backed by the Houthis. There is going to be a very, very serious war locally, and I think that the Israelis will use nuclear weapons as a last resort. I don't think that it is going to help them militarily at all.

It is all fine and good to have nuclear weapons, but you need to be able to strike something that gives you a military advantage, not just killing people.

If they are crazy enough to lob a nuke into Iran, you know what is going to happen to Tel Aviv. You don't need nukes to destroy a city or even a country. Israel right now has to think about its survival as a country, and I think it is very much in doubt in the midterm.

**Fitts:** Midterm is how long? Ten years?

**The Saker:** Yes. I **don't see Israel as a viable entity in the Middle East** at all unless it completely changed its political culture, and that is not happening anytime soon.

**Fitts:** It's interesting. I mentioned all the different things that are rolling out in terms of FASAB 56. If the US doesn't need much covert money laundering and covert operations that they used to get from Israel or related networks, it changes the power dynamic. I don't think there is any way to understand which way it will go except to see how events unfold. We have a good deal to watch for 2020.

The last question that I have for you before we close is: How are you going to stay sane during the campaign?

**The Saker:** I thought that I could just ignore it entirely and that would be the best option, but since Tulsi Gabbard got involved, I am still keeping an eye on her. I am also – with horror – keeping an eye on the Democratic Party and its attempt to impeach Trump or, more accurately, to use an impeachment procedure to hurt Trump because I think they are destroying the policy of the country here. I think that this is truly, truly tragic.

The fact that almost nobody in the media has a serious problem with that tells us something about the media also. This country is in terrible shape, and I am afraid for next year.

**Fitts:** There is a serious problem at the top. That is why I think it will be interesting to see the way the clean-up goes.

I want to briefly turn to your books. The major problem that I have with your books is that I have read all three, and I need another one.

You have written *The Essential Saker*, *The Essential Saker II*, and *The Essential Saker III*. They are all available on your website. Talk a little about how the books are doing and how we can acquire them.

**The Saker:** They are doing well. You can obtain them straight off my website which is [www.TheSaker.is](http://www.TheSaker.is). Some of them are ready for a free download, and the paper ones you can still order.

**Fitts:** I have to tell you that the thing that I love about them is they take you into all these different parts of the world, and you can't travel everywhere, but they take you into different parts of the world, and you see the different cultures and policies and politics interacting at a very granular level. But it's human, and the stories are great.

If you want to understand the emerging multipolar world and you don't have time to read thousands of pages, it's a wonderful way to plug into a whole different way of looking at the world that is so much more compatible with understanding the world around us. They are just a fun read, and I couldn't put them down.

I think that I told you the story about how one of them got stolen.

**The Saker:** Yes. You tried printing the entire book, right?

**Fitts:** I was reading it on the plane coming back from L.A. It was the third book, and I was making notes all over the book. I had read everything but 100 pages.

It was in my Bean bag and I stopped to get groceries on the way home from the plane, and the next morning when I opened the bag it was gone. I was in Kroger's for 30 minutes, and I thought, "Wow! Somebody really wants to know what I think about Saker's book!"

The underlined parts were very, very important. So, if you haven't read *The Essential Saker III*, you need to read it, but first read *I* and *II*. Please give us your URL again, Saker.

**The Saker:** It's [www.TheSaker.is](http://www.TheSaker.is) (as in Iceland).

**Fitts:** I have to make one other plug. Not only do I love your website and all the different articles, but I love the community and the discussion. On the internet you have the richest discussion going of the emerging multipolar world, and the moderation doesn't stop any of the authenticity or the quality of the debate, but it does stop the trolls.

The power of the conversation there is enormously informative. So check out Saker's website. When you do, drop down and start reading some of the comments. It is really one of the most intelligent communities occurring on the internet. I just want to thank you for it because you make it all available, and I know that it is a tremendous amount of work.

**The Saker:** Yes, but I owe it entirely to the head of moderation and the moderation team which entirely deserves the credit for all that. Their work is extremely hard, and they get a lot of nastiness for doing it well. I also thank them deeply.

**Fitts:** You know what? It shows when you go to your website and you read the comments. What you realize is that people really want to have a serious discussion. If we have ways and forms where we can have these serious discussions, we all learn. We get smarter and we get better. We can solve all these problems, but it is going to take bringing transparency and it is going to take an honest discussion.

I have learned plenty from reading the comments at your website, and they have really changed my mind on numerous issues.

**The Saker:** The guest authors that I have, I am really lucky to have. I have superb guest authors, and almost every day there is an article by them.

**Fitts:** Check out the website and get the books. Saker, we will talk to you next quarter. I'm sure that we will have plenty to talk about.

**The Saker:** Probably! We live in interesting times.

**Fitts:** Have a great day!

## **MODIFICATION**

Transcripts are not always verbatim. Modifications are sometimes made to improve clarity, usefulness and readability, while staying true to the original intent.

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