



The Solari Report

JANUARY 29, 2015

The State of Europe with John Laughland



The State of Europe

January 29, 2015

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Ladies and Gentlemen, it's my pleasure to welcome to The Solari Report John Laughland who has joined us once before. He is the Director of Studies at the Institute of Democracy in Cooperation in Paris, France. He is coming into us from Paris. He is a historian, he is an author, a very successful journalist, and he has authored many excellent books.

The first one that I read of his was *The Tainted Source: the Undemocratic Origins of the European Idea*, published in 1997. I first met John in London and heard his description of the challenges that he foresaw with the European Union.

John, you've predicted it. It was prophetic. I'm not happy about that.

JOHN LAUGHLAND: I wrote mainly about the constitutional aspects, but I did have a chapter on the currency side. In the run-up to the introduction of the currency union of European Union I wrote an awful lot of articles for the *Wall Street Journal* about the problem's debt and how the European Union was trying to resolve it, and how in fact they were disobeying their own rules on debt. Indeed, you've used the word 'prophetic', but I'm sure if I dusted off those old articles now – nearly 20 years after the event – they would indeed seem prophetic because of course the single currency, the Euro, is floundering on the fact that the debt rules have never been respected.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Right, and of course, this new announcement from the ECB is more of the same.

JOHN LAUGHLAND: Yes.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: I mentioned earlier to you that Richard Haass, who is the



head of the Council of Foreign Relations here in the November/December issue of *Foreign Affairs* published an article called *The Unraveling*. He closed it by saying that the Bretton Woods system is breaking down and we're on our way to a New World Disorder. I interpreted it as a warning to the neocons to stand down, that they were creating too much disorder in the world and that where America was headed was not in a good place.

I know one of the reasons I wanted you to come on with us is I've been watching, of course, the Russian sanctions roll out. It's part of a process, particularly since 9/11 when America is trying very hard to assert dominance in Eurasia, and that is coming at greater and greater cost to Europe.

Maybe we could start with the United States' effort in Europe and Eurasia and what is happening in Europe and what it means to Europe.

JOHN LAUGHLAND: I think that is a very good place to start, and I particularly like the remark you've put into your question about how Europe pays the price – as it were – for these policies.

The immediate relationship of American foreign policy to Russia and the Ukraine business is that in the minds of people like Zbigniew Brzezinski who, although he doesn't formally belong to the neocon club, nonetheless has formulated a lot of ideas that have found support both among neocons and in the American foreign policy establishment generally.

In his famous book, *The Grand Chessboard*, which is worth re-reading, described Ukraine as America's bridgehead into Eurasia. In the logic of Brzezinski and these people, it's essential to have Ukraine in order to be able to control the Eurasian continent and to prevent anyone else from controlling it instead.

I mention that because I do think that the decision to tear Ukraine away from its natural geopolitical role – which is, of course, to be a bridge between Europe and Russia. The decision to tear it away from that



natural role – the only role, incidentally, which that country could survive – was taken with that logic in mind. It was taken in particular as part of the plan, which is both an economic and also a geopolitical plan, to create of course a Transatlantic Free Trade Zone.

That is the big issue on the agenda at the moment. The big issue is to get this Transatlantic Free Trade Zone going, to consolidate thereby what is now the University known as the West. We don't talk about Europe and America anymore; we just use this rather abstract term. The West, which of course defines itself in very post-modern terms, not in terms of the allegiance to states or in terms to relationship to history or anything like that. Instead, it is in terms of gay rights, human rights, and the post-modern values and so on.

“The big issue is to get this Transatlantic Free Trade Zone going, to consolidate thereby what is now the University known as the West.”

In the longer term, of course, the creation of the Transatlantic Free Trade Zone will in my view – and this hasn't really been discussed yet as far as I know, or perhaps it has but I haven't seen any articles – would logically lead to the creation of a transatlantic single currency in the European Union. No sooner had the single markets been completed in 1986. It wasn't completed until 1992, but the single European act which provided for it was completed, signed, and ratified in 1986.

No sooner had that happened than immediately Europe's leaders said, “We can't have a single market without a single currency.” That is where the Euro started.

I cannot see any reason why the same logic would not apply to a Transatlantic Free Trade Zone. It doesn't make sense to have a free trade zone with different currencies, particularly when those currencies are floating against each other.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Right.



JOHN LAUGHLAND: This brings us back to what you said about the breakdown of the Bretton Woods system. The Bretton Woods system broke down a long time ago, but we often forget that when, for instance, the European community was founded and when the idea was first mooted of a single common market and when other steps were taken toward liberalizing trade – in the early days, in the late 60's and early 70's – at that stage, of course, there was in a sense a single currency. Not that there wasn't a single currency, but there was a system of fixed exchange rates. That meant that there was a direct mechanism for comparing prices in one part of the single market or one part of the common market to another. That was true, of course, within Europe, but also between Europe and America because everything was pegged to the dollar, and the dollar was in turn pegged to gold.

That is of course ancient history now.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Right.

JOHN LAUGHLAND: The logic still applies. It doesn't make sense – and this is one of the big blind spots, really, of so-called free market thinking. The logic still applies. It doesn't make sense to have a single market or a free trade zone if at the same time within that zone national currencies can fluctuate against each other, completely overturning the normal reality-based economic relationships within the different parts of the zone. Basically, if one of the countries devalues, then suddenly its products become a lot cheaper. Naturally, it doesn't make sense within a free trade zone.

As I said, I think the project of the Transatlantic Free Trade Area can only lead to plans for a single currency, and that takes us back to the whole issue – as you say – about the Bretton Woods and the impossibility of resolving the debt issue.

Both in America and in Europe the debt now is so enormous on both sides of the Atlantic. It can never be repaid, and in order to get out of the situation in which you can't repay your debts, the only way to do it is to use trickery basically and to invent a new currency and to roll over the



debt even more.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Well, can't they continuously debase, debase, debase? What we're watching is the rise of the equity markets as the debasement continues.

JOHN LAUGHLAND: Yes.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: It's very interesting because you have everyone in Davos talking about, "Oh dear. The inequality," while the ECB is announcing yet another trillion to ensure that the inequality continues because as you debase you create greater and greater inequality. Those who own real assets are protected and/or who are the beneficiaries of the quantitative easing.

The inequality just continues to rise. It was quite remarkable to watch the Davos to Brussels this week in Europe.

JOHN LAUGHLAND: Yes. Indeed, that is right, but that is the situation that we are in as of today. We know that the major countries are indeed debasing and devaluing. It's a recipe for chaos. There's no doubt about it.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: One of the things you pointed out in one of your interviews over the last year is the remarkable loyalty of the European leaders to the US, which is hard to fathom because if you look at the price that Europe is paying for the Russian sanctions and for the squabble in the Ukraine, the Ukraine is paying a huge price but Europe is also paying a huge price.

Maybe you could talk about what the sanctions are doing.

JOHN LAUGHLAND: I do know a little evidence. I do know that dairy factories in Normandy are working two days a week only now because of these Russian sanctions. They used to have huge exports to Russia.

Apparently there are something like 700,000 apples that have not been exported from Poland to Russia because of the retaliatory Russian



sanctions. In retaliation for the sanctions they have cut agricultural imports from Europe.

On the other side of the equation, France risks losing a very large sum of money indeed if it fails to deliver these two helicopter carrier ships, one of which is being built and is ready to go and the other one is nearly finished. They've been paid for, but France said last September that they wouldn't be delivered because of the Ukraine issue.

The costs of that are in the billions in France. Of course, they're even bigger than the price that's being paid for the ships. The cost to France's reputation as a supplier of military equipment and of arms will suffer immensely because France is very clearly in breach of contract on this.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Right.

JOHN LAUGHLAND: If other potential buyers see a major industrial producer like France change their mind at the last minute on a whim, they are very unlikely I think to place major orders in the future.

So, yes, it's a classic example of how European leaders follow American policies. But, as you say, then they have to bear the consequences in a way which America does much less. The consequences are economic in the specific issue of the sanctions against Russia or Ukraine, but there are much more important social consequences for other aspects of this foreign policy alignment.

I'm thinking of the support given to the rebels in Syria in the rebellion there which started in 2011 which, of course, has caused that country to implode. As we know, it has led to the facilitation of the Islamic State, which in turn as you know has spun into Iraq – all this turmoil encouraged and egged on by the Americans and the Europeans.

Apart from being horrible to the people who live in Syria and Iraq, it also has an effect on us in Europe because of course there are huge numbers of refugees.



C. AUSTIN FITTS: Right.

JOHN LAUGHLAND: There is the massive immigration problem all over Europe. Europe is swamped now with people who have come from Afghanistan and the Middle East who have been smuggled and who have gotten here illegally. The numbers are gigantic.

In Germany, for example, in 2008 the total immigration into Germany was something around 20,000 people a year. Now the figure is nearer 500,000.

“There is the massive immigration problem all over Europe. Europe is swamped now with people who have come from Afghanistan and the Middle East who have been smuggled and who have gotten here illegally.”

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Good Lord!

JOHN LAUGHLAND: It’s been an absolutely dramatic increase in the number of people. Those figures are slightly lower, but comparable figures apply also to France and Britain.

Just after Christmas I was returning to France from Britain by boat. As we drove the car off the ferry in Calais in France you could see the place absolutely swarming with refugees on the roadside and basically trying to get into the perimeter of the ferry in order to cross the channel into England.

We can see the very direct effect of these things. And, of course, needless to say they are having an effect on social questions and on domestic policy. There’s a big Islam movement now in Germany, which is causing huge ructions. There is one in Spain. It’s been an issue in the Netherlands for a long time.

None of this really affects America because America is further away.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Right.

JOHN LAUGHLAND: You can’t smuggle yourself in a lorry from Afghanistan



to America; you have to get there by plane or conceivably by boat. But you can smuggle yourself by land through Turkey and so on into Europe. It's very easy, and hundreds of thousands of people do it all the time.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: At the same time, isn't the median age growing? You have the same problem in Europe that we have here. The median age is rising and the native populations are in what some people would refer to as a demographic winter.

JOHN LAUGHLAND: Yes. Absolutely. That is a whole separate issue, but, yes. It only adds to the general sense of gloom and doom, of course, because as we know the oligarchical elites who govern the world – particularly America and Europe – say that immigration is the answer to this. The more evidence we bring in, the better it will be. The demographic problem will be solved with the rest of it.

Well, that is one way of looking at it. It's certainly not a point of view that I agree with, and I often think that such mass immigration is supported precisely not for sound economic reasons but instead for ideological reasons. You know, the idea being that nations should no longer have a sense of ethnic belonging. They should no longer have any ethnic basis. They should instead be sort of disembodied constitutional structures in which people from any background can feel at home. That's the ideology, and immigration is used to advance that ideology.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Well, you certainly have the feeling here that there is tremendous effort coming from the leadership and the media to debase and destroy the culture. I think that is what is communicated to me by friends in Europe. They are struggling with the same, and it's almost as though you're trying to reduce the culture down to the lowest, most simplistic mind.

JOHN LAUGHLAND: Absolutely.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Now you have elections this year and next year. We start with the Greek elections at the end of the month. What is the impact of



elections?

JOHN LAUGHLAND: They're this Sunday. It's on the 25th of January.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: The sense I got from Tavros was more than ever leadership was worried about the appearance. The problem is almost too overwhelming for them individually for them to do anything about, and, of course, here in America as you know our political leaders have very little power and authority – and less each day.

What I'm wondering is: What is the impact this year and next year of elections? The French elections are next year. Am I right?

JOHN LAUGHLAND: The French elections are in 2017.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Oh. 2017.

JOHN LAUGHLAND: So it's a while yet before they take place, but you're right to raise them because already French political life has been completely sucked dry by speculation about the forthcoming presidential election.

One of the phenomenon of this draining away of power that you mentioned – which is true probably even more of European politicians than it is the American ones – is that precisely because there is no politics anymore, all people talk about, certainly in France, is the next election. Even though it's still got two years to go, France – as I say – is now completely consumed with the question of who will be the candidates and then who will be the victor in the presidential election. It's a very sad state of affairs.

The Greek election I think will be quite important because all the opinion polls seem to indicate that Syriza will win and form a government. I don't know Greece well, but certainly feeling is running very high that the situation is absolutely catastrophic in terms of living standards, which have gone through the floor. There has been an explosion of poverty. Obviously huge numbers of people have been put out of work. Public services have been cut, and so on.



I think it is a very, very bad situation, but above all the medicine hasn't worked. The debt to GDP ratio has in fact shot up because the economy has contracted massively so the GDP figures are much lower. The thing hasn't worked and Syriza is on a winning ticket when it says this because everyone can see the hardship which they conceivably might have expected if it had made the figures turn around, but it hasn't.

If it wins, then obviously we have to wait and see. I'm always skeptical about whether politicians will really do what they say they're going to do. But Syriza has of course campaigned until the very end to austerity tickets. If it does turn around to the IMF and the European unions, we're not going to play by your rules anymore. Then, of course, we could be looking at a breakdown of the currency union. It's going to be in the cards.

Again, I don't have any privileged information, but my guess is that the European leadership is braced for this. I think their main worry at the beginning of the year of crisis – in 2011 really – was that their own banks would get hit. As we know, the various bailout plans to banks to reduce their exposure to bad debt has all been more or less taken care of now.

Probably they're thinking, "Well, at least as far as our banks are concerned, we can let Greece go because all of our debts have been paid off." The bad debts have basically been dealt with.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Right.

JOHN LAUGHLAND: Obviously that's what they care about most. It may be that's the kind of calculation, and maybe that's why the possible election of Syriza has been treated with perhaps less panic than one might have otherwise expected.

On the other hand, again, I think it is a very interesting development if indeed that party takes power because as people have been saying since the Euro crisis started – since the debt crisis really started – there will be a domino effect. If Greece goes, then other countries will follow before



long.

The country that I think will follow – more in a sense than the other real southern European countries like Spain and Portugal – is Italy, which to all intents and purposes is a much more prosperous state than any of the others. Nonetheless, I think it would be quite badly hit by a Greek exit from the Euro. And, of course, if Italy left the Euro then that really would deal a very serious blow indeed to the single currency project.

“If Italy left the Euro then that really would deal a very serious blow indeed to the single currency project.”

C. AUSTIN FITTS: I see so much pressure coming top-down for going the other way – the Transatlantic Free Trade Zone, as you just described – and also the rise of India and China. They are now rising, and the threat of being a smaller market is also part of the push.

You have two logics coming that argue for centralization, but that centralization keeps imploding the economy bottom-up.

JOHN LAUGHLAND: Yes.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: There’s this terrible, terrible tension. To me, the leaders are caught in the middle. The head of Luxembourg once said, “We know what to do; we just don’t know how to get elected after we do it.”

I really see this tension reaching an unbearable level, both here and there, over the next two to three years. It’s going to be very interesting to see how it gets resolved.

JOHN LAUGHLAND: The problem is that one doesn’t know when it’s going to reach unbearable levels. In spite of its inherent fragility, the system nonetheless remains very strong, doesn’t it?

C. AUSTIN FITTS: It does.

JOHN LAUGHLAND: I mentioned earlier the anti-Islam movement in



Germany. It's not directly related to these issues of income and the economy, but it is part of a broader malaise as well.

The system has scored a number of tactical victories in the last 24 hours against that movement. The head of it had to resign yesterday or the day before yesterday, and the march planned which has been going on every Monday for two or three months now was cancelled last week. This week it will be changed from Monday to Sunday.

There have already been a number of tactical victories, and this is ultimately a small issue the way that this movement has been attacked by the establishment, but it's symbolic of a very general problem and a very widespread problem which is the impossibility and the incapacity of protest groups such as this one to constitute themselves as genuine alternatives and to make themselves into real challenges to power.

Syriza is an exception, and we'll see if they succeed. Syriza is, of course, a left-wing group, but all the conservative movements that exist – some of which are very strong, and I'm thinking of the National Front in France – are still a long way from power.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: I wanted to bring up the question of the neocons, John, because you were one of the people who first got me to really look at them as a group. When I worked in the Bush administration I had exposure to them. Since then I've had the opportunity to study them.

The thing that really struck me when I worked with them is the extent to which they did not believe in the law. They really saw those domestic and international laws as an inconvenience that belonged to an old paradigm and didn't relate to them.

One of the reasons I so admire and respect your work is you've done a lot to understand and study the history and the current condition of international laws. You seem to come from the opposite tradition.

I don't know if you've seen Charlie Ferguson's documentary on Iraq, but it's almost as though the Romans brought law and infrastructure and the



Americans bring chaos and a breakdown of civil order. I hate to use the word ‘demonic’, but having worked with them I found them to be literally demonic.

JOHN LAUGHLAND: There is a very demonic aspect to it, and certainly the notion of chaos is a key notion. There is an idea that was expressed from Michael Ledeen – about “destruction is our middle name,” and how, “force lies in our power to destroy old structures.” Of course, the implication was that they would replace them with new ones, but what we see in fact is that they make it this and then they call it peace.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Right.

JOHN LAUGHLAND: I think that for me one of the most sobering events of the last few months has been to see in the person of Victoria Nuland, otherwise known as Mrs. Robert Kagan, how powerful they still remain. It’s over ten years after their great triumph in getting the war on Iraq launched in 2003. But guess what? They’re still there. They are still in very important positions.

Nuland is relatively senior in the state department. She’s played a key role in this Ukraine crisis, which is probably the most important foreign policy issue of 2014 and 2015. And there they still are. She is a fully paid-out member of that group, at least through her marriage to her husband. She is also representative of neocons in the sense that she started off working in Dick Cheney’s office. She comes from the republican side, but she’s perfectly at home in the democratic administration of Barack Obama.

This just shows basically how powerful and influential they remain. They can occupy key positions in either republican or democratic administrations.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Right, and I don’t know Nuland, but my impression of them is these were people who were not able to deal with complexity. Their way of dealing with complexity was to basically use force to simplify.



It's almost like reducing complex systems to something chaotic and base made it possible for them to understand the world. I'll just use the word 'thug' and I'll call them thugs. So the question is: Where does their power come from? Why do we see thugs visited upon the world and continue to do enormous amounts of destruction?

Every time somebody says to me, "The economy is slowing down," I say, "Of course it's slowing down. You're destroying it. What do you expect it to do when you destroy it?"

Economy depends on trust – or markets depend on trust. I mean, I think the big mystery for all of us – and I don't know why I should be asking you when you're in Europe and we're visiting this upon the world. I should have the answer here!

Why do the neocons continue to gain and hold power?

JOHN LAUGHLAND: That is a question that of course is difficult to answer. One of the theories is the idea that they embody our shared – as I shared earlier in reference to Brzezinski – way beyond the neocon community itself strictly speaking, and they are shared by large, large sections of the political establishment in the United States and in Europe. They've managed to be influential way beyond their own ranks.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Right.

JOHN LAUGHLAND: Influential isn't even the right word. I think hegemonic would be a proper word because as we know, in the entire previous congress there was only one congressman who voted against all this stuff. I'm thinking of course of Rand Paul. The intellectual and political hegemony is absolutely breathtaking.

I think you probably are physically closer to an answer than I am. As far as the question of thuggery is concerned, that might be a key to the answer. Of course, stupidity does tend to win out over intelligence. Brutishness can win out over civilization. Civilization is very difficult to build up; it takes a long time. It is very easy to smash it up. It's much



easier to smash something up than it is to create something. I just think that is a part of human nature.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: We saw a change in policy here.

I'll give you an example of what I think may be happening. We saw a change in policy with the Attorney General announcing the end of the state and local share of asset forfeiture in the United States. Since the 1990's it's been on a tear of building out a war on terror, done first through the drug war and then through terrorism. It literally has given enforcers at the state, local, and federal level the ability to seize personal assets without any evidence or proof of wrongdoing. It's been quite effective at building out a control system at the state, local, and federal level.

The AG cancelled the state and local share after an editorial about a month ago in the *Economist* saying America had gone too far and the enforcement system was destroying the trust that was the basis of the economy.

My read on this is that thugs are very useful for building out the system, but once the system is built out you need the system to be credible and you no longer need them.

My question globally is: Are the thugs being used to build out the system, and they just haven't achieved what they wanted yet so the thugs are still upon us at the global level? That is a theory which leads me to my point that one of the things you've seen over the last two months is more and more bumper stickers in America saying 'Putin for President'.

We have the 2016 presidential election here so people are talking now about the primaries. I think there is an enormous hunger in the American body of politic for somebody who can make the case for the rule of law. It's felt very deeply here, but people are scared so you don't necessarily see the discussion of it.

“It literally has given enforcers at the state, local, and federal level the ability to seize personal assets without any evidence or proof of wrongdoing.”



I had to bring up the recent legislation. I know very little about it, but I laughed and I thought of you when I saw it. We just got news this week that the Duma has proposed legislation to outlaw or basically govern and force NGOs in Russia. I don't know if you know anything about that.

JOHN LAUGHLAND: I don't think it's quite as you say. There is a long history of laws governing NGOs in Russia. I'm not aware of one, and I very much doubt there is anything outlawing them.

What there has been – but it was introduced not recently but a year or two ago – was a law requiring NGOs that receive funding to register as foreign agents. That has caused a big uproar. Whether they've changed it or modified this law recently I don't know, but the law which caused so much protest was voted more than a year ago.

As I say, it doesn't limit their activities at all. It doesn't place any limits on them at all. It's merely like a fiscal requirement that they have to register themselves as foreign agents to announce the fact that they receive foreign funding.

It's been derided by Russia's enemies as a restrictive law restricting the activities of these NGOs, but I'm afraid that's a complete lie.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: I'm glad to hear the details of it. I bring it up because to me the combination of the neocon lawlessness fronted by the NGOs spouting moral platitudes to me is particularly offensive. I would ask you to maybe say a few words about what the NGOs' role is in the so-called soft revolution tactics of the American empire.

JOHN LAUGHLAND: They play a key role. I don't agree, though, that the revolutions are soft that they promote. The revolution in Ukraine on the 21st and 22nd of February 2014 was not soft. It was a violent affair which came about as the result of an absolutely ruthless and violent group which the now government in opposition used in order to overthrow the not only democratically elected but also the universally recognized president.



That event, yes, symbolizes all of the things you've been asking about – the contempt for the rule of law. It's absolutely brazen contempt because as I'm sure you know the three European Foreign Ministers had sponsored a compromise between the then-president and the then-opposition which provided for the elections and an interim government to prepare them, but the ink was hardly dry on that when they overthrew Yanukovich – when they overthrew the President. The European and the American governments turned around and said that this was all totally legal – which was just a blatant lie – and of course, to add insult to injury, they then said that the succession of Crimea from Ukraine was itself illegal. It may have been illegal, but it took place in conditions in which the constitutional order in Ukraine had broken down anyway.

Of course, they didn't use the same argument when Yugoslavia broke up. They didn't say the successions of Croatia and Slovenia were illegal although they very clearly were as well.

So, yes, the coups in Ukraine shows this conjunction of contempt for the rule of law, thuggishness, and I would very much emphasize their readiness and perhaps even desire to use force.

In the run-up to it, I denounced in many interviews the violence of the then-opposition – now government – in Kiev. It was quite clear to me even before the 22nd of February that they were determined to seize power by force, and that's what they did.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Right. In my experience the soft revolution is quite violent, but a great effort is made to make it invisible and covert if possible. But I agree with you.

JOHN LAUGHLAND: I'm just referring to street fights. There were very serious street fights between armed rebels and the police and the army – or certainly the police anyway. These fights led to scores of deaths of policemen, hundreds of injuries of policemen. They were proper pitched battles being fought in the streets of the capital. It was in that sense a classic violent revolution.



C. AUSTIN FITTS: My last question, John, as I step back and I look at this from a very long-term perspective, one of the things that is baffling is if you look at all of the locations of cultures that have traditionally treasured the Judeo-Christian heritage, what we're watching is literally those areas being torn apart and fighting with each other. You would think there was a natural cultural cohesion of everyone in the places that are traditionally Judeo-Christian and yet this is tearing us right down the middle.

JOHN LAUGHLAND: Yes.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: I wondered if you could say something about this from a cultural standpoint.

JOHN LAUGHLAND: I very much agree with that and feel it deeply myself. You are referring to the division between Russia and the rest of the West because this makes no sense at all in civilizational terms. It makes no sense at all for a new dividing line to be drawn as Huntington himself wanted it to be drawn along the border between Catholicism and orthodoxy. Huntington said back in 1992 or whenever it was that he wrote *The Clash of Civilizations* that Greece does not belong to Western civilization. It's an absolutely incredible statement.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Greece does not belong to Western civilization?

JOHN LAUGHLAND: Yes.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Oh my Lord!

JOHN LAUGHLAND: Yes, I can give you the page reference. It is simply because his division runs along the line of orthodoxy, so all the orthodox countries don't belong to the West according to him. It's nuts – literally nuts – but that is the view. Again, one is just amazed by the hegemony and power of these ideas because now that's what we're seeing implemented.

Not only is such a division completely crazy in civilizational terms, but



it's also suicidal in view of the things you mentioned earlier – the rise of India and China, and obviously the rise of Islam and such. In such circumstances it would indeed make sense for the Judeo-Christian world to unite. It doesn't make sense for it to be divided, and yet it is.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: All I can tell you is the thing that continues to baffle me is the neocons, but it's wider. Starting in the 1990's what I watched was as though the Americans had lost their minds. Leonard Cohen has a song where he says, "They were blinded by the beauty of their weapons."

Literally as the wall came down and the Soviet Union came apart, the Americans got a very overblown estimate of their power.

“Literally as the wall came down and the Soviet Union came apart, the Americans got a very overblown estimate of their power.”

JOHN LAUGHLAND: Yes.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: That has not transformed into something more mature. If anything, it seems to be debased.

JOHN LAUGHLAND: Yes.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: That is the thing we're grappling with. I know Europe is grappling with it, and this will be a year of trying to sort that out.

Any suggestions you have if you're an American sitting and listening to this? Any suggestions as to what we can do that would be positive?

JOHN LAUGHLAND: Ask Ron Paul to come out of retirement.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: It's interesting. Since the early 90's one of the ways I cheer myself up whenever I'm depressed is I send a check to Ron Paul.

JOHN LAUGHLAND: Keep sending them.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: I absolutely will keep sending them.



Well, John, it's always a pleasure. You are a beacon of light for all of us – not just in Europe, but in the United States. We appreciate your work very much. If there is ever anything we can do to support us, you have only to ask. We wish you the best year possible.

JOHN LAUGHLAND: And you, too. Thank you so much.

C. AUSTIN FITTS: Thank you. Bye.

DISCLAIMER

Nothing on The Solari Report should be taken as individual investment advice. Anyone seeking investment advice for his or her personal financial situation is advised to seek out a qualified advisor or advisors and provide as much information as possible to the advisor in order that such advisor can take into account all relevant circumstances, objectives, and risks before rendering an opinion as to the appropriate investment strategy.