Warpod: Ep #2 The shifting security alliances of Europe and Central Asia

Welcome to Warpod. A podcast brought to you by Saferworld, asking experts from around the world about the impact of security policy on contemporary conflict.

I'm Charlie Linney, Project Coordinator in the Arms Unit at Saferworld. And I'm Lewis Brooks, UK Policy and Advocacy Adviser at Saferworld.

To start the series, we're going to take a step back and look at the trends shaping contemporary security policy, what's changed and what hasn't, and the challenges of different approaches.

CHARLIE: This is the second part of an interview with Lord Peter Ricketts, former British diplomat and the UK's first National Security Advisor; and Nargis Kassenova, Senior Fellow and Director of the Programme on Central Asia at the Davis Centre for Russian and Eurasian Studies at Harvard University.

It's worth noting that since we recorded these interviews, the conflict in Israel and the Palestinian Occupied Territories as well as the wider region continues to escalate.

If you haven't listened to the first part of this interview, go back and find the previous episode with Peter and Nargis wherever you listen to your podcasts.

LEWIS: In episode one, our guests spoke a lot about the Russian invasion of Ukraine, a key moment driving current security trends in both Europe and Central Asia. We discussed militarisation in both of these regions, as well as the potential risks and blind spots of these dynamics.

In this episode, we take a step back to look at the wider patterns of geopolitical competition and alliances, and we also discuss some of the unreliable approaches to partnerships among the different powers that we're analysing.

We start by asking Lord Ricketts about Western policy change and some of the lessons that might be needed in this current environment.

PETER: When I think back to that post-Cold War period, I think Western national security policy was obsessed with two things. One was interventions in other people's countries in an effort either to stop ethnic cleansing in the Balkans or prevent aggression – as with the first Gulf War, when Iraq invaded Kuwait – or then countering state collapse and the terrorism that takes root in Afghanistan, and then Iraq. It was a mixture of interventions and counter-terrorism, and those were the two priorities throughout this period.
And I think looking back, we missed the rise of state threats, the fact that Putin was becoming increasingly reckless and aggressive in his efforts to expand the Russian sphere of influence in Georgia in 2008, his first go at Ukraine in 2014, and then of course, his huge gamble in invading Ukraine, but also China feeling much more a security defence power, intervening in our countries in terms of intelligence gathering, subversion, exercising its hard power in the South China Sea and its soft power in terms of the Belt and Road and increasing its hold in many, many nonaligned countries.
And when we did wake up to this state power threat and we went around the nonaligned countries – for example, after the war in Ukraine started – saying we need your support against Russian aggression, we found them saying, well, actually this is hypocritical because you invaded Iraq, you've taken no notice of the conflicts on our doorsteps and now you want our support on Russia. And of course, the fact that the Western countries are supporting Israel so

strongly in the conflict in Gaza is just one more confirmation of what they see as double standards.
So I think there were some very, very important shifts which are quite largely adverse to Western interests, even though in the immediate crisis of Ukraine, NATO in particular has responded very well and so has the EU.
I think we've tended to think too much about our own interests in the regions rather than the interests of the countries concerned. And I think we are hopefully learning that lesson now.

CHARLIE: I think this double standard, or potential perceived hypocrisy is really something that the West has to reconcile as it finds new partnerships and attempts to consolidate its existing relationships with other states moving forwards. And it's actually more than reconciliation, it's about being a just actor in the international system.

LEWIS: Yeah I couldn't agree more, and I think what was interesting to me was about that reconciliation in terms of how it goes about building partners and alliances. It's important as we start to think about partnerships that we articulate what we mean by that. Because if you work in the development sector you talk about your partners as quite often NGOs in – or civil society groups – in the countries where you're funding. Whereas if you then go and talk to military people they will talk about military alliances and the forces that they might find themselves doing joint operations in. Or if you talk to diplomats, it's about those countries that they're cooperating with at a diplomatic level.
And so these partnerships are at multiple different levels and covering both civil society states and kind of multilateral organisations as well. And I think it's just worth bearing that in mind.
And it wasn't just Peter that was starting to bring up this issue of partnership, but Nargis as well as we started to look at the way in

which Central Asia was approaching partnership and alliances in this new geopolitical environment.

CHARLIE: So we also spoke Nargis about these different types of partnerships in Central Asia.

NARGIS: Well, these are relations across the board. These are security, political, military cooperation, economic cooperation and so on. And it's not a new development because Central Asian countries, being newly independent countries, try to develop relations with various actors to decrease the dominance of Russia in the region. So we practice what we refer to as multi-vector foreign policies. Basically, you would develop relations with different external actors and relations with the West obviously being very important in this regard. So it's not a new thing, but in the aftermath of the invasion, it became even more important. And we do see intensification of various cooperation projects.

China obviously is a very important actor in the region. It's our big neighbour; apart from Russia, this is our other big neighbour. And China, I would say, looks better now than Russia. It is a reliable neighbour, a predictable neighbour. And I think we do see a subtle shift, maybe more leaning on China than we used to see.

Turkey is another important actor, especially for the four Turkic states of Central Asia. And there is a vibrant economic cooperation, security cooperation and so on.

So there is this kind of intensification of diversification of our relations with other actors.

CHARLIE: We then asked her to go into a little but more depth about certain countries within Central Asia where this is manifesting.

NARGIS: There is a diversity, I would say that we see in the region. In Kazakhstan, we see a sharp increase in the levels of disapproval with Russia's policy and the latest Gallup poll shows that – also, I can refer to the data collected by Central Asian Barometer – so we do see

people increasingly dissatisfied with what Russia is doing, criticising Russia for its aggression against Ukraine. We see this trend in Kyrgyzstan as well. And to a lesser extent in other countries of Central Asia.
It also triggered the decolonisation discourse, I would say, in the region. We are former colonies also of Russia. And the emancipation, these processes of emancipation, have been underway since we acquired independence, even prior to that, and the war intensified those for sure.
The importance of local languages, speaking local languages in Kazakh, Kyrgyz, they are definitely up. More people are trying to learn the language. Ethnic Russians are trying now to learn local languages and so on. So it is contributing to the consolidation of national identities in the region.

CHARLIE: So there we heard Nargis talking about the different forms of security, political, military cooperation that we see with countries in Central Asia. We also heard about dynamics within the region, and within specific countries.
As part of the discussion, we then moved on to speak about the role of multilateral institutions and partnerships, and one of the organisations that came out was the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, also known as the OSCE.
It's always had quite a big focus on Central Asia with a physical presence in Uzbekistan, Kazakstan, Kyrgyzstan among other places. So we asked Nargis, what is the relevance of the OSCE in the security landscape for Central Asia these days?

NARGIS: Well, it is somewhat ironic that now when the OSCE in a pretty poor condition, I think we need it more than ever. I think it is very important for Central Asian states to retain these ties, to retain these arrangements, the tie to Europe, the tie to the West, and I think it will probably be difficult to create new arrangements, more effective arrangements at the time.

So I think it's important to maintain what we have, no matter how low on efficiency and effectiveness these arrangements are, the same goes for partnership, partnership for peace. So kind of maintaining these arrangements I think is important and maybe fostering new coalitions. We talked about the climate change, that's a very important topic and that's the area where more cooperation is possible.
But in the times of kind of this super divisive politics and geopolitics, geoeconomics, I think maintaining what we've had is very important.

LEWIS: For Nargis, the OSCE was a really important security partnership, meanwhile in Europe our conversation with Peter on specific alliances covered NATO and the relationships of non-aligned countries.

PETER: I think the NATO deterrence has worked very well. Although Putin's taken huge risks in Ukraine, he's never put a foot over a NATO border. I think he's understood that the NATO will to defend our territories is very strong. So I think that that has been a good thing. But I think there are some secondary consequences of the policies we've taken as a result of the Ukraine war. The very draconian sanctions on Russia have pushed Russia into the arms of the Chinese, and there's a strong axis developing I think between those two countries – purely short-term selfish interests on both sides, but nonetheless important. And I do think that we have lost serious ground in the nonaligned countries by seeming to be so strongly on the side of Ukraine while being prepared to support Israel while they're attacking civilian targets in Gaza.
I think we have to be alive to those trends and to understand the lessons of the response in many nonaligned countries, which is that they will look after their own direct interests, thank you. They're not terribly interested in supporting us rhetorically over preserving the international order because of what Russia's doing. They will calculate their own interests. India will work with Russia if the

Russians give India cheap oil and cheap weapons. Every country wants to have a relationship with China. Saudi Arabia, although it is a strategic ally, quite dependent on America in the Middle East, is also getting closer to China and doing deals with China on Iran. So the world is moving and is not moving in a direction that is very favourable to the Western interests of ensuring maximum support for these institutions of the international order like the UN, which we have supposed were supporting peace and stability in the world but actually have less and less traction.

LEWIS: Again, Peter raises this issue of how the West's approach to different conflicts – including the situation in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territories since October 2023 – is being perceived by non-Western states and becomes one factor in the wider relationships with them.
And that perception will be different from region to region and country to country. I think one of the key things is remembering that both Russia and China will also have double standards – and both Nargis and Peter mentioned these countries as important providers of security – but these countries also having views shaped by their own histories and experiences.
So conflict isn't just about government-to-government relationships, but these matters of perception also apply to societies as well. Here's Peter talking about some of the failures of western interventions over the last couple of decades.

PETER: I see quite a lot of continuity in the way the West approached conflict resolution from the Balkans all the way through to the French operation in Mali. So in the Balkans, in Afghanistan, in Iraq, in Libya, and then with the French military operation in Mali from 2013, a feeling you had to send large numbers of very sophisticated Western forces to go – if not to physically occupy the country, to be a significant security player – and to do this while scrambling to find allies in the country who will support it. And not enough attention paid to the local factors, to the local communities, to the tribal ethnic

tensions, to corruption, to the way elites were given greater prominence and how unpopular they rapidly became.
So, I think we do need to rethink this. We need to work much more with local partners through local partners, avoid the exacerbating presence of Western military forces and the vast budgets and the corruption and the violence that comes with that and try and do it in a lower profile way, but still showing that our values and our interests can help countries through their problems and lead to better outcomes for them.

CHARLIE: What Peter's described there, and what much of Saferworld' research actually backs up, is that there have been these huge strategic failures in large-scale military operations. That the alliances with corrupt local elites that Peter mentions have themselves fed into wider conflict dynamics and instability.
And much more focus needs to be on understanding the local conflicts and contexts, rather than just imposing a Western security lens – as in many of the contexts that Peter mentioned, such as Iraq, Afghanistan, Mali and elsewhere. And I think that trying to be more discerning in supporting local actors who are genuinely interested in peace and democracy is really important.
We asked Nargis if she saw any strategic failures in the West's approach to Central Asia.

NARGIS: I don't see big mistakes as of now. I think we see genuine efforts by the EU and also by the United States to develop cooperation, to support the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Central Asian states. But let's see how it goes.
I think everybody is worried about the upcoming US elections and depending on who wins, I think the situation will change for all of us, including for the countries of Central Asia, because if there is a decrease in support for Ukraine, if the divisions inside the West grow, if the legitimacy of Western leadership, global leadership is undermined, these are these are not good circumstances for the region of Central Asia as well.

Of course, what the West did in Iraq or Afghanistan was a big mistake, a strategic blunder. And there are hypocrisies is that are baked into the international system, into the into the world order as we have it. But I don't see a better alternative at the moment. And what Russian policymakers, experts or Chinese policymakers talk about, and some others, the multipolar world order, I don't see how it can be more peaceful, better for people, better for human rights. The order that Central Asian states were kind of born into in the 1990s – it did provide guarantees and assurances to small states like ours. And I'm not sure what the prospects will be for small states in this new multipolar world. And actually not only for states, but also for societies. I mentioned human rights, and that's a big thing, right, in the West-led liberal world order.

CHARLIE: So this point about Western double standards has come up again, but in contrast to what Peter was saying about Iraq and Western support for Israel, Nargis doesn't see this as a major factor in levels of support from Central Asian governments to the West. For the region, the hypocrisy of Russia's behaviour is much more important and relevant than the hypocrisy of the West's behaviour. This is because of Russia's role as the former colonial power in Central Asia, and also due to much more recent events surrounding its invasion of Ukraine and its failure to support Armenia against Azerbaijan, which Nargis mentioned in the previous episode.

LEWIS: Yeah I think that's really true, but I think this point about double standards and how they are perceived is probably very different depending on where you are in the world. Whether you're in Central Asia, the Middle East, Africa, or Asia, states will still need to have a more just international policy if they want to have credibility there, strategic influence and ultimately reduce violent conflict as well.

CHARLIE: We asked Nargis about the West's response to global crises, and whether she thought there were any conflicts beyond the western political and media spotlight that are being missed?

NARGIS: I think it's very unfair that Afghanistan is largely forgotten by the international community. And for us, it's very important what's happening there. It is important that there are no spillovers of insecurity from Afghanistan. It's important what's happening on the border. It is important what's happening with the kind of Central Asian militants.
So it is important what's happening to the people of Afghanistan. And they go from one big crisis to another, big crises from one catastrophe to another. And I think more international involvement is needed. There is another issue that is now quite important for Central Asians, and that's the water management. We share the Amu Darya river with Afghanistan and the Taliban government has been building the new canal, Qosh Tepa canal and withdrawing waters from Amu Darya, and it has, of course, can have a very big negative impact on downstream Central Asian states.

LEWIS: So Nargis raised Afghanistan as a conflict largely forgotten by the international community. We asked Peter the same question about what other conflicts he thought were beyond the Western media and political spotlight at this moment in time.

PETER: There are two areas of conflict which I don't think get enough attention in Western capitals. One is actually right next door in the Balkans. 30 years ago, it was front and centre of every front page. Now there is high tension in two parts of the Balkans between Kosovo and Serbia and within Bosnia. In Kosovo there is still a NATO peacekeeping force KFOR. The UK recently sent another 200 men to reinforce KFOR after a very sharp attack involving Serbian militants confronting Kosovo police. That is a very sensitive and fragile area. And in Bosnia and Herzegovina, after all those years since the NATO operation in the 1990s, still very fragile politics, still the presence of

an EU peacekeeping force. Things could get worse in either of those theatres, and I would like to see the UK doing more actually. I think a UK offer to contribute forces to the Althea EU operation would go down very well in the EU. It's an operation that we were very, very involved with from the beginning and I think that would be appreciated. But I think we don't pay enough attention to the growing tensions in the Balkans.

And the other area is the Sahel, where we have seen the collapse of the French position almost completely over the last couple of years. If I look back at French security involvement in the Sahel region, the French had long seen that as an area of vital interest for them, an interest that they maintained by basing significant numbers of forces and by maintaining very close relations with dynastic leaders who'd often been there many years, and their children then succeeded them. I think they missed social and economic trends going on in the countries. They were concerned, of course, about the arrival of Islamic militants from Libya heading southwards. But I don't think they saw the way the popular mood was moving against the rulers, the way corruption and mis-government was being felt in the populations and the impact of things like climate change, where rural agriculture was becoming less and less possible migration to the towns, a lot of unemployed young people, and then the growth of militancy and therefore I think they took too much attention on the military security aspects and not enough on the governance and the economic and social aspects of these countries. They got too much associated with the regimes of the past and missed the popular mood.

LEWIS: So I think in both what Peter and Nargis are talking about there is this idea of consistency, that the international community were engaged in Afghanistan, in the Balkans and in the Sahel, but now they've taken their eye off the ball and that attention is waning.

But there's also a warning. In what Peter was saying about the Sahel, the French were engaged there for a consistent period of time. And

what happened was they were consistently flawed in their strategy, focussed more on supporting corrupt elites that didn't have popular support, and less about supporting more equitable peace and development. And as a result of this, the whole kind of dynamics in the Sahel have unravelled.
CHARLIE: This theme of consistency also came up when we asked Nargis about western engagement in Central Asia.

NARGIS: Well, what do we mean by the West? I think there are differences in what was happening in the US-Central Asia relations and in what was happening in the EU-Central Asian relations. Because when we look at the U.S. engagement in the region after the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Afghanistan in 2021, there was some decrease in the importance of the region for Washington. But if we look at EU-Central Asia, we saw more consistency and actually more attempts to deepen cooperation.

With the U.S., we did see a decrease in attention from the United States with the region. But now with the war in Ukraine, this attention is clearly up and while this is a factor, another factor is China again. So there is this competitive dynamic that I don't think we can escape. But I but I think that that could be the biggest concern for Central Asians not to be damaged by these growing divisions, geopolitical divisions, geoeconomic divisions, decoupling, decoupling and so on.
I think the European Union is trying, and we've seen this effort since the adoption of the first EU strategy for the region in 2007. Now we're under the new strategy adopted in 2019. And we do see the EU trying to elevate the political dialogue, to engage in various sectors, to work on the climate change, water management issues.
I would say it's been quite consistent, this effort, but we're still neighbours of neighbours for the EU and it's still not clear how we fit into this kind of picture of the world, the kind of big Brussels, Brussels-centred world.

CHARLIE: So there again we've got Nargis really bringing up that point about consistency and saying that – at least from her perspective – the European Union has shown much more consistency in its approach to Central Asia than, for example, the United States. And that theme has come up quite a few times throughout this episode.

So we've talked a lot about states and consistency in relations, but we also wanted to talk about different political leaders and political developments, and how they might impact the dynamics that we've been speaking about in this episode.

LEWIS: So we've got elections in the US scheduled for November, and we're expecting elections in the UK at some point 2024 as well. There's at least a possibility of a change of government in both countries, so there's a big question about whether or how this might impact Western policy – including security policy.

More recently, in the UK we've had the surprise return of former British Prime Minister David Cameron as the new Foreign Secretary. And before that we had the return of Andrew Mitchell, formerly the Secretary of State for International Development some years ago, and now back again in a very similar role.

CHARLIE: So we asked Peter what impact he thought these political appointments might or might not have on UK security policy.

PETER: I worked very closely with David Cameron from his first day in government in 2010 and set up the National Security Council for him. So I know he's somebody who takes foreign policy very seriously. He did as Prime Minister. I saw him at close quarters taking some pretty

difficult decisions on the withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2010, on the handling of the Libya conflict in 2011. He's somebody who is good at taking decisions and has a formidable range of global contacts and experience of the world. I think inevitably, given where we are in the British electoral cycle, he really has a year as Foreign Secretary before the uncertainty of the election here.
He's working now in close harness with Andrew Mitchell, who was the development secretary in 2010 and a very prominent player in global development policy, and I think very well respected. So I think that's a duo who will see the importance of the development agenda alongside the conflict and crisis agenda. But inevitably, I think David Cameron's time is going to be massively taken up by the war in Gaza and trying to get to a ceasefire and a conclusion and then whatever happens after that in Gaza. There again, it will be essential to think about the economic, the social consequences of what's happened and also the war in Ukraine. I can't believe there'll be a great deal of time or budget to shift the trends on spending in conflict prevention areas, but I think both David Cameron and Andrew Mitchell are very, very well aware of the importance of that.

CHARLIE: Some of the commentary that we've seen around David Cameron coming in as Foreign Secretary is that he might have a slightly softer position on China moving forwards compared to other members of the governing Conservative Party. We asked Peter if he thinks that has the potential to shift the dial a little bit in terms of the UK's approach to China.

PETER: I think David Cameron's position on China has been a bit misunderstood, frankly. In 2010-2011, the conservative government were very much in favour of closer relations with China economically, but that reflected the fact of the Chinese leadership at that time, who were themselves very keen to build up their economic relationship with the West in order to strengthen China.

China has changed since then and therefore I think Cameron coming into this government now will be happy to slipstream into the policy that Rishi Sunak has set out, which is vigilant on security, willing to engage with China on the big global issues like climate and looking to preserve a commercial relationship as long as it doesn't make us dependent on China for next generation high technology.
So I think it's China that's changed and therefore I think Cameron will change with that.

LEWIS: With the opposition Labour Party riding high in political polling in the UK, we asked Peter about the possibility of a change of government and what it would mean for UK security policy.

PETER: I think if we had a Labour government in the UK, there would be continuity in handling the Ukraine war – I see no difference there with the current government – and also on Israel, Gaza, very, very much the same approach. I think it would be different in the approach to the EU. I think there, a Labour Government would be looking for closer cooperation with the EU on foreign and security policy and in other areas, without going as far as trying to renegotiate the underlying trade and cooperation agreement. There are all sorts of things could be done to bring us closer together to get into a more regular, structured dialogue, for example. And I'm sure they will want to look at finding more money for development and for the climate adaptation, climate finance agenda, whether they will find that money in a very, very tight budget, I don't know.

LEWIS: So there's some really interesting analysis from Peter here. In both the new appointments within UK foreign policy, and the prospect of a change of government, it’s only really UK relations with the rest of Europe that are likely to change.

You might think that political parties contesting an election would be trying to drive a wedge between the two of them and demonstrate very different approaches to foreign policy, but what's fascinating in the UK is that is not happening and the Conservatives and Labour are sticking very close together in terms of what they're proposing in security policy.

CHARLIE: Yeah, whereas in the US, we know the picture is potentially very different with the possibility of a second Trump presidency. So we turned to Nargis, and asked her what impact – if any – the US elections might have on Central Asia?

NARGIS: I think the US elections are particularly important for the region. And first of all, that has to do with the US engagement, US support for Ukraine in its struggle with the aggressor. And it's also important for the credibility of the West and for the unity of the West.
Of course, it hasn't been perfect, but we saw what happened during this Trump's presidency, how divisive it was. So that's something that will have an impact on all the rest of the world, including Central Asia, and will send, I would say, pretty bad signals.

LEWIS: Can we separate out Central Asian people and governments here? Will Central Asian populations be watching the US elections? And will they register a Trump victory if it happens? Or is this something that is going to be felt much further down the line? And will Central Asian governments be watching the US elections?

NARGIS: Yeah everybody's watching the US elections because it is the global superpower and it's also a big show. So people, ironically, people in Central Asia often follow more the US elections then than the elections at home that are less exciting.

When we became independent, there was a good amount of Western leadership and democracy was considered to be kind of the only legitimate form of government, and human rights were considered important. Maybe you would you know pay lip service to them, but you had to pay lip service to them and kind of justify your actions in that in a certain way. If this is gone, I think it would be very problematic for everybody.

So for the states, this dismantling of the order, as already mentioned, would be bad because the rights of smaller states will be less, less assured by the system, and for the societies it will be bad because human rights will not be held in the same esteem as they used to be.

And of course, what we saw in the US, a big crisis of the 6th of January. Well I wouldn't say it undermined, but this was quite a blow to the credibility of the of the US, the US democracy, which of course was very much welcomed by authoritarian regimes, regimes around the world.

So if there is more of that, then, you know, the second blow will be much bigger. For the first, the first presidency was seen as a kind of aberration. If, I hope it will not happen, but if there is the second Trump presidency that will be much more indicative of the overall crisis in the world.

LEWIS: So it's quite a note for Nargis to end on there, clearly the stakes are really high in terms of some of the dynamics that she's been discussing. Charlie, are there some pretty high stakes aspects that you're taking away from the last two episodes?

CHARLIE: Yeah so I think it's interesting that we spoke a lot about Russia and Ukraine, especially in the first episode. Whereas while we've been working on this podcast the conflict in Israel and Palestine has really taken over news and policy cycles. And I think the bit that really stands in my mind is from the first episode when Peter said, "Have we passed a turning point?".

We're now seeing higher defence spending, larger armed forces, larger stockpiles of weapons, particularly with Western and European governments. And that throws up load of really important and difficult challenges for policymakers.

LEWIS: Yeah so is there a danger then Charlie that, with the focus on these big military conflicts, that other key security threats or issues are being missed?

CHARLIE: Yeah completely, and I think that's something that Nargis and Peter both really clearly highlighted in their interviews. Peter spoke about the troubles of balancing higher defence spending with spending on climate finance, health security, and all of these other issues. And he also mentioned decreasing development aid in light of higher military expenditure as a key issue. And Nargis also raised these points as key dynamics that are being missed in Central Asia by both Western governments and others.
She mentioned for example increasingly arid land due to climate change, and also water security. And all of these things are currently being missed or undermined by spending in other areas, particularly on military.
What were your key takeaways Lewis?

LEWIS: So I think for me it was slightly different. For me, I found the kind of alliances and partnerships that we were discussing really interesting. And there's a point about consistency that was coming up a lot, and how consistent, particularly the larger powers are with their smaller allies. And this point about inconsistency and a lack of reliability undermining the partnership.
And so you had this in what Nargis was talking about with Russia no longer being a security guarantor for Central Asia. You had this in terms of what she was talking about, about Afghanistan and the lack of western interest after August 2021. And then we've also got what Peter was talking about in terms of this kind of ebbing and flowing of interest in the Balkans and the Sahel.

I think also what was in there was a point about hypocrisy and double standards, and not just that there's a moral problem there, when you say that you should only fight a war in self-defence then have these big offensive conflicts, but that also then impacts your relationships with all kinds of other states and has a geopolitical impact as well. So I think that's really a key issue.

CHARLIE: Yeah and I think all of these other actors that are stepping up to provide security are really interesting to take a deeper look at maybe in future episodes. For example, we talked a lot about Russia as a security guarantor and actor, but we didn't talk about so much about China's role in that situation. Nargis mentioned Turkey, India, the UAE and a few other states as well as stepping up and filling this kind of security vacuum that we're seeing in some areas of the world.

LEWIS: And obviously the discussions that were coming out around elections and Peter and Nargis's take on them was very interesting to me as well.

CHARLIE: Yeah I think elections are definitely something that we want to discuss more and I'm sure they'll come up over the course of future episodes.
But that's all we've got time for today.

[MUSIC FADE]

CHARLIE: So that concludes our two-part introduction to the new series of Warpod where we looked at trends in security policy. In the following episodes we're going to delve into further detail on specific subjects. We'll look at the Russia-Ukraine conflict as well as many other conflicts around the world, as well as the changing state of UN interventions, developments in EU arms control and the impact of the UK and US elections on security policy.

Warpod, from Saferworld.

This series was produced by Andy O'Connor and supported by the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust.

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