Dwarkesh Podcast #64 - Andrew Roberts - Why Hitler Lost WW2, Churchill as Applied Historian, & Napoleon as Startup Founder

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Dwarkesh Patel
Today I have the pleasure of speaking with Andrew Roberts, who is most recently the author of "Conflict: The Evolution of Warfare from 1945 to Ukraine." And this book is like Churchill's histories of the Second World War or the First World War, in that one of the principal actors in the conflicts discussed here is the coauthor, General David Petraeus, who commanded the US forces in Afghanistan and Iraq. As one of your coauthors. And speaking of Churchill, Andrew is also the author of some superb and magnificent biographies of Churchill, Napoleon, King George, and an excellent book about World War II. But first, let's begin with conflict. Andrew, welcome to the podcast.

Andrew Roberts
Thank you very much indeed, Dwarkesh. It's an honor to be on your show.

Dwarkesh Patel
So my first question is this: when we look at the first half of the 20th century, it seems like we got unlucky many times in a row. World War I, World War II, the Bolshevik Revolution in Russia, the Maoist Revolution in China—all those things seem like they didn't have to happen. From reading historians about those topics, that if you reversed a bunch of contingent factors a few years back, any one of them could have not happened. And in each of those cases, tens of millions of people died. When we look at the second half of the 20th century, which you write about in these books, it seems like we got lucky again and again, right? So the Cuban missile crisis doesn't go nuclear. We have all these proxy wars that don't go nuclear or result in a world war. China and India liberalize, and communism falls. What explains why we had such different luck in these two different parts of the century?

Andrew Roberts
The invention of the nuclear bomb. It's pretty much as easy as that. You have all these wars that take place in the post-nuclear age after 1945. And so as a result, you have an umbrella under which everybody acts. But although there are hundreds of wars that break out—about 140 wars—they have to be fought in an essentially limited way because of the existence of nuclear weapons.

Dwarkesh Patel
But couldn't you have said the same thing before World War I, and in fact, many did say that before World War I, where we have all this heavy artillery, we have these to kill millions of people even then, and they still went to war. So how much does nuclear war explain the absence of something escalating?

Andrew Roberts
Well, you're right that the First World War did come about in part because of the arms race, but the knowledge that the nuclear bomb could obliterate the entire planet is something that has always managed to make wars limited. Post 1945, what happened in 1914, the most

people you could kill in a single moment would be as a result of an artillery shell. And that's nothing like a nuclear bomb, frankly. So it's apples and pears.

Dwarkesh Patel
I think it's really interesting in this book you write about all these conflicts that have happened since World War II, and in many cases, they're counterinsurgencies or civil wars. And it's interesting when one side gets to say that they're the legitimate force fighting for the country's independence against foreign aggressors when both sides are getting foreign funding and support. So I'm curious, how come the US has been bad at the propaganda here, where Ho Chi Minh or the Taliban get to say that they're the legitimate forces fighting for their country, or how does that determination get made?

Andrew Roberts
Yes, that's a very good point. I think in both cases, Ho Chi Minh and the Taliban both were local inhabitants in a way that the United States obviously wasn't in either place. But whether they represented the majority of the people in either North Vietnam or Afghanistan is a completely different issue. So it's much more a question of whether or not they are totalitarian powers who are able to establish dominance and keep it in a difficult and dangerous part of the world. And that's what both of them were able to do. It didn't mean that they have a legitimacy in the kind of Jeffersonian democracy that one would like in a utopian world. But if they are the people that are wielding power in the sense of a Marxist-Leninist clique, of course, in North Vietnam, you have to deal with them, and they are the established government.

Dwarkesh Patel
But it's interesting that South Vietnam or the government in Afghanistan didn't seem to have that same sort of legitimacy that these other insurgencies had, even though they were still local governments.

Andrew Roberts
Do you think not? I'd rather think they mean, obviously, they're both immensely inefficient and useless and corrupt, but nonetheless, I don't think that detracts from the fact that they were more legitimate than the forces that were rising up against them.

Dwarkesh Patel
Yeah. And in fact, this might be a good opportunity for you to discuss the four key tenets of strategic leadership that you discuss in the book.

Andrew Roberts
Yes, well, what we found in the book very much, very strongly, and it's interesting you should have mentioned the Chinese Civil War because you get that very powerfully as well, is that the side that wins wars very often is not the one that controls the cities or has the largest

amount of men or has the best weaponry. As you mentioned the Chinese Civil War, let's look at that for a second. The Guomindang Nationalist forces, at the outset of that war, had all the major cities, they had four or five times the number of men, and they also had all the advanced weaponry that they'd taken off the Japanese at the time of the Japanese surrender in 1945. Yet they still lost that war. One of the reasons was that they didn't have very impressive strategic leadership. And Chiang Kai-shek, even when he did come up with good plans, often had warlords below him that refused to carry them out. So what we discovered in war after war is that the thing that matters most is this concept of strategic leadership, by which we mean having a leader at the top, either civil or military, but the ultimate decision-maker. And it's usually best when there's somebody who represents the civil and somebody who represents the military and they get along, and they need to get the big idea for the war right. They need to then be able to communicate that to their lieutenants effectively and indeed to the wider country. They need to be able to implement it aggressively and efficiently. And then they need, as the fourth of the levels, to continue to adapt the big idea to circumstances on the ground and to the way in which the war develops. Because obviously, no war carries out according to plan. The enemy always has a say, and then to refine it again and again and again. And so the people who are able to do that are very often victorious, even though they start off the campaign with many more disadvantages than their enemy.

Dwarkesh Patel
You know, I think this might be a good opportunity to start talking about Iraq and Afghanistan, which obviously your coauthor can speak to like nobody else. I found it really interesting in reading his accounts of what happened in those two countries, especially Iraq, which was a premeditated invasion. It wasn't something we had to just immediately do. It had a completely different casus belli with the weapons of mass destruction than 9/11.

Andrew Roberts
Well, and also the surprise attack on Kuwait. Of course, that's the ultimate reason that this took place, what had happened 13 years before, and the 13 years in between. It wasn't just WMD.

Dwarkesh Patel
Yeah. Although I guess 13 years still leaves us enough time to have a plan of what to do. And I found it interesting that you're discussing that after the regime has been changed, you realize that there's not a plan for how to ensure security and stability in the country. And I just can't imagine, obviously, you have really intelligent people like David Petraeus there who are working on this. How is it possible that there was an invasion of these countries without a good plan for how to secure them afterwards?

Andrew Roberts
Well, he wasn't working on it. He was working on how to destroy the Iraqi army and get to Baghdad. And the people who were working on it were a completely different set of generals who were failing to work out what to do once you had got to Baghdad, who assumed that the thing to do would be to get rid of the Ba'ath Party, which essentially ran the country down to the fourth level. It was all very well getting rid of Saddam's sons and some of the other people at the top level, but when you do that and also, essentially, send the army home and not tell them how they're going to feed their families and allow them to keep their weapons, you've got a recipe for disaster. And sure enough, disaster happened. But that can't be blamed on the soldiers at the point of the spear who did an extremely good job, who overthrew that regime in double-quick time.

Dwarkesh Patel
Now, speaking of strategic leadership, why is it that we don't have a figure natively in Iraq and Afghanistan who had that level of leadership? A Zelensky in Iraq and Afghanistan, where in the book General Petraeus discusses the frustrations he had with Maliki in Iraq. And of course, Ghani leaves Afghanistan when the Taliban start routing the Afghan forces.

Andrew Roberts
And Karzai, of course, also in Afghanistan. Yes, these guys come in for a bit of a pasting, understandably in our book, because they are not the sort of Churchillian figures that Zelensky is. I think partly it's down to the sectarian and tribal nature of Iraqi and Afghan society, where, however good a leader is, he doesn't automatically command the attention and loyalty of other people in the same country. The thing about Zelensky was that it was very clear very early on that he was speaking for the huge majority of the country, and it's very difficult for an Iraqi or Afghan leader, however good they are. And I'm not saying for a minute that Maliki and Karzai were any good, let alone the last chap who gets into his helicopter weighed down with suitcases full of money and hightails it out of there. By complete contrast, you do have Zelensky, who shows all of those four qualities of leadership that I mentioned, and also, of course, who decided he was going to stay in Kyiv, fight in Kyiv, his family were going to stay in Kyiv, he wasn't going to let any military-age male Ukrainians leave the country. And his big idea was, "I need ammunition, not a ride."

Dwarkesh Patel
What is our big idea, the Americans' big idea in Ukraine? What is the ceasefire, or end arrangement, we are driving at which we think would be plausible for both sides to accept?

Andrew Roberts
Good question. I don't think Biden has articulated one properly yet. Zelensky has, which is the obvious one, which is that we're not going to allow 18% to 19% of our country to forever be under the rule of the Russians and we're going to throw them out. And when David and I visited Kyiv about four months ago, we came across a huge level of national unity over that

big idea. All the generals, of course, and the ministers subscribe to it, but they're sort of paid to—it's part of their job. But so also did everybody on the street and everybody that we spoke to. They all absolutely believed in ultimate victory. They didn't know how long it was going to take, they didn't know how much more blood was going to have to be shed, but they all believed that this would not stand and that they were going to ultimately be victorious, even if you, the Americans, cut off their funding after the next election.

Dwarkesh Patel
Right, but what is the answer to the American question of what is our goal? Is that the same as the Ukrainian goal?

Andrew Roberts
No, I don't think it is at the moment. It seems to be to wait until other countries, such as Britain, give a new set of weaponry, then to give much more of the same kind of weaponry, then to wait until somebody else gives some more advanced weaponry. You saw this with anti-tank weaponry, later with tanks, then with artillery, then long-range artillery. Now, you've been giving them these ATACMS, which are very impressive, but you've hung back a bit with fighter aircraft and so on. So it seems to be a piecemeal approach, where you wait until the Russians don't respond, and then you give a bit more. Frankly, it would have been much better, I think, to have armed the Ukrainians earlier with the Leopards, essentially, and the tanks that they really needed for this big southern counteroffensive and come out wholeheartedly for them. Now, you've given a lot of money, obviously. $44 billion is a very significant amount of money, and the Europeans have given as much or slightly more now. But still, the Russians are in control of 18% of the country, and they've been building what the Ukrainians were expecting, hundreds of yards of minefields. In fact, there are miles of minefields down in the south there. And so I'm afraid it's a long and bloody slog, but we've seen wars like this before. This is one of the things that we write about—the Korean War being a classic example, where you just have to thrash it out.

Dwarkesh Patel
Actually, I want to ask you about Korea in a second, but it does seem weird that we're slowly funding a war of attrition. It's classic Clausewitz to focus your effort on the point of attack. If you're just slowly doling out this equipment, why not just give it to them all at once? So they can have a successful counteroffensive.

Andrew Roberts
Because I don't think you've got the political will in the United States to do that, frankly. I think that, yes, you have a nominal majority in both houses, but especially with your lower house at the moment, what's going on there, you don't have the sense of national will to do that. And so, as a result, these poor Ukrainians are fighting and dying. When you do give them stuff, it's extremely helpful and useful. But as I say, the key point is that they will carry

on fighting and dying even if you didn't give them the stuff because they're not going to have America essentially dictating to them what their national destiny is.

Dwarkesh Patel
Now, speaking of the Korean War, the chapter you wrote about this in your book was really interesting and great. And I wonder if Truman had decided to use a nuclear bomb in Korea, had agreed with MacArthur to do so, whether the taboo that we have against nuclear weapons—against tactical nuclear weapons—would not have emerged in the first place. So, the Soviets would have used it in Afghanistan, we would have used it in Vietnam, and Thatcher would have used it in the Falklands.

No, I wouldn't go that far because that would have wiped out the Falklands, and we were trying to win back the Falklands. But yeah, you're quite right. Of course, if MacArthur had used nuclear weapons against the Chinese crossing the Yalu River, then yes, he might well have actually won that war, but it would have lowered the moral barrier so significantly that nuclear weapons would have been used an awful lot more. As it is today, although there's lots of saber rattling by Lavrov and Putin, it doesn't really look as though, I mean, yes, there might be a catastrophic disaster at the Zaporizhzhia nuclear plant, but it's very unlikely for Putin actually to use tactical nuclear missiles in Ukraine, not least, of course, because the Chinese don't want him to. But had they been a regular feature of warfare in the 1950s, so on, then yeah, he might well do it.

Dwarkesh Patel
I just think it's important when you're looking back in history, to give credit at decisions that are not often discussed like this, where Truman just decided to lose Korea rather than, at the time the taboo didn't even exist, but rather than to create a taboo against nuclear weapons.

Andrew Roberts
Exactly. He did create it, as did Clement Atlee, actually, to give him his due. The British Prime Minister flew over to Washington very concerned about this talk, MacArthur's talk about using the nuclear bomb, and so he needs to get some credit as well. And also actually, Truman needs credit for sacking MacArthur in the first place, because MacArthur did have some, I mean, he was a charismatic and impressive figure whose island hopping policy in the Second World Wars was inspired and so on. But he was the classic example of the general who becomes too powerful, an overmighty subject, who had political ambitions himself, who got the Chinese involvement in the war completely wrong, got the big ideas wrong, essentially, and had to be sacked.

Dwarkesh Patel
And that's also another interesting point, how overwhelmingly popular he was. And I remember reading in Lyndon Johnson's biography that when MacArthur came to Congress

to speak after he was sacked about the Korean War's progression, somebody said, this is the closest thing, if he had wanted to, MacArthur was so popular that he could have just said, we're going to storm the Capitol, and people would have just followed him.

Andrew Roberts
Well, having seen what happened on January the 6th of last year, it's obviously not completely impossible.

Dwarkesh Patel
Okay, going back to Iraq and Afghanistan, how much have those conflicts, those counterinsurgency operations, prepared the American military for a war with a peer competitor like China?

Andrew Roberts
A great deal, obviously, but that's true of most wars. It's interesting, of course, China hasn't actually fought a major war for a very long time, really, and since the 1960s against India. So actual practice is an incredibly useful thing. If Ukraine were ever to be allowed into NATO, for example, we'd have 900,000 troops on the southern border of NATO. It would be a huge addition. So actually, having troops that have fought, there's no amount of training that is the same as actual war fighting. What you mentioned earlier actually, I was just thinking about that. Good question. You asked about nuclear bombs. Of course, what we're seeing today in Gaza is a classic example of limited war, in that however vicious and ghastly and painful and bloody it's going to be, it is the story of a group fighting against a country that has got the nuclear bomb alone of all the countries in the region and is on moral grounds not prepared even to threaten the use of it. So in that sense, the Netanyahu government has, it's not doing what Lavrov and Putin are doing by saber-rattling the nuclear option, which does exist. So much of what is happening is as a result of Tehran wanting it to happen. And Tehran doesn't have the bomb and Israel does, and yet Israel is not threatening Tehran.

Dwarkesh Patel
Yeah, and that's a really interesting point. I mean, as early as 1973, you could have had Israel nuke the Egyptian beachheads. It was a war of self-defense. You die if you don't use it or if you lose the war.

Andrew Roberts
Exactly. '73 was an existential war in the way that this one at the moment isn't. Now, obviously, we don't know what's going to happen within Israel, with the West Bank, with Hezbollah, with the Iranians and Syrians. It's not impossible that this could turn into an existential war for Israel. But the possession of the nuclear bomb hasn't done Israel any favors. Equally, it hasn't weakened Israel either.

Dwarkesh Patel
Is deterrence dead? So, speaking of Israel, Iran funded these Hamas terrorists to conduct this attack. And as far as I know, there's no serious repercussions in Iran itself for doing this or funding Hezbollah, of course. Is deterrence as a doctrine, is that dead?

Andrew Roberts
No, because it's working very well in Southeast Asia. In Taiwan, it is only dead amongst people who are so irrational and illogical that they don't mind essentially being extirpated in the way that the Israelis might soon be trying to extirpate Hamas. So if you sort of don't care, if you believe that God has given you the right and duty to kill Jews, then you're not going to be deterred. In the same way that a much more rational and logical actor such as Xi Jinping is where he wakes up every morning and thinks, right, should I be invading Taiwan? And he recognizes, looks to the world situation, to the might of America in the South China Seas, and looks to all his neighbors, all but North Korea, of which hate and fear him, and recognizes that today is not the day to do it. And that is what deterrence is. It's incredibly expensive, of course, deterrence, but it's immensely cheap at the same time compared to the alternative, which is war.

Dwarkesh Patel
So, yeah, this is one of the points you make in the book, is that deterrence money spent on deterrence is seldom wasted. But deterrence also has to be credible. Now, regardless, separate from the question of whether America would actually intervene if China invaded Taiwan, is it rational for the Chinese to believe that America would intervene on behalf of an island with 20 million people, have a kinetic war with China over an island off the coast of China? Does that make sense? Is that deterrence credible for Chinese?

Andrew Roberts
It is. It certainly is, because there is what's been called strategic ambiguity in the American stance. And that is something that no rational actor wants to have to deal with. An America which could be sucked into a major war, an America that would have maybe act irrationally over Taiwan, or which, as you can see, with the Orcus Treaty, has got ambitions to stand up to China and feels that it needs to carry them out. The public statements are obviously not intended deliberately to provoke China, but they're pretty straightforward in being ambiguous enough that China doesn't want to take the risk. Whilst obviously the United States military budget is so enormous, so vast, it's capable of deterring China, if it was to send the wrong messages, taking ships away and so on, then it might not look at what America's done in Ukraine. And Xi recognizes that it's led a coalition which has fought very hard and so far hasn't lost. And so, without a single American serviceman being involved, were American servicemen involved, which they would be in a Taiwan confrontation, the American president would be much, much more likely to go all in.

Dwarkesh Patel
Yeah. Although if, for example, China blockades Taiwan and puts the onus on America to launch the kinetic war to break through the blockade. I wonder if then put in those terms, an American president would not intervene, or at least the Chinese wouldn't expect an American president to launch the kinetic war to break the blockade.

Andrew Roberts
Well, they've obviously war gamed this a million times in the Pentagon. And I think that your remark about 20 million people is obviously an apposite one. But do let's also remember that Taiwan has 80% of the semiconductor industry, or at least the high-level semiconductor industry. Lots of good things are being done to mitigate that against that now. But nonetheless, it would be catastrophic for China to be able to snaffle all of that in a single coup d'état. And obviously the Biden administration knows that.

Dwarkesh Patel
Before we return to conflict, I do want to ask you some questions about Churchill and World War II. And in fact, this is actually a good jumping-off point because speaking of rational leaders, I'm struck when reading your biography of Churchill of how much of his thinking is more emotive, less probabilistic, much more principled. And when I try to backtest how I would have reacted, given my mindset to World War II if I was in Britain, I have to admit I like to think in terms of probabilities and expected value. I would have said, what's the expected value of fighting Germany in 1938 over Czechoslovakia? What would happen if he just didn't? Looks like probably, it probably might just be best to run our odds with appeasement. And I wonder if this is just a one-off case, or do you think in general that illustrates a weakness in the more sort of probabilistic way of thinking about geopolitics compared to Churchill's more emotional, oratorial, principled way?

Andrew Roberts
I don't really agree with you. I think, with the premise because I think that Churchill, yes, he was emotional and principled but also he recognized that the advance that the Germans made between the Sudeten crisis, which ended in Munich in September 1938, and the outbreak of war a year later in September 1939, was so huge, especially in their creation of bombers and tanks and so on. And also it was helped so much by taking the Skoda factories of the Czechs from Czechoslovakia and churning out tanks for Germany, that it was a rational thing to have tried to have stopped Germany invading Czechoslovakia. So what Churchill was doing, yes, he was emotional and a great rhetorician and so on, but he was also making a very, very hard-nosed decision with regard to the balance of power, recognizing that in fact, Germany was in a much stronger position a year later than it had been at the time of Munich.

Dwarkesh Patel
Now, it's remarkable to what extent Churchill had read, and not only read but written a tremendous amount of history. And I'm curious how concretely that history informed his decision-making as a leader. Was it at the level of tactics and geography, where you see how old battles in the same places are fought? Was it at the level of grand strategy? Was it at the understanding of human nature? What level did that understanding of history help him?

Andrew Roberts
All of those and more. One of the reasons I'm proud to be a historian is that Churchill was one, and primarily that was his job in the 1930s when he was out of office, was to write history books. And one of his great ancestors, John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, it's almost like an autobiography of the Second World War, and he's actually writing about his own ancestor 200 years beforehand. But it is extraordinary how many things to do with tactics and strategy, of course, but also with how to deal with allies, how to deal with domestic political opinion and so on. All of these things are gone into and then only five years after the publication of that book, he is Prime Minister and fighting a world war himself. History was a constant echo for him. It gave him endless signposts. It's mentioned in some 10% of his speeches in the Second World War. 10% of those speeches do have references to history. He was basically telling the British people that, look back at the Spanish Armada, look back at Napoleonic Wars, we have been in this dangerous situation before. The country has seen great perils before, Elizabeth I and the Spanish Armada, for example, and we've come through them and been victorious. So, yes, he recognized the sort of political power of historical analogy and he bent it to his overall overarching theme that we have to stand up to the Nazis, actually.

Dwarkesh Patel
So speaking of this, if we think of Churchill as an applied historian, this isn't a question I was just planning on asking you, but you are in the House of Lords. You've written about these, I guess, basically everything that's happened in the last few centuries across your 20 books. Would you ever consider getting more involved with politics?

Andrew Roberts
Well, I'm a politician. I mean, I go to the House of Lords from Monday to Wednesday, lunchtime to dinner time. I go and vote and other than I can't see how much more involved in politics I can be than speaking and voting in one of the chambers of our parliament. If you want to refine that slightly, Dwarkesh, yeah.

Dwarkesh Patel
Let me restate the question. Would you consider running for, aspiring towards a leadership position in the UK, given how successful past historians have been at that endeavor?

Andrew Roberts
Well, we've just mentioned one past historian who's been successful. I assure you that there are an awful lot of other ones who haven't. No, I'm very happy with the extent that I involve myself in politics in the UK. I've got to get back down to writing history books, frankly, is the reason I was put on Earth, really.

Dwarkesh Patel
Now, tying back to Churchill. And your most recent book, there's this interesting thing where wartime leaders, very successful wartime leaders, are kicked out of office after they win their wars. Churchill in 1945, De Gaulle resigns in '46. He led the French against the Nazis. And then more recently, we should discuss in your book, George H. W. Bush possibly has the most successful foreign policy since World War II, the unification of Germany, the fall of the Soviet bloc without a single shot being fired, and many others.

Andrew Roberts
David Lloyd George is the other classic example. Of course, David Lloyd George led us to victory in the First World War. He was out by 1922.

Dwarkesh Patel
So what is this? Why are we in democratic countries keen to kick out the people who win us these wars and foreign policy wins?

Andrew Roberts
Because we recognize that the skills you need in peace are completely different from the ones you need in war. And what the Labor Party was offering in 1945, for example, this sort of New Jerusalem of socialism and the welfare state and nationalizing the Bank of England and free stuff, essentially national Health Service was going to be given by Clement Attlee. But although much of that actually was going to be done by Winston Churchill as well, they recognized that the Conservatives didn't have their heart in it in the same way that the socialists did. So it's completely rational, isn't it, in a democratic country to go for when you've got a choice of leaders to go for the one who's going to lead you through the peace, however well the person who led you through the war did.

Dwarkesh Patel
Although that particular example of socialism in Britain doesn't seem like the rational choice for the British population to have made.

Andrew Roberts
Well, it did after six years of grueling warfare, where people wanted to have a sort of more healthy and better life, and they assumed that socialism was going to be able to do that for them. It took us half a century before we grew out of that particular miasma.

Dwarkesh Patel
Now let's talk about future wars, which is something interesting that you and General Petraeus survey. In your most recent book, you mentioned that the balance of power has shifted more towards defense than offense recently. Why is that?

Andrew Roberts
We're seeing that, aren't we? Or we will be about to see that, I fear. In Gaza, in Napoleonic times, it was one in three. You needed three attackers for every defender. That probably stays true until the Second World War. But frankly, with taking Gaza as an indication, with IEDs, with booby traps, certainly with all these tunnels, and with the capacity for ambush and for sniper fire as well, which has come on leaps and bounds since the old days of Stalingrad, you need certainly more than three to one in offense. It's an interesting fact that when Clausewitz was writing, three to one was a perfectly reasonable ratio, but I think that's gone to the birds now.

Dwarkesh Patel
Oh, interesting. This just preempted and I guess answered a question I was about to ask you, which is it's remarkable to me that the three to one ratio which Clausewitz first came up with has stayed consistent for, I guess, the answer is that it hasn't. But I was about to ask, well, it's weird that for hundreds of years, with all these new technologies, that that ratio is still the one that people use, that technicians still use.

Andrew Roberts
Yes, well, as I say, they did until sort of well into our lifetimes. But they'd be mad to, today, because that has altered, especially, of course, in built-up areas in the kind of situation which one gets in Gaza with lots of high-rise buildings, fewer now than there were, to be frank, but lots of built-up areas. You can look at, for example, the Battle of Monte Cassino, where because the Allies flattened the monastery, actually the rubble was easier for the Germans to defend with machine gun nests and so on, than if the actual building had been left standing. So, there is an argument, actually, that you do better if you don't blast the buildings, as you saw also in Mariupol, which you mentioned earlier. And then there's, of course, Stalingrad, where they fight something called Rattenkrieg, which is essentially "rats' war", because people are fighting down in the sewers. It's hand-to-hand stuff. It's extremely vicious, where every building, every room has to be fought for, sometimes down with bayonets. So this kind of fighting, which of course is heavily full of high casualty rates, might well be the one that we're about to see the IDF enter in Gaza.

Dwarkesh Patel
That's a scary comparison. Gaza becomes Stalingrad. I didn't think of it that way, but that's wow.

Andrew Roberts
In my house in London, I have an actual copy of one of Winston Churchill's speeches with his handwritten annotations, and one of the sentences is that London fought street by street could engulf and devour an entire hostile army. And one hopes that doesn't happen, obviously, to the IDF, but that's the reality of house-to-house fighting.

Dwarkesh Patel
Actually, while we're on the subject, I have a few other questions on World War II that I want to ask you before we return to future wars. You have this really interesting book, I think probably my favorite book about World War II, The Storm of War, which I highly recommend. And in it, you make the claim that were it not for the ideologically inspired blunders of Hitler and the Nazis, they could have won World War II, and then you detail a lot of the mistakes they made. But when we step back and look at after America joins the war, the overwhelming industrial output of America, even if they didn't make these mistakes, is there really any chance that you have a country that has, like, twice the GNP and is outproducing the rest of the world combined in ships and planes, that you could have really stood up to that?

Andrew Roberts
Well, why did Hitler declare war against America? There wouldn't have been a war if he hadn't declared war against America. You'd have fought a war against the country that attacked you, Japan. And the reason is because he was a Nazi. Because he believed that Jews and blacks dominated the American decision-making process, which, by the way, is completely absurd. When one looks at the Roosevelt administration, it had very, very few Jews or blacks, but nonetheless, the Nazis didn't do their factual accuracy; it wasn't always their highest attribute. And they also thought that Americans were cowards and wouldn't be able to fight very well, which is extraordinary considering that Americans had fought very well indeed in the First World War. Adolf Hitler told Molotov when they were in a bunker in 1940 in Berlin that if the Americans did come into the war, they wouldn't be able to actually put any troops into the western theater until the year 1970. As it was, needless to say, by November 1942, you had a quarter of a million GIs storming ashore in North Africa. This sense of ideology. You see it also, of course, six months earlier, in June of 1941 where Hitler invades Russia in the belief that the Slavic people can't stand up to the great German Aryan master race. And as Goebbels said to him, "We'll kick in the door and the whole rotten edifice will come crashing down," talking about the Bolshevik state. But that's not what happened, of course. And the Russians, fighting on their own territory, i.e., when they're not fighting a foreign adventure like in Poland or in Finland or now in Ukraine, are actually very good soldiers. So he got that wrong. Again and again, Hitler put his Nazi ideology before the strategic best interests of the German Reich.

Dwarkesh Patel
It was fascinating to read about the different mistakes Hitler made, obviously, from liquidating 6 million of his most productive, intelligent, and well-educated people to the timing of Operation Barbarossa or launching it in the first place. To the timing of launching World War II in the first place. But even if he hadn't declared war on America, the Lend-Lease aid on whose basis the Soviets were able to drive back the Germans would still have continued. And that was, of course, a meat grinder where the overwhelming majority of German troops died. So I guess you could say, well, then he wouldn't have Operation Barbarossa at all. But then are we still talking about the same war?

Andrew Roberts
He would have invaded Russia and been caught in this enormous war. But if he hadn't declared war on the United States, it's very difficult to work out how Roosevelt would have been able to have declared war on him, especially if you're fighting a full-scale war against Japan, which by that stage had, by early 1942, conquered one-eighth of the world's surface. It's a huge undertaking. But you're absolutely right about the might of American production. By the calendar year 1944, when the British produced 28,000 warplanes, the Russians and the Germans both produced 40,000 each, the United States produced 98,000 warplanes. It's almost as much as the whole of the rest of the world put together. They were building Liberty ships at the rate of one a week. It was just a truly extraordinary thing in terms of sheer production. So, of course, that was going to give them the final say over who commanded D-Day, when D-Day would happen and what would happen once they landed in France. But it also had huge implications for everything else, really, in the Second World War as well. And you're also completely right to say, for every five Germans killed in conflict, I don't mean bombed from the air, I mean killed on a battlefield, four of them died on the Eastern Front.

Dwarkesh Patel
Now, given how misled Hitler was by Nazi ideology, why weren't the Soviets as misled by Communist ideology in the waging of World War II?

Andrew Roberts
Because Communist ideology hadn't affected actual Politburo the way in which the Politburo worked. Under Stalin, there was no sort of dictatorship of the proletariat or anything like that, let alone any equality. He was obviously a totalitarian dictator. But what he did learn was that the Hitlerian way of fighting the war was not the most productive one. So what you get after Operation Barbarossa, after which he had some kind of a mini mental breakdown in the immediate hours that he learned about it, how the one man he trusted in politics, Adolf Hitler, had betrayed him for a, that's a difficult moment to take. But then what he does is to start to lean on those marshals such as Konev and Zhukov and Rokossovsky and others, and gives them a lot more power than they ever had before, and listens to them and takes their advice and actually has a much more Western view. The relationship

between Churchill, Roosevelt, Alan Brooke, and George Marshall, which I write about in my book, Masters and Commanders, is a big sort of give and take, much more democratic and Western way of coming to military decisions. And that's the one that Stalin adopts, and quite rightly and completely contrasted from what's going on in the Wolf's Lair, 1800 miles behind the German front, which is actually the Führer listening for hours to his generals, most of whom knew strategy far better than he did because they actually went to staff colleges. And they'd fought, of course, as officers in the First World War rather than just as a corporal. And men like Rundstedt and Guderian and Manstein and so on, these people would be listened to by Hitler. And then, right at the end of the meeting, Hitler would sum up and say that they were going to do exactly what he'd originally said right at the beginning of the meeting. And we have every word said by everybody at the Führer conferences because the stenographers took down every word that was said. And it's very clear that they would go into tremendous detail. But ultimately, Hitler's way was the way that the Wehrmacht went.

Dwarkesh Patel
This is actually interesting and this is one of the points you discussed in Masters and Commanders about the different ways in which democracies versus dictatorships are able to execute wars, and World War II is obviously the perfect example to evaluate this.

Andrew Roberts
Well, except that the Soviet Union was not a democracy, of course, and it was on the winning side. There is that sort of glaring glitch in the...

Dwarkesh Patel
...you have the Allied, the Western democracies have this strategy by committee, I think you described it in The Storm of War, and that obviously means something as stupid as Operation Barbarossa never happens. You have to come to a consensus between all these leaders. At the same time, in your Napoleon biography, you have this singular genius who is able to execute these moves that even his advisors often are like, well, you shouldn't do that. I guess in the case of Russia they were right. But yeah, maybe you can talk generally about the merits of strategy by consensus versus strategy by a singular mind.

Andrew Roberts
Yes. Actually, the interesting thing about Napoleon in 1812 is that he wasn't warned by his generals that it was a big mistake. And this was partly because he and they thought that this was going to be a three-week campaign and it was only going to go about 50 miles into Russian territory before the Russians capitulated or came to a big battle and were defeated. And he had absolutely no plans at all to go all the way to Moscow in 1812. That would have seemed, as he was crossing the Neiman River, as a complete absurdity. But he was drawn in more and more into the Russian heartland until finally, they gave battle in September 1812 at Borodino. And then he went on and took Moscow. But he left enough time to get back from Moscow to Smolensk. It was, in fact, more time than he had taken to get from Smolensk to

Moscow. There are other reasons, which I go into in the book, about why the retreat from Moscow turned into the catastrophe it did, but it wasn't actually primarily the weather at the beginning. So, yes, Napoleon is the classic example of the single mind strategic leader who, like Alexander the Great or Julius Caesar, has the whole centrality of the campaign in his head. But, of course, he does lose. And after 1812 you have the various coalitions of 1813 and 1814 which force him to abdicate. Then he comes back, of course, in the Hundred Days and loses there as well. So that is in contrast to the much more collegiate way that Wellington and Schwarzenberg and Blücher and so on interacted with one another. But, yes, your overall thesis, I think, is absolutely right about democracies being better at fighting wars, but dictatorships, of course, and totalitarian ones are authoritarian as well, much better at starting wars because they do have the elements of surprise. Very often, one looks at the Yom Kippur War, of course, look at 9/11, Pearl Harbor, Barbarossa that you mentioned earlier, the Falklands, the attack on Kuwait by Saddam. There's a great line of the Chinese sneaking into Korea, the Chinese crossing the Yalu River, 160,000 of them in the dead of night. I mean, it's the most extraordinary surprise attack. And there's that wonderful line of Paul Wolfowitz's, who, when he said that surprise attacks take place so often in history, that the only surprising thing is that we're still surprised by them. And that is right. Democracies can do surprise attacks. Obviously, the major exception to that rule is when Israel did successfully carry out the Six-Day War surprise attack at the beginning of that conflict. But otherwise, democracies tend not to. And by the way, it's a good thing not to, because what it does do is light a fire under the country that's been surprised. Classic examples, of course, being Pearl Harbor, and it makes them feel outraged and angry as a result. They tend to exact revenge. And by the way, what Hamas did on the 7th October is a classic example of that. Of course, that's a surprise attack which was, by its own light, immensely successful, but which will have lit a fire under Israel that is going to be very dangerous for Hamas.

Dwarkesh Patel
This is actually an excellent opportunity to ask you about bringing us back to the future of war, which you discuss in your newest book, Conflict. The question I have is given we have satellite reconnaissance, drones, and all this cyber espionage, given how clearly we can see the world now with these new technologies, are large-scale surprise attacks ever going to be possible again?

Andrew Roberts
That's a very good question. I'm tempted to say no, because you're quite right, everything can be spotted on the battlefield today. Obviously, the Hamas surprise attack was a much smaller scale than a complete nation-on-nation kind of attack like Barbarossa or Pearl Harbour. But nonetheless, it is much more difficult to hide troops today than it ever has been in the past. That doesn't change, of course, the psychology of what happens when you are surprised in the way that Israel was.

But, yeah, in the 10th chapter, the last chapter of our book, we call it "The Future of War." We look at areas like cyber and space, but also sensors, AI, robotics, and drones. Of course, in the future, the war will be fought between two sets of drones, and the humans won't be in the loop. They'll be on the loop. They'll have written the algorithms, but they won't be in the loop because decision-making has to take place far faster than the human mind can work. If a human is involved and at the controls of weaponry of the future, then he'll lose. It has to be fought between two sets of machines and of course, that has great advantages in terms of speed. But also machines have no conscience. They don't feel fear or cowardice. They don't feel remorse or regret or pity. It's going to be a much more dangerous world in that sense.

Dwarkesh Patel
Yeah, and that has all kinds of interesting implications from the technical which you discuss in the book, that the electromagnetic spectrum will be under much greater contention because then you can jam the electronics and the communications between these devices to the strategic. I mean, you have these examples famously, like, let's say that in the 1980s when the stock market crashes because an algorithm malfunctions, if that leads to a world war, whatever that was the equivalent of, that leads to a world war.

So you discussed in your Ukraine chapter that tech entrepreneurs are now having a much bigger impact on the waging of war where obviously you have Elon Musk providing Starlink services to Ukraine and notably refusing to provide the service to help with the surprise attack, the naval surprise attack that Ukraine was planning on launching in Crimea. Now, how will the ability of tech entrepreneurs to dictate where and how they will get involved in lending their technology to governments, how will that play into the future strategy? Will they be a force for peace or will they not be a force at all? Because if the government really wants your technology, in the end, they can just expropriate it.

Andrew Roberts
I don't think they'll do that except for in times of extreme stress and crisis. But no, actually there's a very wide and I think overall very positive area that tech entrepreneurs can play here. And Starlink, yes, it's true that Mr. Musk did refuse to help one attack in Crimea, but overall Starlink has been invaluable in this war. I mean, in a way, it is the first proper internet war. People with iPhones on the battlefield can upload both images and obviously also map references which can prove extremely useful to drones and artillery. And this is one of the reasons that Kiev didn't fall in the opening parts of the Russo-Ukrainian war because Ukrainian artillery was being given accurate information on all sorts of open intelligence, open sources. It was a new kind of warfare which the Russians took a very long time to catch up with. And of course, because they didn't have their own people on the ground, whereas Ukraine did. The native population was 100% opposed to the Russian invasion in every area apart from four Donbass oblasts, you essentially had just a multitude of information sources that were proving to be incredibly useful.

So that's one aspect of modernity. The next one, obviously, is drones and the use they've been put to by the Ukrainians. But the sort of innovative stance of the Ukrainians has been really extraordinarily impressive. And when tech people all across the world, not just obviously in the United States, came out very actively in support of Ukraine, it really did move the dial. And so I think with companies like Palantir and others that are really making huge advances and the cutting edge still being with the west in terms of tech entrepreneurial ability, this is a good thing for the west. And that some individuals are going to be pretty much like Mr. Musk, the most important private individuals, I would say, to actually affect warfare since Teesen and Krupp back before the First World War. So it really is a new world, but it's not a bad new world. It could actually be an extremely good new world for the west and for democracy.

Dwarkesh Patel
Yep. Speaking of tech entrepreneurs and their personalities, let's discuss your biography of Napoleon. So I'm not aware if you're aware of this, but living in there is in the startup community, there is a cult of Napoleon that is solely there.

Andrew Roberts
I didn't know that. Seriously? Is there?

Dwarkesh Patel
Your biography is the part of the canon. So in the person of Napoleon, I think startup founders see the best aspects of themselves resemblance. You have somebody who is a young upstart, just stupendously energetic and competent, much more efficient than the bureaucracies and old systems around him, a reformer, tremendously intellectually curious, an autodidact. You can just go down the list. What is your reaction?

Andrew Roberts
I love that. That's exactly what he was, yes, absolutely. He was totally fascinated by every new thing. He flung himself into ideas for balloons and submarines and anything that could be useful for agricultural development. He was fascinated by trying to build bridges faster and better and cheaper. He was a real go-getter when it came to giving prizes for new chemical components and so on. This was somebody who created the legend, not just for soldiers, but very much for inventors and entrepreneurs and people like that, who he felt were going to help France outstrip Britain, essentially, which had a head start on France in the Industrial Revolution. So there was a very strong sort of nationalist reasoning behind his embrace of science. But he was made a fellow of the French Academy on the basis of his genuine interest, not just because he was the First Consul of France. He used to attend all their meetings. And this was an extraordinary thing. If there was going to be a meeting on, I don't know, electricity, sitting in the front, there would be the First Consul taking notes.

So I can understand why young tech entrepreneurs might like Napoleon, and I'm thrilled that my book might be helping with that.

Dwarkesh Patel
Yeah, no, I think you'd be surprised to the extent of it.

Andrew Roberts
Also, it's true that megalomaniacs also love Napoleon. So I'm not saying that there is a massive Venn diagram shaded area between tech entrepreneurs and megalomaniacs, but it doesn't necessarily mean that liking Napoleon doesn't necessarily mean that you're going to be a great tech entrepreneur, shall we say.

On the point of being a futurist, it's really remarkable. In your Churchill biography, you discuss the ways in which he saw the influence of tanks and planes and even nuclear energy far before many others.

Andrew Roberts
His best friend was the Oxford professor for physics, professor Lindemann, and later Lord Cherwell. When it comes to the people he had around him, he loved having scientists around him. He said that scientists should be on tap but not on top. So he did recognize that he didn't want to have a world run by scientists, but he definitely wanted to know what they were thinking. And as early as the mid-1920s, so a good 20 years before the atom bomb, he talked about how an entire city could be destroyed by a nuclear bomb the size of an orange. And that was very advanced stuff, frankly. He, of course, was fascinated by the use of radar in the Second World War, especially at the very beginning of the Second World War, how one could bend the German rays to mean that their bombers were sent off target and didn't fly over British cities. He wanted to get into the real nitty-gritty of all that, and of course, the ultimate mathematical genius machine, the Ultra machine that broke the Enigma code. In everything related to that, he was also really interested in learning and understanding the reasoning behind what was going on.

It's very easy to think of Churchill as a bit of a reactionary figure, this sort of tubby Tory with his cigars and his brandy and wanting to hang on to India and all of these sorts of very much set in the past kind of attitudes and attributes. But really, he was somebody who was obsessed with the future.

Dwarkesh Patel
But on the point of Napoleon, it's interesting the way you describe the way he would micromanage every aspect of the Empire and obviously his energy and efficiency. It reads honestly like an Elon Musk biography where Elon is micromanaging the engines on his Raptors at the same time running these five other companies. I wonder what you think a

person like Napoleon does today that seems that a genius is born today. Does he become an Elon Musk or does he do something else?

Andrew Roberts
No, that's exactly what he does, absolutely. He goes to Silicon Valley and sets up his own company and makes a billion out of finding something useful to advance mankind with. That's exactly what Napoleon does today. And by the way, if he has anything like the same acquisitive techniques, he probably buys up lots of other companies around him in the way that Napoleon invaded country after country. But when he did invade those countries, what he would do, for example, in Italy after the Italian campaign and he entered Milan, the first thing he did was to get the intellectual, the writers, the scientists, the chemists, and so on, together. He was very interested in astronomy and so on, and would talk to them about their thing. So you had an intellectual as leader, which frankly the Bourbons had not been for the last thousand years of French history. It's very difficult to think of more than one or two genuine intellectuals as ruler. And so one can understand why he became popular amongst the middle class and the intellectuals themselves. And he would also, one of the other things he would do was go into every town he went into. He would go into the ghetto and free the Jews and give them civil and religious rights and so on. And I think that was tremendously forward-thinking for that day and age as well, and a very attractive feature about him.

Dwarkesh Patel
Obviously, the biography of Napoleon must end tragically, and I notice this about many other biographies of great people I read. It is often what makes them great in the first place, they keep making these double or nothing gambles that catapult them to the top. And then, of course, at some point, your luck runs out. That's obviously an oversimplification in every single case. But I wonder if this is also a pattern you notice in the lives of great figures. You could say, for Elon, having his reputation and fortune wasted away at the altar of Twitter could be an example of one such thing. But what is your reaction to that?

Andrew Roberts
Yes, of course, hubris is the occupational hazard of hugely successful people, needless to say. I mean, it's probably also the occupational hazard of lots of other people, but we just don't know about it because they're not usually successful. But one does tend to get stuck in one's ways. One can't necessarily teach an old dog new tricks. You can't necessarily reinvent yourself and therefore you go down the same old paths.

I would say in Napoleon's defense, of course, not least that idea that when he invaded in 1812, which is the key moment, after that nothing good happens, and before that, lots and lots of good things happen. But the key thing about that is that, look, he had beaten the Russians twice before. He was invading with an army of 615,000, which was the same size as Paris at that time. He knew that the Russian army was only about half the size of his and

he didn't want to go too far into Russia, which of course, as I mentioned earlier, changed in the course of the campaign. But it wasn't an insane hubristic mad decision to go to war against Russia in 1812.

What was hubristic, mad, and insane was to try to beat Britain by imposing a continental blockade on the entirety of Europe, and therefore attempting to crush Britain by stopping smuggling, which was completely rife, and to stop every other country from entering into free trade with Britain. It was that belief that protectionism could somehow win the war against Britain. That was the mad thing. And that's what led him into the Peninsula campaign, which cost him a quarter of a million.

Dwarkesh Patel
Wow. Actually, if you have somebody like Napoleon, who for his entire life has succeeded in ways that nobody else is succeeding or could anticipate or people tell him, well, that's not possible, and he accomplishes it. Obviously, he has to take advisors with a grain of salt, knowing that he has been able to do things that others have not been able to do, but he also has to recognize his limits. And this is not just a question with Napoleon in particular, but just in general. How does somebody who is at the tail end of multiple distributions not fall back to mediocrity when making judgments about themselves, but also recognize their limits?

Andrew Roberts
It's always a question of choosing the right advisors, isn't it? In domestic politics, areas that he didn't know much about, like legal codes—although it's called the Napoleonic Code, actually it was his legal experts who drew it up and saw it through and passed the legislation. So in areas he wasn't particularly interested in, he did allow a considerable degree to be advised upon. He was the dictator, he had the ultimate decision, but he was very good at choosing advisors, quite regardless of their status in society or how respectable they were.

There's a man called Cambacérès, who was a truly powerful figure, and he was gay. This was something that was pretty much unknown at that stage. He was outwardly gay, and at a time when, of course, that was against the law. But Napoleon didn't mind that because he was so good at his job that he kept him on as arch chancellor. Some of the marshals, he was a true believer in meritocracy in that. Some of his marshals—there were 26 marshals, 13 of them came from the working classes and in some cases below, they were peasants, sons of innkeepers and barrel coopers and domestic servants, and so on. And yet, if he saw that a man was lucky, it was one of the things he always wanted in his generals, but also was a natural leader. He would appoint him, and they became marshals. And all the marshals, apart from a couple, became dukes and princes, two of them became kings. To be the son of a barrel cooper and to become a king in the early 19th century was a truly extraordinary

thing in an army where for the last thousand years, certainly your rank and status in life was very much the same as your father and grandfather.

Dwarkesh Patel
One thing I found really interesting in your biographies of Napoleon and Churchill, if I'm remembering correctly, both of them wrote a novel in their early 20s or thereabouts, where they, or rather, a character saves their country in battle and wins over a pretty maiden. And I remember the details, but I thought, wow, both of them did that. That's a really interesting detail.

Andrew Roberts
What explains this? Yes, it's probably a terrible psychological disorder, but I've just realized that I did the same thing when I was in my twenties. I had a novel in which I saved the country and married a fair maiden. Gosh, I don't know what that makes me. Probably a megalomaniac like Napoleon, but yes, they're both great reads.

By the way, I love Klisson and Eugenie, the book you're referring to by Napoleon, but the best one by far is Savrola by Winston Churchill, where you see lots of rolling Churchillian phrases which come out again later on in life. And you're right, both of them are very, very obviously autobiographical. Actually, in Savrola, the hero, doesn't he save the country, but then he goes off into exile. And I think, doesn't the Napoleon figure die heroically in battle after saving the nation? But there's a lot of nation saving going on in both of those youthful novels.

Dwarkesh Patel
Now that we're nearing the end of our time, I want to ask you about how is it possible you're in the House of Lords? I just realized that well, I knew you were in the House of Lords, but I just realized how much of your time that consumes. On top of that, you're writing these books that are your biographies are widely recognized as the best biographies of these people, who have thousands of biographies written about them. And you've written 20 books. How are you managing your time? How is this possible?

Andrew Roberts
Because I start work at 04:00 A.M every day. You get about five hours or so before anyone wants to bother you or irritate you. And so that's the trick. It's time management. I nap every single day for about half an hour in the afternoon. I've been doing it since I was at Cambridge 40 years ago. And so, I've trained my body to switch off and then switch back on again. It means that you get two days' worth of work out of one day on Earth. Obviously, everybody's body clock is completely different. But I do recommend if you're young enough to start, and as I say, I started when I was in my early 20s, you can really squeeze more time out of the day than you think is mathematically possible.

Dwarkesh Patel
Yeah, I'm 23, so this might be the perfect time to launch this habit.

Andrew Roberts
Today is the day. Make sure after lunch you put on an eye patch and literally go to bed, and you will find that you've squeezed an extra day out of the day.

Dwarkesh Patel
So why is biography, which is a genre you've employed across many of your books and, of course, books that have become overwhelmingly famous, rightly so? Why is that the best medium to understand an era or to understand the impact of the era on the present?

Andrew Roberts
Because it focuses the mind. It concentrates on one person. You emotionally connect with that person. You either love him or hate him or her. Of course, I have done some work on writing about women. It's the great man and woman theory of history, of course. And I do believe in that because I think that although there are enormous historical movements that happen, the decline of magic and the rise of science, the industrialization, and everything, those come about as the result of the deliberate choices made by millions, indeed billions of people. And you can't look at something like the invasion of Russia we were talking about earlier in 1812, or Churchill's decision to fight on and not make peace with Hitler in 1940, and not recognize that the individual does play an absolutely central role in some major world-changing decisions. So I think it is intellectually justified to write biography. A lot of Whigs and determinists and Marxists don't. They think that biography is far too antithetical to determinism. But you know, what are we but our decisions? Man is spirit, as Churchill said. So, I think it stacks up as a reasonable way for me to spend my time.

Dwarkesh Patel
Yeah, indeed. I think that's a great place to close this conversation. This was absolutely fascinating. And the book, again, I highly recommend it. It was a really thorough and interesting read about recent conflicts with insights from not only one of the best historians in the world, but also somebody who commanded the two most recent campaigns that involved conflict since World War II. So the book is Conflict: The Evolution of Warfare from 1945 to Ukraine, available at Amazon and fine bookstores everywhere. Andrew, thank you so much.

Andrew Roberts
Thank you, Dwarkesh. I've really enjoyed it.