



87. Not-so-Hidden Agendas

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Future Sense is a podcast edited from the radio show of the same name, broadcast on BayFM in Byron Bay, Australia, at www.bayfm.org. Hosted by Nyck Jeanes and well-known international futurist, Steve McDonald, Future Sense provides a fresh, deep analysis of global trends and emerging technologies. How can we identify the layers of growth personally, socially and globally? What are the signs missed; the truths being denied? Political science, history, politics, psychology, ancient civilisations, alien contact, the new psychedelic revolution, cryptocurrency and other disruptive and distributed technologies, and much more.

This is Future Sense.

Steve: We're going to move on now with another topic and just look at an example or two of not-so-hidden agendas in global current affairs, which are very much a sign of our time. As we move forward into this consciousness shift, we are becoming more able to see complex patterns. Our perception is expanding; it's revealing things that we couldn't see before in other words, and things that we couldn't understand before; and it's becoming more and more easy to see the gap between the old ways and the new ways as we try on this new value system. Of course, with the benefit of new technology such as the Internet and our social media applications, people are getting a voice who otherwise would not be heard, so we're learning much more than we could have in the past about the behind-the-scenes workings of various organisations and bypassing traditional media, which also is increasingly controlled, of course, by large corporates and government with their own particular agendas.

These agendas that had been hidden for many, many years, and largely unseen, are coming to the fore. I'm just going to work through one example here, which is about the energy industry—oil and gas—and particularly competition between the USA and Russia to see who can dominate the European market. This idea was triggered by a news article that I saw over the weekend with the headline, *Germany Hits Back at the US for Placing Sanctions on a Critical European Gas Pipeline* (<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2019-12-22/germany-hits-back-at-us-donald-trump-sanctions-on-nord-stream-2/11821624>). The story explains that President Donald Trump has signed a bill barring firms from working on a pipeline that will deliver Russian gas to Europe. This pipeline is called the *Nord Stream 2* project, and it's running from Russia across the north of Europe and it's currently under construction on the Baltic Sea floor. It's going to span a distance of 1,200 kilometres and it would double Russian gas supplies currently available to Europe. Clearly, the US doesn't want that to happen, and so President Trump has ratified legislation that will impose sanctions on firms who work on

that project. In response, Germany's Finance Minister and Vice Chancellor, Olaf Scholz, has told German media that Berlin firmly rejected Washington's decision. Clearly, they want some of that Russian gas.

This just prompted me to remember what's been going on in the energy industry, and in this competition between the US and Russia, and how it's been impacting other current events for quite some years. Yet this story, really, is rarely reported by mainstream media. It's almost never reported, actually—this is an exception—and I guess it's been made mainstream by Trump announcing these sanctions. Of course, Washington has been seeking to sell more of its own liquefied natural gas to European states, and it's claimed that this pipeline will make Europe too reliant on Russian supplies, which is a bad thing from America's point of view because it costs them business, of course.

One of the reasons for this project is to help Russia bypass Ukraine.

Nyck: Ah, yes. The Ukrain—infamous Ukraine. The bad guys—they must be the bad guys, the Ukrainians. They've got a comedian as the president. There's got to be something wrong with that straight away. Seriously, you can't have a comedian as a president.

Steve: You know, Joe Rogan would make a good American president, now that you mention that. Let me just write that down.

Nyck: Oh, you're good.

Steve: In this article in the Australian *ABC News*, it's got a lovely map of Europe and Russia here, and when you look at it, you can see that there's this huge country that sits between Russia and Europe and it's called Ukraine. Of course, Russia doesn't have good access to Ukraine anymore because there is now a pro-US government in power in Ukraine. Somehow that happened. Of course, many have claimed that the US was involved in the overthrow of the previous Ukrainian government, and you can kind of see how that might make sense for that to happen.

I'm not for a moment pretending that this is just all about energy and gas. Inevitably, with these situations in international affairs, it's complex and there are many, many factors at play, and often a number of compounding reasons why a country might do one thing or another thing. It's usually not just because of one particular issue, but this is an interesting issue. The interesting thing about it is that this idea of gas supply and who's going to supply the gas to the European market runs through a number of current affairs, many of which have been reported by the mainstream media without mentioning the topic at all.

Another reason that Ukraine is strategically important is because of its sea and air ports on the Black Sea, which is on the southern end of Ukraine. Russia has been using these for quite some years to station its military forces—air forces and naval forces. Of course, with them falling out of favour now in the Ukraine, it means that they would not have access to those

ports, except that Russia did annex that part of Ukraine so that they could keep using those ports. That part of the Ukraine I'm talking about is called Crimea.

So the game goes on. Isn't it interesting? And of course, we have to remember that Ukraine has oil and gas reserves of its own, and in fact, I learned from an American government website, which is extolling the virtues of doing trade with Ukraine, that Ukraine ranks number two in Europe for gas reserves.

Nyck: Right. Okay.

Steve: So there you go. Isn't that interesting, the things that happen when you're not looking? And, of course, you may have seen in the news recently that the former US Vice President, Joe Biden, has been in the news in relation to Ukraine recently. He was the Vice President when Obama was the President back in 2014, which is when the pro-Russian Ukraine government was overthrown. Very soon after that happened, Joe Biden visited Ukraine, and around about the same time his son, Hunter, joined the Board of Directors of a Ukraine gas company, which is all interesting as well, and I'm sure quite unrelated.

Nyck: Get that tongue out of your cheek.

Steve: What happened this year to cause further trouble is that the Ukraine government indicted the owner of this gas company of which Hunter Biden is on the Board of Directors. It's called *Burisma*, and the Ukraine government alleged that they had been siphoning off a lot of money—in fact, US\$16.5 million worth—which was claimed went to Hunter Biden and his associates as part of an allegedly criminal scheme. This year, his father, Joe, has been accused of pressuring the Ukraine government to fire the investigating prosecutor on that case.

Nyck: According to the same website that you're looking at right now, I think, there was a video of Joe Biden admitting that he paid the Ukrainian president with one billion dollars to fire the lead prosecutor, as you're saying, but this video from September 20th was scrubbed from *YouTube*. Again, it's hard to prove these things.

Steve: Strange coincidences.

Nyck: Strange coincidences.

I mentioned, just before we went on air today, that I just saw a movie the other day called *Vice*, which you might be familiar with, which is from last year. In fact, it nearly won quite a few Academy Awards—eight nominations for the 91st Academy Awards—Best Picture and

everything. *Vice* is about Dick Cheney, the Vice President with George W. Bush at that time, and really this movie is made in a quite comedic, biographical, semi-documentary drama manner starring Christian Bale, who's fantastic as Dick Cheney. It really shows the manipulations—the Machiavellian manipulations—particularly of Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld behind the scenes, to basically access exactly what you talked about: the oil and gas of these countries—Afghanistan, Iraq—and the whole thing being a play for that; and to supersede the powers of the American President, even as the Vice President, is a whole story. So if you want a very interesting movie on that part of this story—nearly 20 years ago now—it's a good movie to check out: *Vice*, 2018, directed by Adam McKay.

Steve: Yes, indeed. To continue the drama, you might also have seen in the media that President Trump has been accused of asking the Ukraine to investigate the Bidens. This, of course, it was a trigger which led to his recent impeachment in the US parliament, and goodness me ...

Nyck: What do you think about that? Because obviously we're talking here about, as you said, the not-so-hidden agendas. What do you think is going on? Because it's very hard to untangle.

Steve: I want to talk briefly about that if we have time before the end of the show, but I might just continue with the gas story because I don't want to lose the thread here.

Nyck: OK. Please do.

Steve: So, all of this seems to be very closely related to capturing the European gas market—all of this this drama that I've explained so far—and yet that's not all. All of the problems and conflict in Syria that's been going on—and of course, Australia has been involved in that as well—seem to be at least partly about gas pipelines also. I found an article in the US Armed Forces Journal, and, you know, you wouldn't expect any kind of pro-Russian bias articles to be published in that particular document. This article was written by an American serviceman, Army Major Rob Taylor, who's an instructor—or at least he was at the time of writing—an instructor at the *Command and General Staff College* at Fort Leavenworth, which is where they train the senior leaders. He wrote an article called *Pipeline Politics in Syria* (<http://armedforcesjournal.com/pipeline-politics-in-syria/>). This was published in 2014 when a lot of this drama was going on, and I want to just read the first couple of paragraphs from this article because it's quite enlightening:

Much of the media coverage suggests that the conflict in Syria is a civil war in which the (Shia) Bashar al Assad regime is defending itself (and committing atrocities) against

Sunni rebel factions (who are also committing atrocities). The real explanation is simpler. It's about money.

In 2009, Qatar proposed to run a natural gas pipeline through Syria and Turkey to Europe. Instead, Assad forged a pact with Iraq and Iran to run a pipeline eastward, allowing those Shia-dominated countries access to the European natural gas market while denying access to Sunni Saudi Arabia and Qatar. The latter states, it appears, are now attempting to remove Assad so they can control Syria and run their own pipeline through Turkey.

Of course, Russia had plans to run a pipeline through Turkey.

So there you have it, from probably a reliable source, I would say, Army Major Rob Taylor. Working at the *Command and General Staff College* means that they're constantly looking at strategic issues and studying strategic issues as part of their training of senior leaders at places like that; we have our own *Command and General Staff College* here in Australia for the military.

And it doesn't end there. I've got one more piece before we move on to look at the impeachment, and that is a WikiLeaks leak which concerns an email from Hillary Clinton. In this email, it says—and I want to quote what Hillary Clinton wrote here.

Nyck: It's lovely that Hillary still talks to you like this. It's fantastic.

Steve: Yes. "The best way to help Israel deal with Iran's growing nuclear capability is to help the people of Syria overthrow the regime of Bashar Assad." So there we have a statement by Hillary Clinton when she was Secretary of State, I think.

Like I said, these issues are never clear cut. They're always compounding things that add up to the decision-making processes, but very, very clearly, the supply of gas to Europe, either by Russia or the US—or US allies in this case—has been a key hidden agenda in many very important strategic decisions which have involved outright warfare in many cases, as well.

Nyck: And you've just got to say, when you listen to these machinations which have been going on for a very long time—and you could go back I'm sure, at least to Afghanistan and the Russian invasion of the 80s there, right through the 90s and through 9/11: the first Gulf War, the second Gulf War, Afghanistan, Syria, now all these countries—you've got to ... well, you've got to follow the money. But also, what I was going to say is the whole project against climate change, so to speak, is faced with these incredible and very complex machinations behind the scenes about oil and gas and more fossil fuels.

Steve: That's right.

Nyck: And that's really what's going on on the planet, despite the protestations of all of us relatively happy and safe First World people who like to protest things. The reality is a little more complex than that, unfortunately.

Steve: It is, and in order to solve these complex problems, we need to actually know the details—the truth. Thankfully, it's getting harder and harder to hide these previously hidden agendas, but once you get a kind of a hint of what's going on, you can look and start to read into even mainstream media reports about what might be going on behind the scenes. In the case of the Syria conflict, Obama came out when he was President at the time and said, very clearly, that any chemical weapons attack by the Assad regime would be a trigger for US military involvement, and lo-and-behold, guess what happened?

Nyck: Supposedly a chemical weapons attack.

Steve: 'Supposedly' a chemical weapons attack, which some parties, including Russia, claim to be a false flag that was done just to justify US military involvement there. The sad fact is that these things happen, but thankfully, it's getting much, much easier to sort of detect these hidden agendas at play.

Nyck: We'll take a quick break for a couple of announcements, and we'll come back and possibly have a quick talk about the impeachment.

Nyck: Thanks for your contributions this morning on the text line. Much appreciated.

A couple of other little things to chat about before we finish up.

Steve: Yes. While we're on the not-so-hidden agendas, let's talk briefly about the impeachment process that's underway in the US and how ridiculous the whole saga is; and the pretence that's going on that this is all about the Constitution and sticking by the Constitution, etc., when, in fact, it's clearly just partisan politics, abusing the powers available through them to try and gain advantage.

Nyck: It's about as crazy as the little blue dress and Bill Clinton, isn't it? That impeachment there. I mean it comes down to the same kind of nowhereville.

Steve: I mean, it's as crazy as Bill trying to get us to believe his lie about what he didn't do.

Nyck: "I did not have sex with that woman!"

Steve: Indeed, and you know, one of the things about these hidden agendas leaking out is that often we'll get a media report—a mainstream media report—which will suddenly change; the story will change without explanation. That was certainly the case when the famous Democratic Party email leak happened around the time of the last election. Of course, those emails went to *WikiLeaks* and I think I quoted from one of them just previously, so you can see how they would be quite unhappy about that information getting out. Initially, that leak was reported as a physical leak in that somebody had a USB stick which was taken from a DNC computer and passed to *WikiLeaks*. Subsequent to that, one of the DNC staffers was murdered, I think it was in New York or Washington.

Nyck: I don't remember that.

Steve: Seth Rich is his name. That murder was supposedly a robbery, and yet he still had his wallet and all of his belongings on him when his body was found in the street. Of course, there have been all sorts of allegations about who might have carried out that murder, but the story from there became quite ridiculous, and swapped and changed many times in terms of the facts about how the leak happened, who the leak was made by, and whether it was the Russians hacking into DNC computers and those sorts of things. It led, eventually, to the whole *Russiagate* farce where it seems that the US security and law enforcement agencies worked together to try and prove some kind of Russian influence in collusion between the Republicans and Trump and the Russian government. But that came to absolutely nothing, which kind of points to the fact that it was just a strategy to try and gain political advantage.

Soon after that was wrapped up as being a farce, we had the impeachment thing crop up over the Ukraine saga. What was really interesting to me was that the most important thing that happened was Trump made this phone call, not that there was any crime committed.

Nyck: "It was a perfect phone call! Perfect! It was perfect", he kept saying. I don't know what a perfect phone call is, but, yeah. Funny choice of words for me.

Steve: The fact that this alleged crime involving \$16.5 million in the Ukraine with connections to a former Vice President and his family member actually happened, seems to have just been completely overlooked as not relevant. What's important is the one party getting power over the other party somehow, and trying to get Trump out of power. It seems to me to be an extreme misuse of power for political means, and ironically, that's exactly what the Democrats are claiming Trump has done—he's misused his political power for partisan means—and yet they are very, very obviously doing exactly the same thing.

There's a stunning short video going around on *Twitter* at the moment, of Nancy Pelosi answering questions to the media about their obstruction of the releasing of evidence in this process of impeachment, where she was almost speechless actually, in trying to answer a

question, and becomes unintelligible for a while, clearly flummoxed by the challenge of trying to answer that truthfully.

Nyck: Well, I think probably part of the issue right there is that probably very few of them, even Nancy Pelosi—any of them—actually probably know the truth. They probably don't know all the machinations behind the scenes, and if they do, well, they're the criminals, I guess, but I find it difficult to believe that anybody actually really knows what's going on, even at the top end of power now.

Steve: It's going to be interesting to see how this plays out when it actually goes to a vote, and certainly looking at the numbers at face value would suggest that it's not going to get ...

Nyck: Oh, no, it's all for show, but for me, part of the reason that this is happening by the Democrats is because they simply don't have a candidate who can face Trump. They're in such disarray themselves, and it is also true that they're facing a very gerrymandered voting and political system, which is definitely weighted much more towards the Republicans—they've just been smarter doing that over a longer period of time than Democrats—so I think they're facing an almost insurmountable thing in Trump, in defeating him. They don't know who's going to go up there, so let's try and bring him down instead.

Steve: Crazy, hey? And this is also absolutely related to the values shift that's going on and our loss of anchor points—the letting go of our old values and drifting in this place where we're not quite sure what our values are. Where we're trying to make sense of what's going on, but without a set of values as reference points—as anchor points—it becomes very difficult to know what's right and what's wrong; what we should be doing and what we shouldn't be doing. This period in the values transition often gives rise to weird experimentation, rapidly changing strategies, misuse of systems (particularly old paradigm systems), rearranging data points—and we're especially seeing that in science where there's a sudden recalculation of the way that we interpret data—and shifting perspectives, trying to find a new sense-making process. We're even seeing that in Australia at the moment during the recent heatwave that we had, which was associated with the fires. I noticed that the *Bureau of Meteorology* announced that they had changed the way that they are calculating heat records in Australia, and instead of relying on the exact measurement of temperature at a particular place, what they've started doing is averaging temperatures across multiple data collection points in Australia and then using that average temperature as the way of measuring whether a record has been exceeded or not. This caught my attention because in the very recent news, they announced that there was a new heat record set and it was in the mid-forties or something, and I know that the heat record in Australia, as it stands, measured at a single place, is from a town called Oodnadatta, where back in 1960 or thereabouts, it exceeded 50 degrees Celsius.

Nyck: I think I remember that day. Seriously!

Steve: I think you were there, Nyck.

Nyck: Yeah, I was there. Well, I wasn't in Oodnadatta but I know where Oodnadatta is. I was close.

Steve: Anyway, this is typical of this in-between space that we're in where we're trying to rearrange everything to make it more useful, or to find some way of making progress where we've lost our anchor points and lost our values, and not to show what we believe or what we should believe. Of course, this has compounding impacts which all contribute to creating the evolutionary tension that's driving the change process.

Just to finish up, I've got three very quick points. The first one is that hidden agendas, and agendas generally, are not always driven by dominant hierarchies, although I've given some examples of exactly that. Some are driven by grassroots values shifts and as a result of this space of not knowing in between two sets of values; and some are a combination of causes where there's clearly no singular cause, but there may be, for example, an exploitation of an existing trend by a hierarchy. We see this all the time in marketing, where they latch onto a general movement in society and decide, 'okay, people are starting to like this, so let's wrap things up to look like that, to try and sell them things', and greenwashing as an example of that.

Nyck: Very good. That's it for Future Sense for this week. Thanks for joining us. Tune into the podcast www.futuresense.it, and you can tune in also to our *Twitter* account, which is @Futuresenseshow, where a lot of the articles that we refer to are placed as well. We will be with you next week. Have a great holiday season, whatever that is for you this Christmas coming up. Whatever religion, or not, or spirituality you subscribe to, solstice people you, thank you for joining us. Bye-bye.

Steve: Best wishes from us.

Nyck: Absolutely. Thanks Steve.

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