



The Perch Pod Episode 34

The New, Post-Pandemic Italy with Dario Fabbri

Jacob Shapiro:

You are listening to the Perch Pod from Perch Perspectives. Hello listeners and welcome to another episode of the Perch Pod. As usual, I'm your host, I'm Jacob Shapiro. I'm also the founder and chief strategist of Perch Perspectives, which is a human centric business and political consulting firm. Joining us on the podcast this week is Dario Fabbri. If you've been listening to this podcast for a while, you will recognize that name. Dario joined us just around this time last July. He is a journalist, scientific advisor and American coordinator at Limes, which is an Italian journal on geopolitics.

Jacob Shapiro:

That's spelled Limes, but it's pronounced Limes. If you are an Italian speaker, Limes does great work, you can check them out online. You can also use your Google Translate feature if you want. I write for them once in a while, as well. Thanks so much for Dario for coming on. We had a great conversation about Italy's perspective on a number of different issues and also on Italy's challenge just going forward here, in a post-pandemic world. Man, it feels good to say post-pandemic world, doesn't it? I hope you enjoy this conversation. Take good care of each other and we'll see you out there. Cheers.

Jacob Shapiro:

Dario, welcome back to the podcast. It has been almost exactly a year since you came on the show. It's nice to have you back.

Dario Fabbri:

True. Thank you for having me back. It's a great pleasure of being here with you, Jacob.

Jacob Shapiro:

And Dario, obviously you're an Italian, so I'm going to ask you some questions about Italian geopolitics, but before we get there, I know that you're preparing for media interviews for this Biden, Putin, Russia, US summit in Geneva, I've been doing the same. So what's on top of your mind. Do you think it's the big deal that everybody's making it out to be, or do you think the US-Russia relations are just stuck for the foreseeable future? I'd be curious to know what the buzz is in Rome on this meeting.

Dario Fabbri:



Well, I don't know what the buzz is in Rome. Well, the buzz is in Rome, he curious that this bilateral meeting is very important. Every meeting for that reason, especially for journalists is considered very important. Everything is supposed to change when two leaders meet. And actually, by this whole hype around the special bilateral meeting, but I might've been mistaken to me. We're just witnessing the attempt by Biden, by the US to calm the situation down, especially after a few months where the relationship between the Russian and US has been dropping pretty quickly. And now I think not to pursue a war, of course, Washington is just trying to calm things down here with Russia. But I do not think that this meeting or any other meeting in the foreseeable future will actually change the relationship for real. What could possibly change this relationship is the perception that the US will have about China.

Dario Fabbri:

I'll be more specific here. To me, the US keeps containing simultaneously China and Russia without opening up to Russia as to use Russia against China. Something like the opposite of what did in 1971, when of course the US opened up to China to use it against the Soviet Union. Now it's not doing the same, because I think for two reasons. The first US believes that if you were to open up to Russia, Russia would be free to move around Europe, meaning would be free to strike agreements with Germany or France for that matter, is that would complicate the whole scenario in Europe for the US. Secondly, the US is not opening up to Russia, no matter what the White House says, whether it is Obama, Trump, or Biden for that reason, just because China is not considered that dangerous.

Dario Fabbri:

Well, of course China is dangerous, but it's not as dangerous as being able to being the foe that can really defeat US. It's not China, of course, with its fleet that is in front of the Atlantic coast for the Pacific coast. It's the US that has been, of course, conducting freedom of navigation operations in China's seas. And it's not, of course, China that is about to contain to US in North America. It's just the other way around with US trying to contain China, in the Asia Pacific. So to me, if China were to become that dangerous, the US would be forced to open up to Russia, to risk. The scenario that I just envisioned for Europe, if US were to open up to Russia. But for the time being, that is not happening for those two reasons. Russia, being able to strike agreements with main European powers, especially Germany and France and China to be considered dangerous, but not that dangerous in this very moment in Washington. How do you see the US, Russia and China relations?

Jacob Shapiro:

Yeah, it's funny. I was going to get to that question in the course of the podcast, but let's do it now. I wasn't sure, while you were talking, whether you were going to say that it was the US didn't think China was dangerous or Russia didn't think was dangerous. And I think what I would say to you is, yeah, I don't think that the US is going to be able to pull off that reverse Nixon maneuver and use Russia against China, the way that it used China against Russia in the context of the Cold War. But I think that's primarily because Russia is not interested. I don't think Russia is willing to play that game and really is thinking more of establishing some kind of international, I don't want to say agreement, but some kind



of status quo where Russia gets its own sphere of influence and is willing to let China have its sphere of influence, and the US needs to stop meddling.

Jacob Shapiro:

I think that's perhaps the Russian perspective. I think you also might underestimate the extent to which there are factions in the US foreign policy establishment who view China as a threat. I don't think it's by any means a monolithic opinion, and I don't think that it is necessarily calling the shots right now, but there is a serious groundswell of not just China is a threat sentiment, but anti-China sentiment in the United States and it is driving policy and you're watching it play out, I think, with the Biden administration because they are being just as tough, if not tougher, I would argue on China than the Trump administration.

Jacob Shapiro:

I also think, the other aspect here is that the Biden administration cares a lot about democratic principles and ideals, and about all those sorts of optics and Biden has gone after Putin and gone after Russia as sort of representing an assault on democratic principles. I don't think that's too far to say. And I don't see any way to bridge... I don't see any way that the US and Russia are going to bridge that ideological divide because Russia thinks that that's insulting and the United States thinks that Russia is insulting. And so what? They'll have a meeting and they'll sit in the same room, but I think that's probably where it ends.

Dario Fabbri:

Well, I'm not saying that, of course, China is not perceived as a threat in the US. I think that if China were perceived as a mortal threat to the US, the US would be forced to open up to Russia, at least would be forced to try to open up to Russia. To me, Russia, and here I disagree with you, to me, Russia would be more than willing to help first for its own sake, to help the US against China. Here to me, it's a matter of strategic grammar, so to speak. If you were to choose between two potential hegemonies, here, US and China, if you were Russia, I think you'd be forced to choose the one that lives far away from you.

Dario Fabbri:

Let's not forget here that China and Russia share a long border. A border, which is under-populated on the Russian front, and of course, over-populated on the China's front. If Russia were to help China gets the US. And let's just for a second here, imagine that China were able to defeat the US or at least were able to replace the US as the only global super power. In that scenario, Russia would face immortal just beyond the border, which is way worse than having a mortal enemy in Alaska. Especially considering how important hydrocarbons are for Russia, especially in that part of the Russian territory. So to me, Russia would be willing to help US. Of course, they would want something in return, and that something in return would be of course scaling down on the US part, the tensions in Eastern Europe, something that US is not willing to concede, especially not now. So I think the Russia, I'm not saying they, of course, would run to accept US offer, but it would be willing to act and it's trying to, to meet Russia.



Dario Fabbri:

And of course here, I might be mistaken again. To me, Russia considers China more the interest than the US for terrestrial reasons, for border disputes. And I'm not sure that Russia wouldn't be part of the game as you called it.

Jacob Shapiro:

Yeah, I don't know. That is not what I've heard and not what I've thought, but that's exactly why I like having these podcasts because it's not interesting if.

Dario Fabbri:

Me too.

Jacob Shapiro:

I will say though, I mean, the way you framed it was that better to have an enemy in Alaska than to have one on your border, with the Russian border. I would think that the view for Moscow is that the enemy is in Belarus and is in Ukraine and that NATO represents that US front there. And that is more disturbing to the center of power of Russia than something far away that they're going to have to deal with in China in the long run.

Dario Fabbri:

Sure.

Jacob Shapiro:

But I do think you're right though, that Russia is going to have to deal with China one way or another. It's a much more pressing and present issue.

Dario Fabbri:

True. But here, Jacob, we're talking about empires, as in empires tend to have a very long memory, and they tend to look at the future, especially in the long run. What I mean here is, yeah, you're right in Belarus and Ukraine, even Georgia the US is the enemy for, of course, along with Poland and Romania. But, of course, US is the main enemy for Russia in those territories. But still, the US does not lie in Europe. One day, as the Russians put it, US won't be able to be as dangerous and threatening in Europe as it is today. China will lie where it is for the foreseeable future, for maybe for centuries, meaning that China will stay put just below the boater for Russia. So I think here, it's a matter for Russia having something in return from the US. The US would offer something real. In Eastern Europe, Russia would help against China, but to me, and I don't know what you think about this.

Dario Fabbri:

To me, as I said, the US peers fears they may lose control of what France or Germany do vis-a-vis Russia. And then that is considered something that the US doesn't want to think about, that or at least doesn't



want to deal with, having, I mean, France or Germany striking deals with Russia, or just acting as if Russia were an ally instead of an enemy.

Jacob Shapiro:

Yeah. I wanted to ask you. You brought up France and Germany and Germany, obviously dependent on Russian energy, where does Italy fit in there? Does Italy have any opinions about Russia's relations with Europe going forward?

Dario Fabbri:

Sure.

Jacob Shapiro:

Does it feel uncomfortable about maybe Germany and France dealing on more stable terms with Russia, or is it far enough away that you don't care? How do you articulate that position?

Dario Fabbri:

Well Italy always had a, let's say a good relationship with Russia, especially, or even during the Cold War, when, of course, Russia was called the Soviet Union for two reasons. First reason, Russia is very far away from Italy. So Italy never really feared Russia, or at least hasn't feared Russia as much as of course, Poland or Romania, or even UK feared and fear Russia. The second reason is first we're dependent for energy mostly in Russia. And we've been dependent on Russia for many decades now, energy wise. So Italy has never really considered Russia as an enemy, even during the Cold War. And I believe that when something is strategic, is being held throughout the years by different parties. When different parties pursue seeing the same foreign policy means that that very issue is strategic. And here in Italy, for a very long time, it was the left of course, the communist party that was close to Russia for ideological reasons, apparently.

Dario Fabbri:

And nowadays is the right being close to Russia, again for ideological reasons apparently. But when ideological reasons move and change, to me means that there's a strategic level underneath all of this. So Italy has never really feared Russia, but when Italy looks at Germany with the Nord Stream too and stuff like that, and all the ties that bind sort of at least Russia and Germany together, Italy is not that worried, not at all. Even France, I think, is not worried about what Germany does with Russia.

Dario Fabbri:

To Italy, the US should open up to Russia and we should have a normal relationship with Russia and so forth. Let's also consider here that Italy doesn't really believe in great powers relationships. To Italy, it's only a matter of economy, trade, energy. Just as it happens in Germany, more or less, let's say this way, let's call it this way. So I wouldn't pretend something of a very geopolitical approach when it comes to



Italy, especially because here economy, trade and energy, as I said, are the most important issues, more important than any other geopolitical issues that we might consider.

Jacob Shapiro:

Yeah, that's well said, but then I'll throw it back at you, and this gets to the China point that we were talking about. I mean, just a few years ago, Italy made waves because they signed on to China's Belt and Road Initiative, and I remember being with you at the Limes conference, right after that happened.

Dario Fabbri:

Yeah, true.

Jacob Shapiro:

Some people were upset and some people were surprised, and it seems that you.

Dario Fabbri:

You were very calm, I remember.

Jacob Shapiro:

Well, yes. Well, because I don't... I think that Belt and Road is more of a PR stunt than it is anything else, but at least one person came up to me and said, it could be the end of the Italian US relationship, the end of NATO. And I think I told him to calm down a little bit.

Dario Fabbri:

Wow.

Jacob Shapiro:

But it seems that Italy has reversed itself. It seems that Mario Draghi is very skeptical of China, not just skeptical of China now, but is aligning Italy, can we say against China, can we say that Italy is part of this European Union push to redefine its relationship with China in a more antagonistic way and get closer to the United States?

Dario Fabbri:

Yeah, we.

Jacob Shapiro:

How do you see that situation evolving?

Dario Fabbri:



We can surely say that. To quote a very famous movie, something has changed in the past few months here. Let's consider Italy's situation, Italy's condition. Mario Draghi has been chosen versus not been elected. Has been chosen to pursue two different goals, two goals that are different, but intertwined. The first goal is to have the so-called European funds come to Italy. Draghi is basically saying, trust me, I will be the one managing those funds, I will be the one using those funds, of course, on behalf of Italy, but you can trust me the money will be rightly spent. And of course, Draghi is talking to Germany. Yeah, of course those sponsors are calling European, but it's Germany that's guaranteeing for Italy and other countries whether it's AAA in front of the markets to have the European Commission, of course, creating its own bonds to have those funds come in.

Dario Fabbri:

On the other front, the other goal that Draghi is pursuing here is telling the US that also the US should trust Italy. Yeah, of course, we're getting deeper into Germany's sphere of influence, the so-called EU next generation... something that is very tied to Germany just for the reason that I explained before, but also, Italy's telling the US, we just want the money. We do not want to get deeper for real, into Germany's sphere of influence. So Draghi is telling the US, please trust us, and also, trust us when it comes to Russia and China. A month ago, here, an alleged spy, Italian spy, a member of Italy's Navy has been arrested and has been charged with spying for Russia. That very fact has been widely publicized on Italian media as if our government was telling everyone that we won't accept and tolerate Russia's interference in our affairs, something that sounded pretty much as a message to the US.

Dario Fabbri:

Just as much as what Draghi said a couple of days ago when he said that we're reviewing our signing of the memorandum of the Belt and Road Initiative. So here we have a government that in a very difficult condition and situation for our country. Italy, of course will be in default next year, if those so-called European funds weren't coming. In a very difficult situation that Draghi is trying to have the Germans trust us and having the Americans trust us when it comes to spending the money. For the Germans, money comes through a relationship with China and partly Russia when it comes to the US.

Jacob Shapiro:

Yeah. I want to highlight what you just said there, because I think the listeners could... It could just breeze you by, and you could miss the importance of the statement. But you said that Italy could be in default next year, if these EU Next Generation funds, which is the EU pooling its resources together to loan money to EU states in need after the COVID-19 pandemic to help rebuild, if Italy doesn't get those funds. And one of the questions I wanted to ask you is what do you think Italy's biggest challenges, whether that's politically... let you answer that question however you want, but what is Italy's biggest challenge post COVID? And I wonder if that is the answer right there? Is it about Italy really needing the European Union to get together and get this Next Generation program off the ground, because Italy is facing a major economic problem? If it isn't, is that the biggest challenge or is there something else that should be on our radar when thinking about how Italy is approaching recovery from COVID-19?

Dario Fabbri:

Well, that's the biggest challenge in the short run, for sure. If you were to consider this very moment, that is the challenge overall. As I said, Italy would pretty much bring default if those funds weren't coming. Just because of our debt, just because it's a slow recovery, just because of what our economy has been for the past 20 years, I'd say. But if you were to look at the long run, if you want to look at a future, of course, Italy's got many other challenges. The first challenge is, of course, demography. Italy's population has been declining. Our median average age is very high, the highest in the world alongside Japan. And Italy is supposed to deal with those challenges, especially democracy and economy.

Dario Fabbri:

And also, Italy's got another challenges facing. Being at the center of the Mediterranean sea, Italy has been kind of surrounded by other powers that has been eroding our sphere of influence the Mediterranean or in Libya, but ultimately, Balkans. And those powers are mainly Turkey and Russia. So I'd say that Italy's challenges are several and some of those challenges are important. I think that those challenges can be easily defined as mortal, if they weren't managed properly. And it's no easy task.

Jacob Shapiro:

What is your perspective on how things have changed inside the European Union, if they've changed at all after the COVID 19 pandemic? Do you see the EU as a stronger entity potentially coming out of the pandemic? You mentioned the importance of EU funds to help the Italian economy. Does that maybe put Italy at odds with countries like Hungary or Poland, which have been coming up, some of the EU bureaucracy, and I think delaying the arrival of some of those funds with their own concerns. Do you feel more confident in the EU? Do you feel like the EU is going to come together here or do you feel this is just another episode where the EU is going to fall short?

Dario Fabbri:

I don't know if it's going to fall short. I surely not hope that this will be the case, just for all the things that we just said. I think that we're witnessing here something different coming from Germany, because the EU is no power, is not a subject, as we all know, but European countries are. And unlike what happened let's say 10 years ago, Germany has decided that they have to save the Euro zone. And they have to be at the center of the saving. Meaning, as I said before, that Germany is kind of guaranteeing for other countries in front of the markets with AAA, meaning that unlike what it did 10 years ago, when Germany was all, it's all your fault, you should pay your own debts.

Dario Fabbri:

You should care about yourself. You shouldn't ask for any help and stuff like that. Nowadays, we have Germany being much more helpful and more willing to help. That's why I say that here, when witnessing a different phase of Germany's history. Maybe you won't last long, maybe Germany will go back to what it was 10 years ago or even five years ago, but that is something that is happening right before our eyes. And that's the reason why some other countries such as the Netherlands, but also Austria, Finland thrill, they were also skeptical of those funds, not only because they think, probably they were even right, that

countries such as Italy or Spain or Greece, they won't be able to spend those funds in the right manner, they won't be able to spend those funds efficiently. That's just a part of the truth. On the other hand, there were also, especially the Netherlands and Austria they're also skeptical what Germany will want to do in the future.

Dario Fabbri:

It's like if they're asking themselves, okay, now Germany's saving the Euro zone. It's putting for real, itself at the center of the continent and the future of the EU. What's next? Let's remember here that strategy for the Dutch or for the Austrians, it's always spent not being next to Germany. And if they see Germany trying to morph into something else, any movement coming from Germany kind of scares those countries, that's the main event, that's the main fact that they were witnessing here, Europe, especially inside the EU, at least to me.

Jacob Shapiro:

Is it fair to say that... So I asked you about Italy's biggest challenge. Is it fair to say that the EU's biggest challenge is getting some of those countries to deal with the fact that Germany is asserting a more active role or are there other problems that you think are more serious for the European union going forward from you?

Dario Fabbri:

Well, that's the main problem right now, but of course there are other problems that have been plaguing the EU since forever, I'd say, meaning that the EU is not nation, doesn't have and more importantly, the countries that make up the EU you are different. They have different interests. They see the world in a different way and so forth. And there was no way to meet to create a nation just because we say so. Nations, historically have been created through violence. All nations have been created through revolutions, wars, and there's always a specific group that through revolutions or wars tends to dominate the other groups. And after it has achieved such a goal, it gets those groups into the nation. And after some decades and centuries, what happened before it gets forgotten and in the whole part of a nation. But nations, as I said, they stem from violence.

Dario Fabbri:

Unfortunately, humans, did not know any other... no other means to create a nation. In Europe, unless we want the Third World War, no nation will be created and in the next few years. So those are the endemic problems that have been always plaguing the EU. And alongside, now we have those countries, the ones that we mentioned, but even the US, to me, trying to understand what Germany's next move will be. And Germany to me doesn't really know what to do. Germany's pretty much content and satisfied with what it is, but it understands that it won't last forever.

Dario Fabbri:

Germany an economical superpower for such a long time, kind of avoiding any responsibility, any major responsibility connected to its role, especially when it comes to dealing with Russia or dealing with



China, even dealing with the US or the UK, for that matter. I believe that the Germans understand that the future will be different. They will have to take responsibilities. The problem here is understanding what kind of responsibilities Germany is willing to take in the future. And as I said, Germans don't really know. They're still trying to understand, but they're not sure of which path to follow for the next few years.

Jacob Shapiro:

Yes. And I think in some sense, they're scared of the responsibilities as is everyone else, because the last time the Germans undertook responsibilities to themselves, it wasn't a very pleasant experience for most people. You haven't really mentioned France at all, and I sort of associate you... You were the first person who really helped me realize that France was a much stronger player potentially in the longterm in Europe, than I had really understood a couple of years ago when we were at Limes. So where does France fit in here? Is France balancing Germany? Is France just sort of all on board with Germany and happy to help Germany play that bigger role. Where do you see France fitting in with these changes that you've talked about?

Dario Fabbri:

I think France is biting its time. France's economy is pretty much in dire streets. It's not that far away from Italy's economy. So for now, France needs to stay very close to Germany. Doesn't want Germany to go back to austerity, to go back to fiscal conservatism, for the time being at least. But when we'll look at the long run, when we look at the future, France has got its own plans. France believes she will be the most important country in Europe demography-wise and France understands that it will have the nuclear power and a strong military and so forth. So I think France is still biding its time, even when it comes to Germany. The problem during this time is that France needs to deal with its own internal issues. France's president is very different from the US president.

Dario Fabbri:

It's very different in being almost a king or a queen if in the future if they will have a woman that's a president, meaning that if the US president, if the American president doesn't really have strong powers, the France president has got very strong powers, and can really carve the destiny or the future for its own nation. And now Macron understands that France needs to assimilate foreigners, those foreigners, especially Muslims that's been living in France for many decades now. And Macron understands that assimilating second, third generations of Muslims in France kind of requires a violent approach, violent in a culturally violent approach. Meaning that as Macron is trying to do is trying to create as they call them national imams, imams being educated and instructed in France.

Dario Fabbri:

And also they're trying to control even more mosques and the movements of those considered dangerous Muslims by France's public and so forth. So I think that for the next few years, France will be trying to deal with those issues, those internal issues, because it's true. Maybe France in the future will be demographically the most important country in Europe, but it needs to assimilate third, fourth, even



fourth generation, that it's got on its own territory. Otherwise, it won't be able to look beyond its own borders if even in 10 or 20 years, will be forced to look inside of itself.

Jacob Shapiro:

Yeah, it's funny the way history repeats itself. I'm thinking in particular, this is one of the only cases in which my arcane knowledge of European Jewish history actually helps and is relevant. Because, I mean, when Napoleon was trying to emancipate the Jews back in the late 1700s, early 1800s, I forget the exact phrase, but it was some version of to the Jews, everything as Frenchmen, as individuals, but nothing as a nation, the idea being that you couldn't have people inside, well, then his empire, who were not devoted to the state, but that they had all individual rights and that they were united in their Frenchness as individuals. And you can see very clearly that Macron is dealing with a similar sort of thing. He has a population or a significant faction of the population that has not been integrated for a lot of different reasons, we don't have to go into here.

Jacob Shapiro:

And he's trying to say the same thing to them. You can have all the rights the French people can have, but you cannot then assert your, I don't know, your religion, your culture on what France is. It's that everybody gets the same rights. And if you want to do these things in the private of your own home, that's fine. But once you go out into the public sphere, it's this radical form of French secularism, where everybody has to be French. I've probably bastardized that a little bit, but I think that's close enough to what the French thinking has been on that note.

Dario Fabbri:

It is, yes. And to me, but even, it's even more than an integration. You say integrated, here, it's matter of assimilating those people. They're fairly integrated to some extent, but they're not assimilated. I mean, what I mean here is, assimilation means that they cut any tie with their own ancestral countries. That they perceive themselves only as French and no matter what their religion is, and no matter what their history and roots are. And that's something that, for example, the US for a very long time has been able to do with, especially with immigrants coming from Europe, but that's something that France has not been able to do at all with immigrants coming from former colonies, especially if they were Muslims. And that's the biggest issue, the most important issue in France, today, and I think it will be for many years to come.

Jacob Shapiro:

Yes. So the US has done a good job over time, if you look at the largest, sort of from the highest altitude, it has done a good job, but to your point in practice, it's been difficult. I mean, when there was surges of Chinese immigration in the late 1800s, the first US reactions to that were not so great. We can talk about Japanese internment. We can talk about the way African-Americans in the United States, there are still huge disparities there. And we've seen that come up in recent US politics. So it's certainly not perfect. But I think you're right, that that is the sort of thing France is going to have to deal with. And it's



not something that France has had to deal with in a long time and in past episodes of French history. When it's had to deal with it, it's been very disruptive.

Jacob Shapiro:

Dario, I know you got to go. Before we let you go, though, I'm going to throw you a curve ball here. I don't know if you know anything about this, but I've been thinking a lot more about Ethiopia these days. And when you have an Italian geopolitical thinker on the podcast, that seems right to ask if you have any... Do you have any thoughts or opinions on what's going on in Ethiopia with Abiy Ahmed and, I mean, there's a lot of stuff going on there, we don't have to go into all of it, but I just wondered based on Italy's historical intervention in Ethiopia in the 20th century, is that one of the challenges that you would allude to on Italy set of strategic challenges, or is that sort of further a field and it's more about Turkey and Libya and things closer to home?

Dario Fabbri:

Unfortunately, especially when it comes to the Horn of Africa, Italy has been losing, and I would even say that it has lose... that it's lost, I'm sorry any real influence in that part of the world. Yeah, there are still some memory of what Italy did back then in the Horn of Africa, but now we're lagging far behind of those countries that you just mentioned, especially Turkey. If you considered how difficult it has been for Italy to have a voice on what's going on in Fuga, you'll definitely understand. Towards, for example, that part of the world is just something that we watch on television, and for a very short time. We're not really understand that there's a strong historical tie with the Ethiopian and that part of Africa that we should look more into. And that reflects on our action there. In Djibouti, for example, Italy has got its own base, but the Italian public doesn't really know about this and doesn't really care about this.

Dario Fabbri:

And as I mentioned, Turkey, not only in Ethiopia and the Horn of Africa, maybe Northern Africa and the Balkans is now a real threat for Italy, and something that really worries the Italian government. And now we have basically Turkey confining with Italy and Libya, just on the other side of the sea. And we have Turkey increasing its own influence in Albania and the rest of the Balkans. And the Balkans have always been a part of the world that where Italy's influence was pretty strong. So it's not only a matter of Sub-Saharan Africa, but also Northern Africa and Balkans when it comes to Italy's past being forgotten or Italy's influence being waning for such a long time. And Turkey's is the main threat really in those territories, in the Balkans, and even in Libya, especially in Libya.

Dario Fabbri:

We can fairly say that Turkey now confines with Italy, borders Italy, when it comes to Libya. They're just on the other side of the sea. And Turkey twice is a very difficult animal, is a very difficult power to deal with, just because Turkey has got an imperial mindset and doesn't really have demerits, at least not for now, to pursue its own goals, or even more importantly to get those goals, but it seems that Turkey does know what to do, something that Italy does not know. So for example, to understand, and I wrap this up, to understand what to Italy would like for the US to do, Italy would like for the US to intervene in



Libya, maybe indirectly against Turkey, something that, of course, won't happen, in any future that I can envision.

Dario Fabbri:

And that, I think, more than anything kind of provide you with the inability of Italy, of being present and influent in those territories, in those parts of the world. In Africa, in the Balkans, in any other area that they're supposed to be very important for Italy?

Jacob Shapiro:

Yes. Which sort of brings us back where we started, because of what you're concerned about is Turkey and your European power Russia is an awfully good friend to have, but we'll have to leave it there and pick it up next time from there. Dario, thank you so much for your time.

Dario Fabbri:

Sure, whenever you want.

Jacob Shapiro:

It was great talking to you.

Dario Fabbri:

Thank you. It was my pleasure. Bye Jacob.

Jacob Shapiro:

If you haven't signed up for our free newsletter at perchperspective.com, what are you waiting for? Please check out the website. We've put out a nice weekly summation of what's going on in the world. You can also find more information on our website about the geopolitical consulting services that we offer clients. If you're unsure about whether you could use those consulting services, aren't sure whether you need help when it comes to geopolitical risk, why not error on the side of caution, send us an email at info@perchperspectives.com. We're happy to set up an introductory phone call and talk about what we can do for you. You'd probably be surprised at the way geopolitics is affecting what you're doing, especially in today's multipolar and competitive world. Second of all, if you need more Perch in your life and you're not interested in a full-on consulting arrangement, you should check out latampolitik.com.

Jacob Shapiro:

That's L-A-T-A-M-P-O-L-I-T-I-K.com. That's our collaboration with visual politic, which is a YouTube channel that has millions of subscribers and viewers around the world. Three times a week, it gives you an in-depth look at the geopolitics of Latin America, which I think is a really underserved area when it comes to reporting and when it comes to analysis. I've been particularly proud of how at LatamPolitik, we've done some great work on what's been happening in Peru lately. Some major elections coming up



in Peru. There was an attack by the Shining Path last week, a really grizzly attack, which says disturbing things about Peru's future. And honestly, there is nobody either in the English language or in the Spanish language, I think, that is taking this approach towards Latin America, geopolitics.

Jacob Shapiro:

So for the price of a cup of coffee, I'll be at a fancy cup of coffee every month or a beer a month, whatever you want to say it as, your five bucks a month that gets you three of those geopolitical updates on Latin America week. Feel free to check it out or sign up for the free trial. Last but not least, if you like this podcast and you're not interested in all the other stuff, there's one favor you can do for me, or really two favors, I guess I should say. First, whatever platform you're listening to this podcast on, leave us a review or leave us a rating. It's a really small thing. It takes five seconds out of your day, but it's immensely helpful to us. And if you really like the podcast, consider sharing us with your friend with your uncle, with anybody else that you think might be interested in this content.

Jacob Shapiro:

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