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Opinions Matter: Navigating Perspectives



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Foreword

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There have been numerous significant developments for TPQ since 2022. Our recent rebranding as *Transatlantic Policy Quarterly* not only reflects our expanded focus on international issues with broad implications for European and American politics, but also incorporates a new vision for the future. Our most recent issues focused on various aspects of the broader challenges and possibilities presented by this new vision, and we gratefully received numerous contributions from our eminent authors. Although we have published some of these articles in previous issues, it was necessary to give the floor to other authors whose Opinion articles also made an outstanding contribution. Keeping this in mind, we have prepared this special issue, the primary objective of which is to give a collection of such remarkable works, including those that have been previously published digitally.

Our fascinating conversation with Mr. Jakob Hallgren, Director of the Swedish Institute of International Affairs (*Utrikespolitiska Institutet*, UI), which took place in October 2022, is also included in this issue. During this important interview, we asked Mr. Hallgren a variety of questions about the dynamic nature of European politics and UI's work, and he provided valuable insight into the organization's vision and his own thoughts on the matter. We hope you will appreciate reading this important interview, and we look forward to conducting similar ones with other influential individuals and institutions in upcoming issues.

The Director of the Ukrainian Institute for International Politics, Ms. Nadija Afanasieva, asserts that the Russian invasion of Ukraine has altered how security and international law were viewed on a worldwide scale. Based on this premise, she contends that it is imperative to contemplate the prospective structure of regional collaboration with regards to security and sustainable development within the region, particularly considering the presence of a potentially hostile nation in the eastern portion of the continent.

According to Professor Hossein G. Askari, the inception of the contemporary era of economic sanctions may be traced back to the aftermath of World War I. Economic sanctions, particularly naval embargoes, have been widely seen as a viable means to curtail the military capabilities of opposing entities. However, the author asserts that other nations, including the United States, regarded them as unlawful. Following the conclusion of the war, the League of Nations incorporated economic sanctions into its covenant, allowing for their implementation under strict and specific circumstances. With the conclusion of World War II, the establishment of the United Nations marked a significant development in international relations. However, it is worth noting that

economic sanctions were not widely regarded as a legitimate tool of foreign policy during this period.

Ms. Ruth Dorsainville examines the effects of Executive Order 13985 on issues of equality, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility. The author posits that the Executive Order on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) in the Federal Workforce is aimed at eliminating structural injustices arising from the absence of equity and accessibility within the Federal workforce. Similar to other systemic issues, the author holds the belief that the Federal government acknowledges the impracticality of resolving this matter through a simplistic and expedient strategy. Therefore, she claims that the Biden administration is advocating for a comprehensive and coordinated approach, wherein all governmental entities and employers actively contribute to the development of a viable and enduring resolution.

We invite you to delve deeper into the various facets of this special edition of TPQ, titled 'Opinions Matter: Navigating Perspectives.' On behalf of Transatlantic Policy Quarterly, I would like to extend our heartfelt appreciation to all the dedicated contributors who invested substantial time and effort into this endeavor. The TPQ team thoroughly enjoyed the process of curating this exceptional edition, and we are immensely grateful for the invaluable support provided by our longstanding partner, the Halifax International Security Forum. Special recognition goes to our esteemed corporate sponsor, Yapı Kredi. We would also like to express our appreciation to our other sponsors, including Beko, Ford, Gordon-Blair, Kalekim, TEB, The Ritz-Carlton, Tüpraş, Turcas, and Uluslararası İlişkiler Dergisi, for their unwavering support.

Aybars Arda Kılıçer
Editor-in-Chief

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INTERVIEW WITH MR. JAKOB HALLGREN

DOI: 10.58867/FTGX3774

This interview took place on 14 October 2022 through Zoom. TPQ (Editor-in-Chief Aybars Arda Kılıçer and Associate Editor Ali Demircioğlu) asked several questions to Mr. Jakob Hallgren, the Director of the Swedish Institute of International Affairs (Utrikespolitiska institutet, UI) since February 2022. TPQ cannot be held accountable for the respective views and opinions of the interviewee, whose permission is taken for publishing this interview transcription.

Jakob Hallgren*

Interview Date: 14 October 2022.

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TPQ

Summer 2023

* Mr. Jakob Hallgren is the Director of the Swedish Institute of International Affairs (Utrikespolitiska institutet, UI) since February 2022.

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Aybars: Arguably per question is about Sweden and Finland's recent accession process to NATO. Considering the potential membership of Sweden and Finland into NATO, we would like to ask you what does Sweden think about increasing tensions between other alliance members, namely Türkiye and Greece? Like what is Sweden's position in this kind of tension?

Mr. Jakob Hallgren: Yeah, well, first, I should maybe say that since I'm representing the Swedish Institute of International Affairs, abbreviated as UI, which is actually the Swedish abbreviation I. We're an independent institute, so I'm not talking on behalf of the Swedish Government, but we, of course, happen to be in Sweden, so I think we have a fairly good view of what we think that the Swedish Government thinks on this. However, that is particularly difficult right today. We are in the middle of a power and government shift here. And it's right now at 10:00 o'clock that the incoming Prime Minister is presenting his Coalition partners, and it's only going to be on Monday when the new government is presented. And since this is a shift from a center-left government which has governed Sweden for eight years, to a center-right government supported by the Sweden Democrats, who are, I'm sure you know, a new force and rising force in Swedish politics.

I mean, what I am going to say today, well it's going to be less clear than if I had been talking about the previous government, for instance, because then I would have had a longer period to observe and assess their policies. However, that being said, I am of course fully aware of what the incoming parties have sent signals to this new government but I'm extrapolating and guessing a little bit. So, that is just a general reservation, but I think it's important for you if you send this later because you know on Monday, we know which party will hold, for instance the post of Foreign Minister, which is quite important for which courses are taken etc. So, there might be margin for some missed judgments here. Anyway, back to your question, well, I think, and we think that it is of course worrisome. I am saddened and regretful that we see that tensions between Greece and Türkiye are probably at the highest point in the last few weeks and months in many years. I mean, I will not make a judgment of the different causes, but I can only say that I think it's worrying to see that two

NATO allies are in such a verbal tip for that. I, of course hope that this will not translate into any kinetic violence or activities, skirmishes, however small they are. I think I would join everybody else, whether from the EU, NATO or the United States, who are calling for restraint and kind of a returning from this. You know diplomatic or verbal brinkmanship that, I think we are seeing. So that is of course as a source of concern for us. However, I think and hope that we're talking about two countries, which admittedly have different views on many things. Including territorial, borders, access to whatever natural resources under the seabed, etc., they will be able to find a compromise for a forward given that they are, after all, allies for many years and I would also like to mention. I think everybody is of course aware of this, but in considering the magnificent and quite unprecedented aggression that we're seeing in the Ukraine right now by Russia. I think it's important to keep the eye on that ball and remember that is the epic and major, big challenge to the security order that we want to have in Europe. So, that that may be a call for restraint and call for, coming back a little bit and trying to find a compromise solution. I understand this is not easy and I have full respect for the grievances that might be held on any side, often dating back very long history. But still, maybe a plea to also remember the bigger picture challenges here.

Aybars: Yes, sir, absolutely right. And, on that grant, we may move on to our next question. We would like to ask you, can you kindly tell us what policies you enacted after Russia invaded Ukraine since 24 February, especially like what influenced this unjustified attack had on the activities of your institute?

Mr. Jakob Hallgren: Actually, I only took up the position as director on 14 February. So, I mean, I started this job 10 days before Russia's full-scale invasion. I mean it's an incredibly important to remember that the war, Russia's attack and invasion and aggression already started in 2014, but it certainly took an enormous leap upwards on 24 February. This is more or less sided with when Sweden emerged out of the pandemic. With all these two restrictions being lifted. So, this meant overnight, you know. We had been covering this and commenting on this for obviously a long time. We had followed the build-up over the last two years and maybe starting more in earnest after Russia ultimatum on 17 December last year with a lot of speculation. Where it would go etc. But it certainly took a new turn after 24 February. In our institute we have several programs and centres. One of them is in the stock of Centre for Eastern European Studies, a National Centre of Excellence housed at our Institute. So, they have been extremely busy in. In both explaining to the wider Swedish public, and increasingly to an international audience "what happened and how Russia and President Putin could engage in such seemingly completely inflicting such a lot of damage from themselves and the willingness to take such huge losses and the complete disrespect, both for norms and human lives and any

previous agreements. How on Earth was it possible that Russia would take such a bizarre course?"

We've been extremely busy explaining this to the wider public, analysing and advising the Swedish decision makers and policymakers. Those were the ones who were most directly affected. But we have other researchers and analysts covering other areas such as China, Europe, the Middle East, the wider Asia, Transatlantic Relations etc. And all of them were involved in this because there are ripple effects, consequences, and views on this, which differ somewhat around the world. As you know very well so.

So, I would say that the whole Institute has kind of worked suddenly towards this overarching conflict and both explaining it and researching about it, so it's meant a huge increase in interest for what we do. We've trying to follow suit and live up to those expectations.

Aybars: Yes, thank you very much and maybe we can also talk briefly about your expectations about post Ukrainian War Europe, like what is your vision for this setting? Like what do you expect? There will take place after this kind of bloody war build and like do you think the European states will have to put more on their budgets of defence or any other kind of trajectory is possible?

Mr. Jakob Hallgren: Of course, all countries in Europe as a whole who had not committed to the 2 percent of GDP Goal for defence spending and I hear is increasingly that is going to be considered the floor around the ceiling did so for obvious reasons because everybody realized that given the complete disrespect for any norms, for any countries to be able to decide and determine their security policy courses etc. have of course made everyone realize that we need to step up in a in unprecedented ways that we haven't seen since the end of the Cold War, in Sweden case. I think also in Finland case. However, I cannot talk so much about Finland even though I know them very well.

So, I think that when the Russian Government in December claim that "there needed to be spheres of influence and that countries who were not decided to be nonaligned, had to be nonaligned that they could not choose any longer which security allegiances they wanted to have that that message essentially. The Russia earlier said that they wished for countries to be nonaligned, but after that day they said they must be nonaligned." That was a red, uh, that was already there, a red line for Sweden and Finland. And that was compounded by the actual stepped-up aggression in February.

It took a couple of Weeks and months, but it became apparent to everybody after a while that this was unacceptable. So, we decided to in broad agreement and with a big support From the Quite a Swedish Public and in Parliament to apply for NATO membership. Because we simply saw that there was no space for this. You know nonalignment and previously neutral stances that we had Built our security policies for on so long. So, that was of course a huge mental shift for our Sweden and also Finland and then they stepped up defence spending as you mentioned, but also you know an unprecedented willingness in broad agreement to support the account to punish the aggressor in blatant violation of the UN Charter, in this case Russia and to support the Ukraine party not only politically, not only economically, but also which was also quite unprecedented by sending arms. Which I mean in Sweden case is it had not happened that we had sent arms to a Party in an ongoing conflict since 1939 and the last time we did that was when we sent arms and volunteers to assist Finland. When the Soviet Union had attacked Finland in the fall of 1939. So, I mean several of those decisions were you know, quite extraordinary and quite unprecedented, I would say.

Aybars: Yes, and maybe we can also talk about this kind of Sweden's turning to NATO and like what do you think about the American-Swedish relations on that ground? Like what new opportunities and possibilities does Sweden assertion to NATO?

Mr. Jakob Hallgren: Yeah, well, maybe you asked also about the vision for a post Ukrainian war in in Europe, and I didn't respond to that. But let me just underline that.

Just because Russia has violated the European Security order doesn't mean that the European security order doesn't exist any longer. We might have to adapt the European security structures to cope with a rogue country that is not respecting the rules that everybody else is agreeing to. But of course, we will continue to defend and believe in all the values which are enshrined in the Helsinki Final Act the Paris Charter of the OSCE, the inviolability of territorial borders, the Right for any country to choose their security path, the respect for human rights both internally and externally, et cetera.

All of that is incredibly important to remember and our vision for a post Ukrainian war in Europe is of course, that we will have, unfortunately with military means they convinced Russia that they are on a completely erroneous path in what they are doing at that. But we have to come back to the type of for all, Respect that has somehow, Reigned for the last three decades. Otherwise in in Europe. With obviously some notable examples, but never at this scale. So, I just wanted to add

that on the previous question.

And then yeah, well on the Swedish American relations. Sweden has been nonaligned or neutral for a more than 200 years, not always a glorious nonalignment and neutrality but nevertheless, never a party of Military alliance. We're not yet a part of NATO. We remember, we're applying to become members. But I mean the links and relations to the United States have been very close and warm since the Second World War. There's a lot of cultural language affinity, and a third or I think 25 percent of Sweden's population at least immigrated in the 19th century to the United States.

So, there are many Scandinavian descendants in the U.S. My wife has kind of family there. I mean, there's a lot of kind of links of that kind. Sweden is certainly not the only country who's got links to the United States. I'm sure Türkiye has a lot of immigrants in the U.S. as well. There are both cultural and family links Sweden always chose together with Finland and other countries to be nonaligned after the Second World War, but still there were very close and warm relations respecting that that you know different parts, but after the end of the of the Cold War, Sweden became a member of the NATO Partnership for Peace. For many years it has been said that Sweden and Finland and I think Ukraine as well have been among the closest as close as you could be a NATO without being a member and without being covered by Article 5 collective security guarantees, et cetera. If this membership process is consumed and finalized, which we of course hope, Sweden will become a full and formal ally to the U.S.

Such as to Türkiye, of course. Which is important to remember. We fully realize this is a collective commitment covering all of the allies, Portugal, Türkiye, Norway, The United States, etc. But of course, the United States is the biggest of the allies and the Supreme and ultimate current tour, given the size of their military, economy, standing in the world, etc.

We will become allies hopefully as I have said. And what exactly this will mean in practical terms in terms of changed foreign security defence policy, is of course you know still in the making but the wishes very much there to kind of to make it work along the lines of how other allies in the NATO in NATO are developing or have developed their ties with the U.S. and new members.

And I think there is actually reciprocal appreciation, not only from the U.S. I think that currently all countries apart from Hungary and then Türkiye have already ratified the memberships.

I think it's not only the U.S., but all of the countries have in a fairly quick process as well, have signalled that they see a huge benefit in in Finland and Sweden joining NATO and that has to do with the Nordic Baltic region will be easier to defend against Russia's aggressive and unresponsive, irresponsible behaviour. So that's one thing from a military security policy point of view and the other is of course a country like Russia who wanted to scare countries from not joining NATO, having Sweden and Finland applying was of course a huge loss of faith and a huge snob. It was one of the proofs on the diplomatic front that this whole adventure was completely flawed, because I don't think it would have happened unless Russia had behaved as they are doing.

So, all of that taken together, I think it will strengthen relations between Sweden and all of the allies including Türkiye, including Germany, France, the UK and of course the United States and all of the others.

Aybars: Yes, actually we want to also talk a bit about, Sweden and Turkish relations. As you know, Türkiye has been a member candidate for the European Union for decades. Probably the longest kind of candidates in the line, and considering the role of Türkiye in Sweden, a Swedish accession to NATO. Do you think there might be a more positive climate for a European Union membership for Türkiye as well? Like what do you think about?

Mr. Jakob Hallgren: I followed this process. It started a long time ago and it is, I mean formally still ongoing. But for all practical purposes not very much is happening I am afraid, and I mean, it would require a long lecture to go into all of the reasons and who is responsible for where we are today. But on your question whether the current accept Swedish and Finnish accessory process might affect the Turkish application to the European Union, I'm afraid I have to say, I'm a little bit worried that the way Türkiye positions are judging from the number of ratifications, say a minority view. I am not sure that will serve. You know that will enhance Turkish chances in the membership application process regarding the European Union.

Yeah, I mean the European Union accession process is certainly long and incremental, and even if Sweden or other individual member countries would take on an even more positive role to enhancement, there are so many other countries. Other factors in comparison, I guess that the NATO accession process is briefer, because EU accession includes so many chapters which has to do with. Fundamental values and many competitiveness criteria, anti-corruption, et cetera, et cetera, et cetera.

So, this is I think it's a little bit difficult to compare right away. I am afraid that this kind of reluctances or kind of strong statements from Türkiye, which are of course fully legitimate. I'm not so sure that that would be, you know, would help Türkiye in the EU accession process. So, It remains to be seen where that will end, but if you ask me straightforwardly that that's my personal assessment.

Aybars: Our next question has two parts actually in the first part, we ask which topics points to the highest importance for the activities of your institute, and furthermore the second part of the question is what influence did the developments since COVID pandemic? Which had on the priorities of this research, kind of concerns of yours?

Mr. Jakob Hallgren: We cover many things at the Institute, the novelty at our Institute right now is that we last year, established to national Centres of Excellence, one for China and one for Eastern Europe, including Russia.

Of course, that I mentioned before with, big resources for our size. So that's a new departure and new development, which means a lot of focus is on making sure that the centres are well established and get up and running and do what they're supposed to do. Because we're in the middle of that build up process which started last year and ends next. Year when they were reached like a cruising speed or altitude. But this doesn't mean we are not focusing on any other ongoing areas.

We have a Europe program covering all aspects of European affairs. Sweden is going to take over the rotating Presidency of the European Union. From 1 January, this is not the rotating Presidency as it was before Lisbon with the Lisbon Treaty, but it is. It's still an important role, and there's a lot of meeting where the Presidency needs to, take charge and chair and to some extent, steer. The actions of the Union for respect of the President of the Council and the High Representative, foreign affairs, etc.

So, we're currently focusing quite a lot on preparing for that, making sure that Sweden becomes a responsible and good chair pushing the agenda of the Union. Maybe setting aside our national priorities for a while to kind of push the wider EU agenda and where, by the way, enlargement, your earlier question is certainly one. Your question, I think will be on the agenda, even though that is of course currently very much driven by the recent announcement to make Ukraine and Moldova candidate countries and the invitation Georgia to become one. But I guess this will also put all of the other candidate processes in the limelight, so that's one area.

We are also covering the wider Asia. In the Pacific, what's happening there. The China Centre is certainly looking at China. Still, the new geopolitical rivalries and realities mean that we need to look much closer at what is happening in Asia.

And then we have the Middle East and North Africa program. Because even though we are based up here in the North, we realize the importance of EU relations with the Mediterranean and the countries in the Mediterranean. That, of course, includes Türkiye, but also the rest of the Middle East, is incredibly important and wider in Africa, etc.

And then finally we have a program focusing on more global affairs where one of the key strands is the green transition climate change, climate negotiations and those kinds of global necessary processes which cannot stop. It should not stop even though we have had the biggest war on European soils since the Second World War.

Then maybe finally another area. We are looking increasingly into the relation between the economy and technological development and geopolitics. How we increasingly see that, in the economy, new technologies are becoming instruments, and in geopolitical competitions, notably between the United States and China, but that affects us all in in in different ways.

And these are areas that we need to understand. Especially, a small, technologically advanced and export dependent country like Sweden needs to understand those issues. Geopolitics enters virtually any field these days, and I think that's incredibly important to understand more whether it has to do with, you know, academic collaboration or decisions at the municipal or regional level. Or you know for that matter. Telecommunication is a major area of interest for Sweden given Ericsson et cetera.

So, there's no lack of important areas to cover and then maybe also finally understanding and respecting the fact that there are different views in the world on global events. We're currently seeing some kind of a battle of narratives.

How should Russia's war in the Ukraine highlight the current geopolitical changes. How should that be understood and how? Why is? It so that. Some countries see that differently. You would draw different conclusions than others on this in this conflict. There's no lack of important areas and I wouldn't like to put one above the other. Because we're all in it, but maybe with this kind of EU presidency lens, a major issue for Sweden and Finland will be to follow how the NATO application process unfolds so far. Of course, Türkiye is a key player in this. I would love to hear your

view about this.

We are currently not conducting any research on global health. However, it's quite obvious propose what I just said before about this, polarisation globally, and battle of narratives, et cetera,

We have realised that there is a frustration among many countries who feel that they were not allowed to receive the vaccines et cetera, and that that is kind of playing into this. It's a discussion now about the war in Ukraine etc.

Some of them are saying: 'So, you are asking us to take sides on this conflict, but we are still disappointed. We were not able to receive vaccines.' This is part of a narrative which is quite unfortunate. Where that is somehow affecting the judgement on the on this a question of a breach of the United Nations Charter, etc.

So, in that sense, we're following it a little bit. However, we're not conducting research on that particular issue.

Aybars: We have two questions about your branches. And like one of them concerns with the activities of your research regarding China. We would like to ask whether the recent crisis in Taiwan Strait influenced your research, and what is your approach to the crisis between China and Taiwan?

Mr. Jakob Hallgren: It is obvious that the recent escalation of tensions around Taiwan, in December coinciding with the U.S. speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit has also increased the interest in Sweden and, you know, started a debate about that in in Sweden and the whole issue of the relations. So, you know we are doing research on this, but we're not taking a particular position or stands. And as we all know, this is a very delicate balance so and it is ongoing. So, I cannot give you a particular position there or here or there in either direction regarding that position. We're not doing that as an institute, but these are issues that we're looking at and the reports will be forthcoming, but they are still in the pipeline. Note that there is a big standoff in these issues between China and the United States and the rest of the world. I mean Sweden as a country does not have a diplomatic presence in Taiwan, like most other countries. And still, we are worried about the tensions as they are increasing for the whole of Northeast Asia.

I used to be the ambassador in the Republic of Korea. So, I have seen this at close range how these tensions are not only around Taiwan but in the whole region with North Korea, et cetera. We are extremely worrying, and we would like to do whatever

is possible to kind of deescalate. In the case of North Korea, they of course need to change position and go away from the development of a nuclear programme, et cetera, et cetera. So, so that's what I have to say on that issue.

Aybars: Thank you very much. Our second question kind of focuses on your Middle East and North Africa (MENA) programme and we would like to ask your opinion regarding the changing dynamics of the Middle East? Especially between Israel and other prominent regional lenders. I would like to ask what your position as an institute regarding the peace attempts between Israel and Palestine and other actors is which embodied in recent Abraham Accords.

Mr. Jakob Hallgren: Well, the Abrams Accords and the states involved. That were of course not previously at war. So, I think we welcome that as a good step towards general de-escalation of tensions in the Middle East. But please remember that we do not take positions as an Institute, these are my assessments as the Director.

You also alluded to, the main problem, which is the conflict between Israel and the Palestinian, state is still not solved and that remains. There is no visible or clear progress for that right now. So yes, the Abrams Accord were very good as a step forward, but there is still a lot of work to do and obviously there are still many tensions in the conflict. You are very close to it. So, you know that much better than we do, how the war in Syria is still raging even though maybe at a lower level than before, but it's still there and people are still dying and in relations with Iran and between Iran and Israel and with Saudi Arabia there is many on unsolved issues we're following closely. I don't have a panacea or a recipe for how that should be solved, but clearly, as you said, the Abrams Accords was, you know, one step not enough to create a more general atmosphere of de-escalation, but one. important step,

I hope it could be followed by others so, and I'm sure you have a lot of views on that as well, there's many aspects of that that. You, as a country are involved which we you know fully understand and respect.

Aybars: Thank you, Mr Jacob Hallgren, and I mean that was a very interesting and informative talk. We are delighted to meet with you as well as having you in this valuable interview.

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TÜRKIYE AS A MEDIATOR POWER IN THE RUSSIAN AGGRESSION TO UKRAINE

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The Russian invasion of Ukrainian territory changed the perception of security and international law on the global level. We need to think about the future framework of regional cooperation in terms of security and sustainable development in the region having the country-aggressor on the eastern part of the continent. Russia is a historical threat to dominate the Black Sea region and control the straits. And it's our joint task now to stop the war for the benefit of the wider area.

Nadija Afanasieva*

Keywords: NATO, Russia, Security, Türkiye, Ukraine.



TPQ

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The Russian invasion of Ukrainian territory changed the perception of security and international law on the global level. We need to think about the future framework of regional cooperation in terms of security and sustainable development in the region having the country-aggressor on the eastern part of the continent. Russia is a historical threat to dominate the Black Sea region and control the straits. And it's our joint task now to stop the war for the benefit of the wider area.

24 February 2022 is a day, when the whole world understood that Russia is an aggressor. Ukrainians understood this even earlier, as the occupation of Ukrainian lands started in 2014 with the occupation of Crimea and Donbas. One of the Russian arguments to start the invasion in 2022 was the danger of NATO coming to its borders with bases, armed forces, and heavy weapons. They also blamed NATO for creating the biological laboratories on the territory of Ukraine. Here is the tricky thing – the cooperation between Ukraine and NATO countries armies started in 2014 with joint trainings and practices. Since that time, the cooperation framework with NATO has been named “Enhanced Opportunities Partner – EOP”. This means that we are working together to enhance the capacity of the military forces and align their training activities. So, the argument for a close NATO presence for Russia was not accurate in 2014, and even in 2022, there were no discussions on NATO bases on the territory of Ukraine.

The whole world can see that Russia doesn't recognize any rules of war, or international law and demonstrates the total lack of humanity. This pushes us to think together about how to proceed after the victory of Ukraine. There is no doubt that Ukraine will win this war, the question is when, the sooner is the better, as fewer people will die and less infrastructure objects will be ruined. Time is a crucial fact here and with the support of partner countries, Ukraine can move faster to victory. The decisive position of the Turkish government and civil society to act in compliance with the principles of international humanitarian law, organize humanitarian corridors, respect the rights of children and civilians, as well as the Muslim and Turkic communities in regions affected by the Russian aggression and occupation since 2014, need to be continued.

Talking about global diplomatic efforts, we need to mention the UN's inefficiency in its current form. Obviously, the organization needs to be renewed, and here we need to continue the advocacy of reformatting/ expanding the UN Security Council. "The world is bigger than five" is a traditional call of the President of the Republic of Turkey, who is referred to five countries as permanent members of the UN Security Council. Russia is one of them and has the veto power, at the same time, the open

aggressor against the right of existence of Ukrainians. The continuation of the war threatens the food security of the entire region, especially the Middle East and North Africa. Ukrainian grain traditionally goes not only to the Turkish market but also to re-export to MENA countries.

We are grateful to Turkey as they already supported Ukraine on the way to the victory – by Bayraktars, the closure of straits for Russian ships, shuttle diplomacy and mediation services. At the same time, it is not enough and it's too early to relax. Ukraine has repeatedly asked to join the sanctions and close the sky, we still remember the position of Türkiye in its call to the international community to establish a no-fly zone in Syria to protect civilians, including Turkomans along the Syrian-Turkish border. The most significant value for Ukrainians now is peace and silence in our homes, readiness to cooperate, and willingness to solve problems exclusively through diplomatic methods, including with the mediation of Turkey. We definitely consider Turkey as a precious partner in negotiations and the future recovery of Ukraine.

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ECONOMIC SANCTIONS — OUR MODERN-DAY GORDIAN KNOT

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The modern history of economic sanctions begins with the wake of WWI. Economic sanctions, notably in the form of naval embargoes, were seen as an effective instrument to limit the war-making powers of adversaries. Yet, several countries including the United States saw them as illegal. After the war, economic sanctions were sanctified in the covenant of the League of Nations permissible under highly limited conditions. After WWII, with the birth of the United Nations, economic sanctions were still not generally seen as an acceptable foreign policy instrument. For instance, the United States branded the Arab boycott of Israel as illegal. The most celebrated sanctions were on South Africa under the auspices of the United Nations. These proposed sanctions gained momentum in the latter part of the 1980s. However, they were still ineffective because Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher would not join the UN initiative believing that Nelson Mandela was a terrorist with Communists sympathies! Reagan even vetoed the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986, which had to be overruled by the U.S. Congress. Only then did Britain follow suit, and sanctions took a toll on the apartheid regime.

Hossein G. Askari*

Keywords: Economic Sanctions, Economic Warfare,
Middle East, Iran, U.S.



TPQ

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The modern history of economic sanctions begins with the wake of WWI. Economic sanctions, notably in the form of naval embargoes, were seen as an effective instrument to limit the war-making powers of adversaries. Yet, several countries including the United States saw them as illegal. After the war, economic sanctions were sanctified in the covenant of the League of Nations permissible under highly limited conditions. After WWII, with the birth of the United Nations, economic sanctions were still not generally seen as an acceptable foreign policy instrument. For instance, the United States branded the Arab boycott of Israel as illegal. The most celebrated sanctions were on South Africa under the auspices of the United Nations. These proposed sanctions gained momentum in the latter part of the 1980s. However, they were still ineffective because Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher would not join the UN initiative believing that Nelson Mandela was a terrorist with Communists sympathies! Reagan even vetoed the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986, which had to be overruled by the U.S. Congress. Only then did Britain follow suit, and sanctions took a toll on the apartheid regime.

Ironically, while the U.S. was slow to accept sanctions as a legitimate instrument of foreign policy, it has been a fast learner! Almost immediately in the aftermath of WWII sanctioning North Korea and becoming the supreme sender of sanctions. President Kennedy's 1962 embargo on Cuba with the hope of overthrowing Castro's regime was a watershed. Some sanctions against Cuba are still in force 60 years later in 2022. While the U.S. has wielded sanctions on dozens of other countries, including Russia, Iraq, China, Venezuela and Syria, sanctions on Iran have been longstanding and provide a good case for elaboration to highlight the limitation and the danger of sanctions.

The United States sanctions exports and imports of a country. It impedes access to international finance transactions (SWIFT). It sanctions capital inflows and outflows of a country. It restricts the flow of technology and people into and from a country. It sanctions commercial dealings with a country. It sanctions leaders, individuals, companies, and organization of a country. To make the sanctions more effective, it bolsters these with secondary sanctions—extending the same sanctions to any entity that breaks any of these with the target. It does all this and more to change the objectionable policies of a country. Iran has been subjected to all the above.

Why does the U.S. impose more sanctions than the rest of the world combined? Because it can. It has the largest economy in the world. It possesses premier technology in most fields. The dollar is the main reserve currency, store of value and medium of international exchange with trade and financial flows denominated

in dollars—allowing the U.S. to sever access to the dollar market. U.S. credit rating agencies, though independent, may be swayed in downgrading an adversary's credit. In short, the U.S. has economic and financial power and is willing to use it to bend an adversary and the U.S. has the military power to put behind its sanctions.

Besides the policy goals and even a regime's overthrow, a president and his party can pound their chest that they have acted boldly against an adversary. It provides great political theater, no matter if the sanction has no chance of being effective. Sanctions are easy to impose with no U.S. soldiers going to war. The President can direct sanctions through executive action. Still, what is the point of sanctioning Iran's morality police? Yes, their activities are objectionable, but how will sanctioning them change their or the regime's behavior? Or sanctioning the travel of a person who never goes outside of their country? Publicity stunts at best.

So, sanctions have been touted to be the instrument of choice when diplomacy fails. It avoids war and its attendant casualties, delivers the goods, or at least pushes back or brakes on an adversary's maligned policies. Do sanctions achieve their goal? Rarely and in a reasonable amount of time. Witness sanctions on Cuba, though modified over time, are still in force 60 years later; those on Iran dramatically tightened since 1979, still going strong after more than 40 years. The success case that all proponents of sanctions claim are those on South Africa, but this beside taking much time were helped by being multilateral, through the United Nations, as opposed to unilateral albeit strengthened by secondary sanctions.

What have sanctions on Iran achieved? Clearly, there was no immediate success—Iranian authorities did not, and have not, changed their policies to satisfy the United States because sanctions would have been lifted if they had. Be this as it may, maybe if Iran had not been sanctioned, it would have become so much stronger economically that it could have become a more dangerous adversary? That we will never know, but here is what we do know. Sanctions have eroded all trust between Iran and the U.S. Diplomacy is in a sheet of thin ice. Millions of Iranians have been deprived of economic security and essential medicines. While sanctions have killed no American soldier, thousands of Iranians have died from these deprivations. The decline in opportunities has been a major factor in driving young talented Iranians to emigrate far afield. Yes, sanctions have devastated Iran—its economy and more important the welfare and health of its citizenry. The seeds of hatred have been sown at least in the hearts of thousands of Iranians.

While Iran has been handcuffed, what about the fallout further afield? Yes, Iran's exports have been limited, but the global pain in Iran's two major exports have only now become apparent. Iran has the second largest reserves of natural gas and the fourth largest reserves of crude oil. So, Iran should be a prime exporter of natural gas (piped gas to Europe and/or liquified natural gas commonly referred to as LNG) and petrochemicals that use these as feedstock. Not so because of sanctions. In 1995, Iran invited Bechtel Corporation (the company that developed and built Qatar's LNG plants) to visit Iran. Iran's geography and vast gas reserves offered the most economic option for piped gas for Europe. In 1996, President Clinton killed all foreign investment and participation in Iran by enacting the Iran-Libya Sanctions Act. Bechtel could not develop these projects in Iran and CONOCO could not develop Iran's oil fields. The result 25 years later? Europe is hostage to Putin, Iranians have suffered and sanctions have not changed what the U.S. considers Iran's objectionable policies. Admittedly no one could have predicted the Ukraine war, but that is precisely the point. Sanctions are imposed with little appreciation of how they might affect the larger world then and into the future. ILSA has reduced the availability of oil and gas and adversely affected competition for these products, driving up prices and fueling global inflation. More broadly speaking, sanctions destroy natural comparative advantage of countries (the basis for trade) and put in its place an artificial comparative advantage, thus increasing prices and in the process resulting in supply chain problems, in turn leading to costly readjustments in production and distribution patterns across the world.

While sanctions have removed much of Iran's oil and gas off the market and its traditional exports of nuts, dried fruits, rugs, and handicrafts, they have helped the fortunes of producers elsewhere. In turn, they have become a powerful lobby for maintaining sanctions on Iran. Lobbyists for Qatar, UAE and Saudi Arabia work behind the scenes to maintain the sanctions to dampen any competition from Iran in natural gas and oil and in turn weaken Iran politically. California pistachio growers lobby to keep Iranian nuts out of the U.S. Of course, there is an army of anti-Iranian regime lobbyists—Israeli, Jewish, Arab- who want tighter sanctions to topple the Tehran regime.

What does all this tell us about sanctions being an instrument of “peace” when diplomacy fails? Yes, battlefield casualties are avoided for the sender of sanctions, but they are real for the target in the form of hunger, malnutrition, and medical deficiencies. Sanctions can go on for more years than most, if not all, wars, with devastating economic dislocations for the target and for the some of the world. The economic fallout can be even more ever than most wars. There remains the question as to the legality of unilateral sanctions under international law and whether they

contradict the articles of agreement of the IMF, IBRD and the WTO. For the future, the world should come together and limit the deployment of sanctions to military and related exports and imports and ratified by a majority vote of the UN Security Council with no vetoes permitted.

A LOOK AT THE IMPACT OF EXECUTIVE ORDER 13985 ON DIVERSITY, EQUITY, INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBILITY

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As a collective, the Executive Order on Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) in the Federal Workforce is targeted at eradicating systemic injustice resulting from the lack of equity and accessibility in the Federal workforce. Like other systemic problems, the Federal government recognizes that this cannot be resolved through a push-and-go approach. That's why the Biden administration is canvassing for an equally systemic response that would have all government agencies and employers play their part in creating a sustainable solution. Inequality in America has a long and pervasive history. This is why the Biden administration's push to limit and hopefully eradicate its effect sends a refreshing message to the millions of Americans it affects. Limiting factors including access to equal opportunities, unfair treatments resulting from racism, and other harmful prejudices continue to perpetuate a cycle of poverty within certain sections of society.

Ruth Dorsainville*

Keywords: American Law, Inequality, Injustice, Racism, Workforce.



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Inequity, racism, and unequal opportunity in the workplace are well documented.¹ These vices are kept in place through the differential treatment of people of color in our society. Studies have shown that racial minorities are more likely to be stopped by law enforcement officers, detained pretrial, be leveled with a more severe charge, and handed a harsher sentence than white persons. The discrimination we witness today may not be as imposing as outright slavery, it however still propounds the same evil; that people should not be seen as equals.²

On his first day in office, President Biden signed Executive Order 13985 to build on the federal government's effort at stemming institutional injustice against underserved communities. This order affirms and seeks to enforce through the law that the federal government has a workforce that reflects the diversity of Americans.

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Inequality in America has a long and pervasive history. This is why the Biden administration's push to limit and hopefully eradicate its effect sends a refreshing message to the millions of Americans it affects. A study by PEW Research Center shows how economic inequality has continued to widen even after the recovery from the 2008 recession.³ Limiting factors including access to equal opportunities, unfair treatments resulting from racism, and other harmful prejudices continue to perpetuate a cycle of poverty within certain sections of society.

In the U.S, public White Supremacist events have increased by 123 percent since 2016.⁴ Even more dangerous than these events is the apparent attempt by hate groups seeking to legitimize their ideas through the use of what are culturally mainstream channels. That's why the government has to be resolute in its response.

1) United Nations Secretary-General, "Remarks on Racism in the Workplace," (19 November 2020). <https://www.un.org/sg/en/content/sg/speeches/2020-11-19/remarks-racism-the-workplace>

2) Vera, "An Unjust Burden," (May 2018). <https://www.vera.org/publications/for-the-record-unjust-burden>

3) Pew Research Center, "Most Americans say there is too much economic inequality in the U.S. but Fewer than Half Call it a Top Priority," (9 January 2020). <https://www.pewresearch.org/social-trends/2020/01/09/trends-in-income-and-wealth-inequality/>

4) YouTube video by Global News, "The Rise of White Supremacy and Its New Face," (30 May 2019). https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KnI9c4_xu8w

Today, racism is no longer a phenomenon within our towns and cities as it's found its way to the borders of "the Land of Liberty... where all men are created equal".⁵ We are all witnesses to how Ukrainian Immigrants are given the red-carpet treatment, unlike their black and colored counterparts. Every refugee has the right to seek asylum and refuge in another state. Still, somehow, the events of the last few months remind us of all that the polity thinks a White refugee is more deserving of sympathy than people of color from Haiti, Syria, or Mexico.⁶

Successive studies have shown the harmful effects of the lack of diversity in management positions and how it creates a chain effect that culminates in more denigrating actions toward the already meager underrepresented section of the workforce.⁷ As a government, maintaining a workforce that reflects the diversity of your citizenry is critical to building trust. In America however, this objective is challenged by the hurtful history of slavery and the Jim crow laws used to mandate racial segregation and permit a system of discrimination across the United States.⁸

The effects of history's injustices are staggering.⁹ Figures published by the National Association of the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP),¹⁰ show that while Black Americans are only 13.4 percent of the U.S population, they make up 22 percent of fatal police shootings, 47 percent of wrongful conviction exonerations, and 35 percent of individuals executed by the death penalty. African Americans are incarcerated in state prisons at a rate five times higher than White Americans.¹¹

While on the campaign trail, Biden's slogan of "Building back better" underlined his vision for creating an American economy more robust and more inclusive than before the Covid pandemic. According to the Biden campaign, every American worker and family will feel welcome to play their part as total participants in this economy. Actions towards actualizing these promises were set in motion on the very

5) National Achieves, "Declaration of Independence: A Transcription,"

<https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript>

6) Refworld, "UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)".

7) MissionSquare Research Institute, "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the Public Service Workforce," (September 2021). https://www.slge.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/deireport_092421.pdf

8) Myers et al., "Government's Equity Imperative," Deloitte (14 September 2021).

<https://www2.deloitte.com/us/en/insights/industry/public-sector/bias-discrimination-racial-equity-government.html>

9) Jennifer Rae Taylor, "A History of Tolerance for Violence Has Laid the Groundwork for Injustice Today," ABA (16 May 2019). https://www.americanbar.org/groups/crsj/publications/human_rights_magazine_home/black-to-the-future/tolerance-for-violence/

10) NAACP, Criminal Justice Fact Sheet. <https://naacp.org/resources/criminal-justice-fact-sheet>

11) Ashley Nellis, "The Color of Justice: Racial and Ethnic Disparity in State Prisons," The Sentencing Project (13 October 2021). <https://www.sentencingproject.org/publications/color-of-justice-racial-and-ethnic-disparity-in-state-prisons/>

first day of his Presidency.

The Biden administration also launched a Whole-of-Government Initiative to Advance Racial Equity.¹² This was intended to serve as a foundation for the work needed to build a fairer and just society under the law. Biden's campaign promise to hit the ground running and prioritize the government's fight against inequity led his administration to push a flurry of executive orders and legislation to combat what he calls the "corrosive stings of racial injustice".¹³

As a democracy, the American government is dependent on solid institutions. The Biden administration is bent on using these institutions to address the problems of equity, inclusion, and accessibility in the national workforce. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC), the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), and the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) are among the government agencies empowered by the executive orders signed on 25 June 2021.

Barely a week after signing these orders into law, President Biden signed a resolution removing an overhaul to the EEOC reconciliation process.¹⁴ This updated the EEOC rules on unlawful discrimination based on age, disabilities, and genetic information. Initially introduced in the United States Senate, it gives the Federal government more powers to hold employers accountable for workplace discrimination through the EEOC.

As the primary federal agency for enforcing laws against employment discrimination, the EEOC had reported numerous achievements in the 2021 fiscal year. It resolved 138 merit lawsuits and 95.7 percent of all district court resolutions.

For the sake of taking a more balanced approach, the Direct Employers Association remarked that the EEOC has taken a nosedive in its performance during the Biden administration. As an association formed by managers (supposed to be regulated by the EEOC), it's fair to say you have to choose whether or not to take these remarks by the Direct Employers Association with a grain of salt.

12) White House, "Fact Sheet: President-elect Biden's Day One Executive Actions Deliver Relief for Families Across America amid Converging Crises," (20 January 2021). <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/01/20/fact-sheet-president-elect-bidens-day-one-executive-actions-deliver-relief-for-families-across-america-amid-converging-crises/>

13) YouTube video by MSNBC. "Biden Announces Executive Orders Focused on 'Diversity, Equity and Inclusion'," (26 January 2021). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BCDpIVXb3SQ>

14) White House, "Remarks by President Biden Signing Three Congressional Review Act Bills into Law: S.J. Res. 13; S. J. Res. 14; and S. J. Res. 15," (30 June 2021). <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/speeches-remarks/2021/06/30/remarks-by-president-biden-signing-three-congressional-review-act-bills-into-law-s-j-res-13-s-j-res-14-and-s-j-res-15/>

The Office of Management and Budget (OMB) is another vital federal agency necessary for the success of the Biden Administration's push to guarantee DEIA in the federal workforce. The OMB's role in monitoring the Presidency's budget allocations and spending by federal agencies makes it a vital component for successfully implementing DEIA initiatives.¹⁵

Each year, the federal government spends more than \$650 billion, making it the world's largest consumer of goods and services. Executive order 13985 requires agencies to identify and resolve the obstacles underserved communities face in achieving full and equal participation in the U.S economy. So far, OMB through the small business contracting goal has awarded 59 percent of all federal government spending managed by the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) to companies owned by this underserved communities.

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) and the Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP) are the two other agencies equally instrumental to the success of this initiative. They share a mandate under the 25 June Executive Order to take steps toward improving diversity in federal employment by helping agencies to build and strengthen partnerships with historically black colleges, tribal colleges, Asian American and Pacific Islander-serving institutions, and other learning institutions which predominantly serve underrepresented communities.

Despite sustained efforts by the Biden administration, at creating functional DEIA initiatives, the employment gap between White and Colored communities has not witnessed much change.¹⁶ In April of 2022 for example, the Black unemployment rate fell to a pandemic-era low of 6.2 percent (seeing a further rise from the 5.9 percent of April 2022) while the overall employment rate remained at 3.6 percent.¹⁷ These figures permeate the entire ecosystem as racial undertones were visible even in the recently concluded confirmation hearings for Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson,¹⁸ the first black woman to be nominated to the supreme court.

15) Clinton White House Archives. <https://clintonwhitehouse2.archives.gov/OMB/organization/role.html>

16) Ben Werschul, "Biden hasn't put a dent in the Black employment gap after a year in office," Yahoo Finance (20 January 2022). <https://finance.yahoo.com/news/biden-black-employment-gap-after-a-year-in-office-153939312.html?>

17) U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Employment Situation Summary", (3 June 2022). <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/empsit.nr0.htm>

18) Seung Min Kim and Marianna Sotomayor, "Race Hovered over Ketanji Brown Jackson's Confirmation Hearing," The Washington Post, 24 March 2022. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/2022/03/24/race-jackson-confirmation-hearing/>

The mixed results recorded by the various agencies responsible for implementing Biden's executive orders on DEIA make it challenging to grade its success. If history is any guide, this administration has a long way to go. Thankfully, it has taken some steps in the right direction.

ARMENIAN-AZERBAIJANI RAPPROCHEMENT: FACING A HURDLE

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The ongoing negotiations between Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders that have been realized through separate Russian and EU intermediaries since 2021 have become more intense lately. The United States has also increased its diplomatic support in 2023. Two top-level meetings between Ilham Aliyev and Nikol Pashinyan have been held through Russian facilitation in Sochi and Moscow (31 October 2022 and 25 May 2023) and four top-level meetings have been hosted by the President of the EU Council, Charles Michel, in Brussels since April 2022 (22 May 2022, 31 August 2022, 14 May 2023, and 15 July 2023). In addition, the Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders met twice in Prague and Chisinau on 6 October 2022, and 1 June 2023, on the margins of the first and second summits of the European Political Community respectively.

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Keywords: Azerbaijan, Armenia, Caucasian Affairs,
Türkiye, Normalization Process, Nagorno-Karabakh.



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One year ago, in a piece titled “Towards Armenian–Azerbaijani rapprochement: Initial steps,”¹ I evaluated the initial developments towards the rapprochement undertaken by the governments of both Azerbaijan and Armenia, and Armenia and Türkiye. The piece ended on a positive note highlighting the first direct phone conversation between Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers (Jeyhun Bayramov and Ararat Mirzoyan) in nearly three decades. The conversation took place on 11 April 2022, and they discussed various issues relating to the future peace treaty, the establishment of the Joint Border Commission, and humanitarian issues.

Now, a year later, after the recent talks between Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan and Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev held in Brussels on 15 July 2023, it is useful to return to this topic and take a closer look at the current status of the Azerbaijan–Armenia and Armenia–Türkiye normalization processes.

The ongoing negotiations between Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders that have been realized through separate Russian and EU intermediaries since 2021 have become more intense lately. The United States has also increased its diplomatic support in 2023. Two top-level meetings between Ilham Aliyev and Nikol Pashinyan have been held through Russian facilitation in Sochi and Moscow (31 October 2022 and 25 May 2023) and four top-level meetings have been hosted by the President of the EU Council, Charles Michel, in Brussels since April 2022 (22 May 2022, 31 August 2022, 14 May 2023, and 15 July 2023). In addition, the Armenian and Azerbaijani leaders met twice in Prague and Chisinau on 6 October 2022, and 1 June 2023, on the margins of the first and second summits of the European Political Community respectively.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken also organized a joint meeting with Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference on 18 February 2023, to advance the bilateral peace negotiations between the two states, as no meetings at the top level or at the level of foreign ministers had been held since the Prague meeting on 6 October 2022. At the same time, the U.S. has continued its efforts in this direction and facilitated bilateral talks at the level of foreign ministers on May 1–4 and June 27–29 at the George P. Shultz National Foreign Affairs Training Center in Arlington, Virginia. On both occasions, the Armenian and Azerbaijani foreign ministers, Jeyhun Bayramov and Ararat Mirzoyan, met with U.S. Secretary Anthony Blinken and Assistant to the President and National Security Adviser Jake

1) “Towards Armenian–Azerbaijani rapprochement: Initial Steps,” *Transatlantic Policy Quarterly*, 14 April 2022. <http://transatlanticpolicy.com/blog/84/towards-armenian-azerbaijani-rapprochement-initial-steps>

Sullivan in Washington. As a result of these bilateral talks, it was announced after the second meeting that the ministers had reached an agreement on additional articles of the draft bilateral “Agreement on Peace and Establishment of Interstate Relations.” They also acknowledged that the positions on some key issues require further work.²

Furthermore, four meetings have been held within the framework of the Joint Border Commissions led by Azerbaijani and Armenian deputy prime ministers Shahin Mustafayev and Mher Qrigoryan without any intermediaries with the aim of addressing all questions relating to the delimitation of the border and how best to ensure a stable situation (24 May 2022, 30 August 2022, 3 November 2022, and 12 July 2023).

At the same time, talks between Armenia and Türkiye about the normalization of relations started, without preconditions, in 2021, after the Second Karabakh War, when both countries appointed special representatives for the normalization process: Ambassador Serdar Kılıç and Deputy Speaker of the Armenian Parliament Ruben Rubinyan. These were the first direct negotiations between Armenian and Turkish officials in over a decade.³ Their first meeting was held on 14 January 2022, in Moscow, and further meetings were organized on February 24 and May 3, and on July 1 of 2022, in Vienna.

In February 2022, reciprocal charter flights between Armenia and Türkiye resumed. Due to the bankruptcy of Atlasjet, the airliner operating flights between the two states in 2020, there were no direct flights between Türkiye and Armenia for over two years.⁴

Furthermore, the Turkish and Armenian ministers of foreign affairs, Mevlut Cavusoglu and Ararat Mirzoyan, met on the sidelines of the Antalya Diplomacy Forum on 12 March 2022.

On 1 July 2022, the special representatives for the normalization process between Türkiye and Armenia, Serdar Kılıç and Ruben Rubinyan, agreed “to enable the crossing of the land border between Türkiye and Armenia by third-country citizens visiting Türkiye and Armenia respectively” as well as “commencing direct air cargo trade between Türkiye and Armenia at the earliest possible date.”⁵

2) “US supports continuation of talks between Azerbaijan, Armenia - State Department,” Trend.az, 10 July 2023. <https://en.trend.az/azerbaijan/politics/3771371.html>

3) “Turkey–Armenia border opens for the first time in 30 years for earthquake,” Commonsplace.eu, 11 February 2023. <https://www.commonspace.eu/news/turkey-armenia-border-opens-first-time-30-years-earthquake-aid>

4) “Passengers happy about flights resuming between Türkiye,” aa.com.tr, 2 February 2022. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/passengers-happy-about-flights-resuming-between-turkiye-armenia/2492391>

5) “Press Release Regarding the Meeting of the Special Representatives for the Normalization Process Between

On 1 January 2023, Türkiye and Armenia lifted barriers and began direct air cargo amid normalization talks between the special representatives of both countries.⁶

Armenia also provided humanitarian aid during the devastating earthquake that occurred in Türkiye in February 2023. Five Armenian aid trucks passed over the Margara–Alican border bridge, which was opened for this specific purpose.⁷

Overall, four major highlights within the Azerbaijan–Armenia and Armenia–Türkiye normalization processes can be distinguished for the past year.

First, on 22 May 2023, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan made it clear that Armenia is ready to recognize Azerbaijan's territorial integrity of 86,600 square kilometers. He has also explicitly stated that Azerbaijan's 86,600 square kilometers includes 'Nagorno-Karabakh' and Azerbaijani enclaves.⁸ This was, in fact, Pashinyan's first clear public statement acknowledging Azerbaijani sovereignty over so-called 'Nagorno-Karabakh.' Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev positively assessed this statement of the Armenian Prime Minister officially recognizing the parameters of the territory of Azerbaijan, including Karabakh and the Azerbaijani enclave villages, but added that "now it's time for the same words to be confirmed on paper, signatures to be made and relations to be established."⁹

However, Nikol Pashinyan, in the above-mentioned statement, also noted that recognition of Azerbaijani territorial integrity is inseparable from the rights and security of the Armenians of Nagorno-Karabakh, and they should discuss it in direct dialogue with Baku, but for these negotiations it is necessary to create an international mechanism.¹⁰ Azerbaijan has repeatedly rejected this stance because it considers Karabakh its internal matter and does not want to discuss it with any other country.

Türkiye and Armenia," Ambassador Serdar Kılıç and Deputy Speaker of the Armenian Parliament Ruben Rubinyan, 1 July 2022. https://www.mfa.gov.tr/no_-212_-turkiye-ve-ermenistan-normallesme-sureci-ozel-temsilcileri-nin---gorusmeleri-hk.en.mfa

6) "Türkiye, Armenia Start Direct Air Cargo Trade," <https://www.trtworld.com/turkey/t%C3%BCrkiye-armenia-start-direct-air-cargo-trade-64230>

7) "Turkey–Armenia border opens for the first time in 30 years for earthquake," Commonsplace.eu, 11 February 2023. <https://www.commonspace.eu/news/turkey-armenia-border-opens-first-time-30-years-earthquake-aid>

8) "The territorial integrity of Azerbaijan includes Nagorno-Karabakh" and other statements by Pashinyan," Jam-news.net, 23 May 2023. <https://jam-news.net/pashinyan-on-the-topics-azerbaijan-russia-csto/>

9) The Meeting Dedicated to the Socio-Economic Results of the 6th Month of This Year was held Under the Chairmanship of Ilham Aliyev, 11 July 2023. <https://president.az/az/articles/view/60429>

10) "The territorial integrity of Azerbaijan includes Nagorno-Karabakh" and other statements by Pashinyan," Jam-news.net, 23 May 2023. <https://jam-news.net/pashinyan-on-the-topics-azerbaijan-russia-csto/>

According to Thomas de Waal, in terms of recognizing the territorial integrity of Azerbaijan, the incumbent Armenian government has gone much further than previous administrations. However, he adds that “Yerevan is doing this under clear international pressure, Armenia is being told to come to terms with the fact that the idea of Karabakh’s independence has disappeared. But, on the other hand, it is also clear that no power in Armenia will ever completely abandon the people of Karabakh.”¹¹

Second, on 23 April 2023, Azerbaijan established a border checkpoint at the entrance to the Lachin road. This can be considered “the most significant tactical achievement for Baku since the end of the Second Karabakh War in 2020.”¹² This border checkpoint has been established “in accordance with the internal legislation of Azerbaijan as well as the international rules to prevent illegal activities and to ensure transparency. Over the past few months, hundreds of Armenian residents have been allowed to pass through this checkpoint in a well-regulated and transparent manner”.¹³

Thus, this step has not only contributed to fully controlling the Armenian traffic to and from the Karabakh region, including halting the illegal exploitation of natural resources, the illegal flow of weapons, military equipment and landmines, the rotation of illegal armed formation, as well as the illegal transportation of third-party citizens into the sovereign territory of Azerbaijan, but has also enabled Azerbaijan to restore its last remaining section of the border with Armenia, which had been in a state of limbo since the occupation of Lachin, the first adjacent district located outside of the former Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (NKAO), in 1992

Third, on 6 February 2023, the border between Türkiye and Armenia was opened for the first time in 30 years to allow Armenian aid trucks to pass to the Turkish regions affected by the devastating earthquake.¹⁴ Although this was for a short time, it had an enormous symbolism for Turkish–Armenian rapprochement. However, it is well known that Türkiye closed its border with Armenia due to the occupation of Kalbajar, the second adjacent district outside the NKAO seized by Armenian armed forces in April 1993. Thus, without any tangible progress in the Armenian–Azerbaijani normalization process, it is difficult to expect any serious positive results

11) “Baku uses ‘Coercive Diplomacy’ against Yerevan,” Thomas de Waal, Jam-news.net, 3 July 2023. <https://jam-news.net/thomas-de-waal-on-armenian-azerbaijani-talks/>

12) Fuad Chiragov, “Azerbaijan Establishes Border Checkpoint Along Lachin Road,” *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol. 20 Issue 78, 15 May 2023. <https://jamestown.org/program/azerbaijan-establishes-border-checkpoint-along-lachin-road/>

13) Commentary on the Statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation of 15 July 2023. No:393/23. <https://mfa.gov.az/en/news/no39323>

14) Turkey–Armenia border opens for the first time in 30 years for earthquake aid,” Commonsplace.eu, 11 February 2023. <https://www.commonspace.eu/news/turkey-armenia-border-opens-first-time-30-years-earthquake-aid>

in Turkish–Armenian rapprochement, because these two processes are inextricably linked to one another.

Fourth, the Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan’s attendance at Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan’s inauguration ceremony following his re-election in Ankara on 3 June 2023, is an extraordinary event in Turkish–Armenian relations. However, this decisive step by the Armenian prime minister was negatively assessed by the Armenian Diaspora as, in their opinion, it discredited their lobbying efforts in the USA.¹⁵

However, existence of certain disagreements between the sides impedes both Azerbaijan–Armenia and Armenia–Türkiyenormalization processes so far.

The *fate of the Armenian population* who reside in that part of Azerbaijan’s Karabakh economic region that is currently under the control of Russian peacekeepers is the first key issue in this context.

Azerbaijan is ready to reach out and engage in direct negotiations with Karabakh Armenians. In fact, the first meeting between the representatives of Azerbaijan and representatives of the Karabakh Armenians was held on 1 March 2023, at the headquarters of the Russian Federation’s peacekeeping contingent in Khojaly. Later, on March 13 and March 27, the Presidential Administration of the Republic of Azerbaijan issued invitations on Twitter addressed to “representatives of the Armenian public in Karabakh” to talks in Baku on “reintegration” and the “implementation of infrastructure projects.” The Karabakh Armenians reaffirmed that they are ready to meet with Azerbaijani representatives in Khojaly and insisted on Russian peacekeeping mediation.¹⁶

However, Azerbaijan wants to directly negotiate with the local Karabakh Armenians without any third-party mediation. As President Charles Michel underlined it the EU encourages “direct dialogue between Baku and representatives of Armenians living in the former Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast”, and such “dialogue should provide multi-needed confidence for all those involved”.¹⁷

15) Harut Sassounian, “Pashinyan’s Ankara Visit used by Turkish officials to undermine Diaspora Efforts,” Panorama.am, 4 July 2023. <https://www.panorama.am/en/news/2023/07/04/Pashinyan-Ankara-visit/2861615>

16) “Azerbaijan Again Proposes Reintegration talks with Karabakh Armenians in Baku, rejected by Stepanakert,” Karabakhspace.commonspace.eu, 28 March 2023. <https://karabakhspace.commonspace.eu/news/azerbaijan-again-proposes-reintegration-talks-karabakh-armenians-baku-rejected-stepanakert>

17) Press remarks by President Charles Michel following trilateral meeting with President Aliyev of Azerbaijan and Prime Minister Pashinyan of Armenia, 15 July 2023. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2023/07/15/press-remarks-by-president-charles-michel-following-trilateral-meeting-with-president-aliyev-of-azerbaijan-and-prime-minister-pashinyan-of-armenia/>

However, the existence of *members of illegal Armenian armed detachments* that are still entrenched in Karabakh and de facto governing structures (the so-called ‘Parliament,’ ‘ministries,’ etc.) existing in Karabakh are among important pending issues that create serious obstacles to the start of direct interaction between Baku and Khankendi. Azerbaijan demands the withdrawal or disarmament of the former and the latter's dissolution.

Another controversial question within this issue is related to the new Armenian narrative that has evolved around the idea of a “humanitarian crisis in Nagorno-Karabakh” and a fictitious accusation against Azerbaijan that it intends to carry out ethnic cleansing of Karabakh Armenians.¹⁸ Through this “old new narrative,” the Armenian side is trying to misrepresent the current situation. On the one hand, they would like to keep the old format of interaction that was used between Armenia and so-called Nagorno-Karabakh before the Second Karabakh War, and is therefore trying to remove the ‘Lacin’ border checkpoint in order to get unimpeded access to Karabakh. However, although Armenia requested on 12 May 2023, the modification of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) 22 February 2023 Order in the Armenia v. Azerbaijan case concerning the “Application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination” to include removal of the Lachin border checkpoint, the ICJ unanimously denied this request on 6 July 2023.¹⁹

It is clear that, despite the two and a half years that have passed since the Second Karabakh War, it is still difficult for the de facto leaders of separatist forces in Karabakh to readjust to a new political reality. At the same time, there is no consolidated vision about the Armenian–Azerbaijani normalization process in Armenia. Pashinyan’s recognition of Azerbaijani sovereignty over Karabakh has also triggered shock, ire, and outrage among the main opposition forces in Armenia as well as representatives of the Armenian diaspora.

However, in order to come to a peace agreement with Azerbaijan, more consistent work should be done not only by the Armenian leadership, but also by the representatives of the international community especially in the direction of facilitation of the smooth integration of the Karabakh Armenians into Azerbaijan, because there is no doubt that Karabakh as a whole, including its lowland and highland parts, is firmly situated within Azerbaijani sovereign territory.

18) “Pashinyan Says No Alternative to Peace Treaty with Azerbaijan Despite Baku’s Ongoing Provocations,” Hetq.am, 6 July 2023. <https://hetq.am/en/article/157820>

19) Press Release No:381/23 on the decision of the International Court of Justice of 6 July 2023, on unanimous denial of Armenia’s request, <https://mfa.gov.az/en/news/no38123>; Application of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (Armenia v. Azerbaijan) Request for the modification of the Court’s Order indicating a provisional measure. No. 2023/40.

It is undeniable that despite almost 30 years in a state of limbo, this geographic region and people currently residing there must be firmly aligned with Azerbaijan and should be associated with the legal and administrative structures of the Azerbaijani state. In this context, special mention should be made regarding the statement made by Kristina Kvien, the U.S. Ambassador to Armenia. “Commenting on the views that it will be impossible to live peacefully if Nagorno-Karabakh remains part of Azerbaijan, Kristina Kvien said the U.S. believes and hopes that it is possible, that all parties should make joint efforts to make this possible, that this is the right approach”.²⁰

Azerbaijan’s willingness to provide humanitarian supplies to Karabakh Armenians via Aghdam should be considered as one of the positive humanitarian gestures in this context. This issue was also underlined in the press remarks by President Charles Michel following trilateral meeting with President Aliyev of Azerbaijan and Prime Minister Pashinyan of Armenia on 15 July 2023.²¹

The second disagreement between the sides is related to the connectivity issues such as unblocking transportation and economic links in the region. Despite the establishment of a trilateral working group on this specific topic based on the provisions of the 11 January 2021 Trilateral Statement, and the fact that twelve meetings of this working group have been held, the outcome still seems elusive. However, the positions of the sides are somehow getting closer. This issue was also discussed during the recent meeting in Brussels and the sides agreed that modalities of future transport arrangements will respect the principles of sovereignty, jurisdiction and reciprocity. It was also noted that the construction of the railway connection should be undertaken forthwith, and the EU would be ready to contribute financially in this context.²²

Border delimitation has also been a difficult topic which needs a special attention. However, at the recent meeting in Brussels “both leaders reconfirmed their unequivocal commitment to the 1991 Almaty Declaration as a political framework for the delimitation” and agreed to intensify and accelerate the work of border commissions.²³

20) "US Ambassador to Armenia on Chances of Karabakh Armenians surviving in Azerbaijan: We Believe It Is possible," News.am, 4 July 2023. <https://news.am/eng/news/768688.html>

21) Press remarks by President Charles Michel following trilateral meeting with President Aliyev of Azerbaijan and Prime Minister Pashinyan of Armenia, 15 July 2023. <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/press/press-releases/2023/07/15/press-remarks-by-president-charles-michel-following-trilateral-meeting-with-president-aliyev-of-azerbaijan-and-prime-minister-pashinyan-of-armenia/>

22) Press remarks by President Charles Michel following trilateral meeting with President Aliyev of Azerbaijan and Prime Minister Pashinyan of Armenia, 15 July 2023.

23) Press remarks by President Charles Michel following trilateral meeting with President Aliyev of Azerbaijan and Prime Minister Pashinyan of Armenia, 15 July 2023.

On the other hand, some disagreement between Armenia and Türkiye also exist.

The *unveiling of the so-called 'Nemesis' Monument in Yerevan* on 25 April 2023, has been negatively perceived in Türkiye. As a result of this act, Türkiye “closed its airspace for Armenian planes, and the Turkish foreign minister later demanded that Armenia dismantle the monument, otherwise threatening to take unspecified additional actions against Armenia.”²⁴

Today Azerbaijan tries to use both diplomacy and force to achieve some progress in its efforts towards peace. However, Armenia is still stuck between myth and reality. A drastic shift is required to move from myths related to ‘imagined communities’ defined by kinship and history to new, pragmatic relations with Azerbaijan and Türkiye. But past narratives, stereotypes, grievances, phobias, and geopolitical implications create hindrances for ‘crossing the Rubicon,’ that is, passing a point of no return for the time being.

24) Dr. Benyamin Poghosyan, “The Other Side of the Armenia–Turkey Normalization Process,” *Armenianweekly.com*, 11 May 11 2023. <https://armenianweekly.com/2023/05/11/the-other-side-of-the-armenia-turkey-normalization-process/>

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TECHNOLOGY COOPERATION IN AN ERA OF MULTIPOLARITY

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Openness has led to the development of other parts of the world. In the early 2000s, the abbreviation BRICS was coined referring to Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. These countries represented a set of countries that were emerging on the world stage as significant economic and political actors. A common Western notion was that the increased openness and exchanges would drive the world in a more democratic direction. Such a development could be seen in quickly developing countries in the latter half of the 20th century, including Japan, Korea, and Taiwan. 20 years into the millennium shift it is now obvious that the world is moving in a different direction.

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Keywords: Balance of Power, China, Multipolar World Order,
Technology Cooperation, U.S.



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In the past 30 years, the world has experienced significant changes. The Cold War came to an end with the fall of the iron curtain, which set the stage for a globalization wave dominated by U.S.-European norms. The era has been characterized by an increased international openness based on a neoliberal order, in trade and scientific exchanges, and an ensuing interconnectedness.

Openness has led to the development of other parts of the world. In the early 2000s, the abbreviation BRICS was coined referring to Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa. These countries represented a set of countries that were emerging on the world stage as significant economic and political actors. A common Western notion was that the increased openness and exchanges would drive the world in a more democratic direction. Such a development could be seen in quickly developing countries in the latter half of the 20th century, including Japan, Korea, and Taiwan.

20 years into the millennium shift it is now obvious that the world is moving in a different direction. According to V-Dem, 70 percent of the world's population lives in dictatorships,¹ including electoral dictatorships, and the democratic part of the world has gradually decreased. Even in the United States, often seen as the high point of democratic governance during the 20th century, the political system has eroded some of its democratic institutions, especially during and in the wake of the Trump presidency.

After the collapse of the Soviet Union, another superpower has arisen, namely China. 20 years ago, the country was still characterized as a developing country, but authoritarian China is today seen as one of the nodes in the global power balance, alongside the United States and Europe.

It has been clear that China has gained significant influence in many parts of the world. For example, the Belt and Road Initiative, China's massive investment and infrastructure project has created strong ties to Africa and Asia. China is also exerting its influence through trade and investments in Europe and the United States. This has created strong responses from the Western world, as well as in many parts of Asia, raising tensions between countries.

1) Vanessa A. Boese, Nazifa Alizada, Martin Lundstedt, Kelly Morrison, Natalia Natsika, Yuko Sato, Hugo Tai, and Staffan I. Lindberg. 2022. Autocratization Changing Nature? Democracy Report 2022. Varieties of Democracy Institute (V-Dem).

A multipolar world imposes substantial challenges to international exchanges, especially in the fields of technology, innovation, and economic exchange. With the absence of a monolithic force driving the norms of interaction, and a rule-based order increased tensions are noticeable between advanced nations. In short, the multipolar power dynamics challenge the Euro-American hegemony, which has exacerbated global political tensions. At the same time, the world is facing existential threats caused by men, such as climate change, environmental deterioration, energy, and pandemics. These threats inherently need to be solved globally and in the interaction between countries. An issue growing in complexity is how countries collaborate amidst changing power dynamics and rising apolarity.

Bibliometric data shows that military alliances do not generally dictate collaborative patterns in science or technology. The patterns seem to be much more decided by considerations related to scientific opportunities, resource complementarity, and individual drivers. However, in an era where national and global security concerns as well as nations or regions' global competitiveness are taking precedence on the political agenda in many countries, the impact is seen in the technological and scientific spheres. As competing advanced nations are also racing to champion certain technological fields, decoupling efforts have started to take place. This is particularly obvious in fields such as semiconductors, AI, or 5G. Much of the decoupling seen in these areas are about building buffers between China and the United States. The Chips and Science Act from 2022 enacted by the United States Congress have particularly set the stage for additional regionalization and strategic alliances in science and technology.²

During the Chinese Communist Party's 20th national congress that ended on the 23rd of October 2022,³ it is also clear that Secretary General Xi Jinping has consolidated his power. Much of China's ambition follows an already made-up path towards increased self-reliance, technological development, and increased innovativeness. The structural concerns in China such as the older population, high levels of private and public debt, as well as risk for increasing social instability, including tougher authoritarian controls on companies as well as individuals endanger the progress in science and technology.

2) The White House, FACT SHEET: CHIPS and Science Act Will Lower Costs, Create Jobs, Strengthen Supply Chains, and Counter China, 9 August 2022. https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/08/09/fact-sheet-chips-and-science-act-will-lower-costs-create-jobs-strengthen-supply-chains-and-counter-china/?utm_source=link

3) Press Centre, 20th National Congress of The Communist Party of China, People's Daily Online, 2022. <http://20th.cpcnews.cn/english/index.html>

The developments seen between these global juggernauts of science and technology have been described and followed by many analysts. However, how this recalibration of activities is impacting other countries is also of integral importance. As the world is heading towards a multipolar order, the technological/scientific (sub)fields advanced countries are seeking to isolate are also areas, which they seek collaborations with actively. Collaborating with “like-minded countries” has become increasingly addressed in policy documents. The term like-minded is fluid and has been addressed in the intersection of notions such as democratic values, security, global challenges, or reciprocity. This of course sets the stage for various conflicts.

Moving forward it will be obvious that the distinction between democracy and autocracy is a little too simplified. But what the world will be seeing more of will be the technological competition between the United States and China. What role other regions will play is unclear. The European Union has taken a position obviously closer aligned with the United States, but the notion of strategic autonomy also sets the ambition for a Europe not too dependent on others in the spheres of technology and innovation. The European Union has also launched the largest framework program in the world for research and innovation funding to advance Europe further. The program for 2021-2027, Horizon, Europe, amounts to over 100 billion Euros.

As for countries such as the United Kingdom, Australia, Japan, and Korea, the trend is that they will further their links with the United States in the areas of security, technology, and innovation. The Indo-Pacific region, excluding China, nonetheless is not by any means a monolith. India is moving towards a more authoritarian direction and nationalistic tendencies have also made its foreign relations more capricious.

Given the developments described above the next few years will see increased tensions and attempts at regionalization as well as fractionalization of technological development. Global coalitions will become more impacted by security concerns at a time when the world is stuck in the interdependencies formed by globalization and global challenges.

SOURCES OF AI INNOVATION: MORE THAN A U.S.-CHINA RIVALRY

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Many experts frame the debates around AI technology as a great power rivalry between the U.S. and China. Indeed, by most measures, the United States and China lead the world in AI innovation. Yet focusing solely on the United States and China elides global AI adoption dynamics and yields an incomplete picture about how and why countries acquire certain emerging technologies. While the U.S. and China undoubtedly matter when it comes to fostering AI innovation, cultivating AI talent, generating technology exports to emerging markets, and advancing AI global standard-setting, a diverse range of countries also exert significant influence on AI acquisition and adoption trends.

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Many experts frame the debates around AI technology as a great power rivalry between the U.S. and China.¹ Indeed, by most measures, the United States and China lead the world in AI innovation. Yet focusing solely on the United States and China elides global AI adoption dynamics and yields an incomplete picture about how and why countries acquire certain emerging technologies.² While the U.S. and China undoubtedly matter when it comes to fostering AI innovation, cultivating AI talent, generating technology exports to emerging markets, and advancing AI global standard-setting, a diverse range of countries also exert significant influence on AI acquisition and adoption trends.

Countries such as India, Singapore, and Israel, have vibrant AI ecosystems, including substantial investments in R&D, strong commercial applications, and conducive operating environments.³ These countries represent not only important markets for AI technology exports but also budding centers of AI innovation. In certain respects, this makes innovative middle powers almost as crucial as the superpower competition between the United States and China.⁴ To that end, analyzing and understanding middle power technology adoption trends and capabilities constitutes an important sub-topic in the broader “emerging technology-international competition” debate.

Ranking countries based on their AI capacity has become a popular point of research. These rankings usually involve compiling indexes and measurements of key AI technology components such as computer engineering talent, pre-existing scientific infrastructure, ease of investment in AI, government strategy, and commercial ecosystem.⁵ These indexes all place the United States and China at the top of their country lists for possessing the most sophisticated AI-related capabilities and the most favorable investment ecosystems. Yet, due to the rapid pace of technological innovation, different countries excel in various emerging technologies, making it

1) Kai-Fu Lee, *AI Superpowers: China, Silicon Valley, and the New World Order* (Houghton Mifflin, 2018); You Wang and Dingding Chen, “Rising Sino-U.S. Competition in Artificial Intelligence,” *China Quarterly of International Strategic Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 2 (2018): p. 241-258; Satoru Mori, “U.S. Technological Competition with China: The Military, Industrial and Digital Network Dimensions,” *Asia-Pacific Review*, Vol. 26, No. 1 (2019): p. 77-120.

2) H. Akin Ünver and Arhan S. Ertan, “Politics of Artificial Intelligence Adoption: Unpacking the Regime Type Debate,” in *Democratic Frontiers* (Routledge, 2022): p. 83-107.

3) Michael C. Horowitz, Gregory C. Allen, Elsa B. Kania, and Paul Scharre, “Strategic Competition in an Era of Artificial Intelligence,” Center for a New American Security, (2018).

4) For an extended treatment about middle powers and their evolving role, see Kleinfeld et al., “How Middle-Power Democracies Can Help Renovate Global Democracy,” Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 4 February 2021. <https://carnegieendowment.org/2021/02/04/how-middle-power-democracies-can-help-renovate-global-democracy-support-pub-83809>

5) See for example: Alexandra Mousavizadeh, Alexi Mostrous and Alex Clark, “The Arms Race: A Groundbreaking New Index Ranking 54 Countries,” Tortoise Intelligence (3 December 2019), <https://www.tortoisemedia.com/2019/12/03/global-ai-index/>; Stanford University Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence (HAI) AI Index: <https://aiindex.stanford.edu/> and Carnegie Endowment for International Peace AI Global Surveillance Technology: <https://carnegieendowment.org/publications/interactive/ai-surveillance>

difficult – if not misleading – to render a precise ‘top AI nations’ or ‘early adopter nations’ designation.

To capture the multiple facets of AI development, the Stanford Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence (HAI) AI Index uses a more disaggregated ranking format, sorting capabilities based on scientific publications, repositories, patent filings, GitHub performance, and talent recruiting and hiring.⁶ For example, when countries are ranked according to growth in AI hiring, New Zealand, Hong Kong, and Ireland form the top three. On the other hand, India, the United States, and Germany lead the world regarding relative levels of AI skills penetration. As for private sector investment in AI technology, the United States sits on top – with China, the United Kingdom, and Israel falling much further behind.

These variances in measuring AI performance and capabilities reflect the rich and diverse world of AI sub-capabilities and shows how countries are trying to capitalize and form comparative advantages for different aspects of AI. Turkey’s development of the Bayraktar TB2 drone and accompanying electronic warfare (EW) is a good case in point. While the United States, and to a lesser extent China, dominate military technological innovation, in recent years, other countries have stepped into the fray. Turkey’s TB2 drones not only provide a cost-effective option for militaries to deploy a lethal instrument against their adversaries, but the AI platform undergirding the TB2’s EW capabilities, represents a milestone innovation. As Amir Husain writes in *Prism*: “it has been theorized that TB2 drones over Azerbaijan were controlled from Turkey, with larger Akinci drones acting as relays. ATGMs [anti-tank guided missiles] delivered at scale, against a peer-force by attributable, long-endurance platforms controlled by pilots hundreds of miles away... never before was this concept of operations employed.”⁷ It would be a mistake to assume that AI innovation is relegated exclusively to the largest powers.

The diffusion of AI capabilities among middle powers presages the emergence of new global coalitions which could transcend legacy Cold War arrangements. What if, for example, the EU is joined by states such as Israel, India, Japan, and South Korea to establish a third camp of countries pursuing high-technology advantages independently from U.S. and Chinese technology firms? The European Commission, for example, has situated the EU’s broader role in AI as “leading the way in the approach of developing AI on a fundamental rights framework.”⁸ Could European ‘norm-setting’ power in emerging technologies provide an alternative for

6) Stanford University Human-Centered Artificial Intelligence (HAI) AI Index. <https://aiindex.stanford.edu/>

7) Amir Husain, “AI is Shaping the Future of War,” *PRISM*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (2021): p. 50-61.

8) Gabriela Zanfir-Fortuna, “European Commission’s Strategy for AI, Explained,” Future of Privacy Forum (2018). <https://fpf.org/tag/european-ai-alliance/>

democracies seeking to engage in technology-transfer and co-production on AI sub-components who also wish to steer clear of authoritarian practices, such as invasive biometric techniques or discriminatory profiling?⁹ In particular, can the EU set the parameters for a more “humane AI” which can incorporate ethical considerations into algorithms or set legal and legislative safeguards to prevent the abuse of automation by powerful actors? Could such a bloc change the import-export dynamics of AI-related systems across the world?

Other countries may seek to go it alone and form à la carte partnerships with leading AI nations or stay fully independent in order to remain non-aligned in high-technology competition. Brazil, for example, has recently announced the creation of a network of self-contained AI labs – linked to its armed forces – which will largely rely on domestic components.¹⁰ The same goes for Nigeria, which has established a new agency for ‘Robotics and Artificial Intelligence’ that seeks to render the country less dependent on foreign AI imports.¹¹ Slovenia and Hungary too have taken steps to reduce foreign dependence on high technology research and development by establishing national AI centers.¹²

These differing trends illustrate the fluidity of global AI technology competition and how future alignments will not necessarily be defined by two-country competition between the United States and China. Middle powers offer diverse AI capabilities and will influence how the two AI superpowers implement their AI export strategies.

Key questions loom: are middle power states interested in forming new cooperative regimes, independent from Beijing and Washington? Will the two AI superpowers accept the emergence of new coalitions of countries which are fostering AI cooperation among themselves? Will new partnerships lead to any revisions to the foundational institutions governing global digital infrastructure, such as the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), or Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN)? More importantly, can emerging AI powers translate technological cooperation into geopolitical momentum, forming new trading regimes, long-term technology transfer partnerships, and potentially greater political and diplomatic cooperation

9) Steven Feldstein, "The Road to Digital Unfreedom: How Artificial Intelligence is Reshaping Repression," *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (2019): p. 40-52.

10) Fernando Filgueiras, "Artificial Intelligence Policy Regimes: Comparing Politics and Policy to National Strategies for Artificial Intelligence," *Global Perspectives*, Vol. 3, No. 1 (2022): p. 32362.

11) Jake Okechukwu Effoduh, "Towards A rights-respecting artificial intelligence policy for Nigeria," Paradigm Initiative (November 2021). <https://paradigmhq.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Towards-A-Rights-Respecting-Artificial-Intelligence-Policy-for-Nigeria.pdf>

12) Charlotte Stix, "A Survey of the European Union's Artificial Intelligence Ecosystem," ArXiv preprint arXiv:2101.02039 (2020).

in international affairs? These questions highlight the need for researchers to think beyond U.S.-China strategic competition in AI, and to consider the manifold of arrangements, innovations, and configurations that will shape AI technology.

THE NORDIC COUNTRIES - DIVIDED AND UNITED

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“The world will never be the same again” - so the saying goes in Europe and elsewhere. And as we, in early April 2022, see the horrible pictures from Ukraine, it is hard to think otherwise, knowing well that things may become even worse if the war spreads and weapons of mass destruction are used. European countries have traditionally differed in their contacts with and their attitudes to Russia. As for the Nordic region, the geographical closeness to their powerful neighbor has made people sensitive to Russia’s policy and its implications for Nordic security. This closeness is undoubtedly among the reasons for the considerable changes that took place in 2014 following the annexation of Crimea and the aggression against Donetsk and Luhansk. Not only did the Russian activities affect the Nordic countries’ views on Russia, but also their cooperation with each other. The issue now is which impact the aggression of 24 February 2022 will have on these countries.

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Keywords: European Union, NATO, Nordic Countries,
Nordic Security, Russian Invasion of Ukraine.



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Background

While some perceive the Nordic countries as a unit in the field of security and defense, the region is highly heterogeneous. Denmark is a member of both the EU (albeit with an opt-out for security policy) and NATO, whereas Norway and Iceland are members of NATO only, and Finland and Sweden of the EU only. This division for a long time led to restrictions on Nordic cooperation among all five countries.

The fall of the Berlin Wall had a profound impact on the security situation of the Nordic countries, leading Finland and Sweden to apply for EU membership quickly and to join in 1995. Both countries also changed their doctrines, removing terms related to neutrality and replacing them with the term military non-alignment. Nonetheless, at this time, none of them considered applying for NATO membership. A new situation for Nordic cooperation made it necessary for the Nordic countries to now address security issues.

In 2007 a new impetus for closer cooperation was taken by the Norwegian and Swedish supreme commanders, with their Finnish counterpart joining in 2008. They believed small states, like the Nordic ones, were no longer capable of financing balanced and modern forces solely through national funding. Combined production, joint exercises, etc. would result in lower costs for the individual countries. The result of this initiative was the establishment of the Nordic Defense Cooperation (NORDEFCO) in 2009, which unified several cooperation structures.

Presented by former Norwegian Defense Minister and Foreign Minister Thorvald Stoltenberg in 2009, the Stoltenberg Report attempted to strengthen the political dimension of cooperation as well. The report included a solidarity clause to which the five countries were positive. However, it also showed the limits of closeness as all countries emphasized that their first priority was NATO and the EU, respectively.

As seen from the description above, while all five countries are part of Nordic cooperation, the core initially consisted of Finland, Norway and Sweden, especially in military matters. Denmark was at this time less interested, primarily due to its geographical position on the European continent rather than the Scandinavian peninsula, whereas Iceland's geographical position and lack of military forces make some issues even less relevant.

The Impact of 2014

For the Nordic countries the Russian aggression against Ukraine in 2014 removed any illusions they might have had about this country's intentions against other European countries. Consequently, Nordic security cooperation from then on included issues of territorial defense. As for Swedes, the realization that their country may be a future target for Russia came already in 2013. The decisive event was when on Easter Friday, 2013, Russian bomber planes made a mock attack on Stockholm and southern Sweden, turning away just outside the territorial border. A similar event later took place against the Danish island of Bornholm.

One effect of this was that NORDEFCO grew to include a broad spectrum of security and defense issues, from civilian emergency preparedness to simplified procedures for gaining access to each other's airspace and territorial waters as well as mutual use of air and naval bases. Moreover, the NORDEFCO Vision 2025 of 2019 set out to improve the Nordic ability to act together in peace, crisis, and conflict.

Another effect of the events of 2014 was that the borders between NATO and non-NATO countries gradually became less important. A crucial step was taken in 2020 when Finland, Norway and Sweden announced that they would harmonize their national operational planning in order to be able to conduct coordinated military operations during crises and conflicts in areas of common concern. The indicated area is the northernmost part of the three countries in which their air forces have pursued weekly Cross Border Training practice since 2008. Denmark, Norway and Sweden concluded a similar agreement in 2021 to enable common military action, which focused on the sea lanes in the Kattegat, Skagerrak and North Sea.

Among the Nordic countries, the bilateral cooperation between Finland and Sweden stands out. Formally initiated in 2014 and based on a high level of confidence, its primary aim is now to be able to act and conduct operations together during peace, crisis and war. For giving or receiving assistance, the consent of the respective parliaments is required only in case of a military attack. Many activities are pursued, such as operational planning and the set-up of a standing Naval Task Group. While Finland and Sweden have not exchanged any mutual defense guarantees, no predetermined limits are set on cooperation.

Nordic cooperation largely emanates from the closeness felt by the countries in the region and the realization that any problem or threat unavoidably affects all. Yet, not that long ago, a Nordic NATO country helping out in the defense of a non-NATO country was unimaginable. The impaired security situation, and the fact that, in a military sense, the area forms a single operational unit, are undoubtedly vital factors behind the change that took place. So is the consent of others who see the need for a joint approach. Not only are the Nordic countries dependent on the U.S./NATO for their security, but also the U.S./NATO need access to Nordic territory if the Baltic countries are under threat. This dual dependency is visible in the exercises involving many NATO members that frequently take place in the Nordic area.

Furthermore, Finland and Sweden cooperate closely with NATO, being members of the Partnership for Peace since 1994 and since 2014 being Enhanced Opportunities Partners. In 2018 the two countries entered an agreement with the United States to strengthen the already existing bilateral and multilateral agreements.

Other developments in the north also contribute to this increasingly rich security landscape: The Joint Expeditionary Force (JEF), led by the UK and established under NATO, gathers ten countries in Northern Europe, among them Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden. Like the Nordic cooperation groups, JEF may react quickly and thereby serve as a valuable force in a crisis or as a bridging mission.

While the Nordic countries differ in their institutional affiliations, they don't see the EU and NATO as competing with each other. Instead, they have embraced the great variety of initiatives, seeing them as filling different roles and thereby adding to Nordic security.

The Future

Finland's and Sweden's close cooperation with NATO has not gone unnoticed by Russia, which has recently threatened the two countries with military policy measures if they apply for membership. The effect has, however, not been what Russia must have hoped for: support for membership has increased sharply in both countries, and the issue of whether to apply is now vividly discussed. Such a development could not have occurred at this pace under normal circumstances. Both countries said at the outset that they hope to come to the same decision, but at the time of writing, Finns seem to be close to agreeing to apply for membership, whereas Sweden is lagging. If only Finland became a NATO member, bilateral cooperation would unavoidably weaken, which would be much regretted by both.

The Nordic countries also pursue their policies in a European and transatlantic context. Both EU's recently presented Strategic Compass and NATO's Strategic Concept are likely to be subject to adjustment due to Russia's aggression. It is in the Nordic countries' best interests to maintain cohesion, since they are small and close to Russia, something that can't be taken for granted. Europe includes many dividing lines, which Russia has already shown its skill to exploit, and the next presidential election in the U.S. may again lead to the splits that we saw a few years ago.

Globally, there are likewise reasons for concern. A containment policy against Russia is a likely reaction, seen as necessary to prevent this country from pursuing similar acts as against Ukraine. We don't know what the Russian reaction will be, or even more importantly, what China's response will be. It is possible that the world will change in ways we cannot currently imagine for both big and small countries.

DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES OF WAR IN BOSNIA AND WAR IN UKRAINE

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Late February 2022, and early April 1992. These are the starting dates of the two largest European wars for decades. They were both preceded by conflicts which have cost thousands of lives; the war in Croatia in 1991 and the war in eastern Ukraine in 2014. Does the earlier conflict – the Bosnian War of 1992-95 – tell us anything about the present conflict? Are there any ‘lessons’ to be learned, any warnings to be heeded?

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Keywords: Balkans, Bosnian War, Russia,
Russian Invasion of Ukraine, Ukraine.



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Late February 2022, and early April 1992. These are the starting dates of the two largest European wars for decades. They were both preceded by conflicts which have cost thousands of lives; the war in Croatia in 1991 and the war in eastern Ukraine in 2014.

Does the earlier conflict – the Bosnian War of 1992-95 – tell us anything about the present conflict? Are there any ‘lessons’ to be learned, any warnings to be heeded?

The differences between the two conflicts are probably a better place to start. Ukraine’s conflict has two parties, Bosnia’s had three. Ukraine is undergoing invasion; Bosnia’s was internecine warfare, albeit that two of the three groups involved had strong outside backing. This came from Tudjman’s Croatia and Milosevic’s Serbia.

It is also worth examining the war’s stated and actual objectives. In Bosnia, it was very directly about population expulsion – certainly from the Serb side – accompanied and aided by mass murder. There was also an attempt to destroy the very idea of a multi-ethnic, multi-confessional Bosnia. This involved the cultural destruction of the country; two well-known examples being the shelling of Sarajevo’s National Library (by Serbs) and the destruction of Mostar’s Stary Most bridge (by Croats).

The stated Russian war aims in Ukraine – to protect Russian speakers from supposed Nazis – are absurd and obscene. Outside commentators are unsure of what President Putin is attempting; is this about seizing Ukraine’s offshore gas reserves, or about creating a second Belarus, i.e., a vassal state? Whatever it is (assuming there is a clear rational in Putin’s head), the wanton destruction now taking place does look like an attempt to wipe this very idea of Ukraine off the map of Europe. This does seem reminiscent of the earlier conflict.

An obvious difference is the flow of arms. In Bosnia, there was an arms embargo, which hurt the government forces and benefited the Serbs, who were armed by the Yugoslav National Army. As for Ukraine, Western arms are flowing freely into the country, even from sources that previously would not have sent military equipment.

The unity of the Ukrainians is also a notable contrast, for now. Bosnian government forces had their own internal conflicts, even a breakaway region, Bihac. It is to be hoped that this unity is maintained in Ukraine, though it will surely become strained as the war drags on. It would be terrible to see rivalries emerge and even infighting among Ukrainian groups if there are splits. In conflicts, moderates often lose out to radicals.

A notable aspect of the Bosnian War was the number of volunteers who joined the various sides. There has been a long tradition of irregular warfare in the Balkans; Chetniks (among Serbs), Kacacks (among Albanians) Bashi Bouzouks (among Ottomans) and Komadija (among Bulgarians and others). Many were half-bandit; the Hudjuk figure was also a long presence in the region. These various groups gained (typically a well-earned) reputation for ill-discipline and brutality. This reputation, which would evoke terror in civilians, especially women, was an aspect of psychological warfare.

Those who volunteered to fight in Bosnia (and previously Croatia) were of different strands. Many were adventurers and extremists, especially those who fought with Croatian units. Russians and Greeks fought with the Serbs, and did Serbs from Serbia itself, and the Serbian diaspora. Many of these Serbian volunteers were attached to notorious paramilitary groups, led by warlords and war criminals such as Arkan (Zeljko Raznatovic) and Vojislav Šešelj. These groups were greatly feared for their brutality.

The Bosnian government forces had volunteers from the Middle East. These so-called Mujahedeen were exaggerated in numbers and impact. They were, however, a propaganda coup to the Serbs, who sought to portray the war as confessional, Orthodox Christianity against Islam.

The war in Ukraine has also attracted large numbers of foreign volunteers. Estimated in thousands for the Ukrainian government, many westerners, some of them are of Ukrainian descent. This large and diverse influx has drawn comparisons – somewhat inevitably – with Spanish Civil War.¹

In fact, there have long been volunteers fighting in Donbas. While Serbs have been fighting in these breakaway regions since 2014, their numbers are not significant in the context of the full invasion that we are currently witnessing. “Those volunteers cannot make a considerable difference now as they did in 2014 or 2015. The military operation is now more extensive. They are just a small drop in the ocean,” according to Predrag Petrovic, of the Belgrade Center for Security Policy.² Two more significant groups are joining the Russian offensive. These are the shadowy mercenaries of the Wagner Group, and the much-discussed Syrian mercenaries, although as of early April, there was little evidence of their presence.³ There is an

1) See J Oliver Conroy, “Among the Americans fighting in Ukraine,” *Guardian*, 14 April 2014. Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/apr/14/americans-fighting-in-ukraine>

2) Nermina Kuloglija and Azra Husaric, “Serb Volunteers Answer Call to Fight in Ukraine,” *BIRN*, 8 March 2022. Available at <https://balkaninsight.com/2022/03/08/serb-volunteers-answer-call-to-fight-in-ukraine/>

3) Presence, that is, in Ukraine. According to Kareem Chehayeb, they are arriving in Russia. See his “In Syria, Russia leads effort to recruit fighters for Ukraine,” *Al Jazeera*, 1 April 2022. Available at

element of psychological warfare at work here, as with the often-cited presence of Chechen fighters. Nonetheless, these groups are likely to be more effective than the Russian conscripts, and possibly even more inclined to commit atrocities.

The atrocities are in little doubt.⁴ The looting of homes may have brought ridicule on the Russian troops, but the wanton destruction of urban areas and the indifference towards civilian casualties are certain war crimes. Mariupol has now been added to the list of siege-targeted cities, which also includes Beirut, Vukovar, Sarajevo, and Grozny. Many other Ukrainian cities may face the same dreadful fate as war continues. This under the leadership of native Leningrader, a city that endured 1,000 days of siege by the Nazis.

The allegations of rape carry a very strong echo of Bosnia. The crimes against women were a core aspect of that conflict: it was not excessive behaviour by some troops, it was systematic like campaigns such as the Rape of Nanking, or Bangladesh's Independence War. It was the use of rape in Bosnia and Rwanda that led to the recognition of rape as a war crime. It was with impunity that Russian (and other Soviet) troops waged a campaign of rape on the women of defeated Germany in the 1945.⁵ Their descendants are now doing the same in Ukraine.

Bosnia was also a conflict that created hundreds of concentration camps. Elsewhere a colleague and I have argued that we may see a particularly brutal policy of incarceration in Ukraine, namely that people will be shipped across the border into Russia.⁶ With the withdrawal of Russia from the Council of Europe, there will be no legal oversight of Ukrainian civilians/prisoners of war who forcibly taken to and jailed in Russia. In addition, if large numbers of people are detained, a camp system will develop in the Russian-occupied Ukraine, where people will be held before being transported into Russia. Ukrainian colleagues have confirmed the existence of a so-called 'filtration camp', where Russian forces 'screen' detainees, deciding who will be imprisoned. Given the vast crimes of Hitler's and Stalin's regimes, concentration camps have a unique resonance in the European imagination. Even the term 'filtration camp' is chilling.

<https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/4/1/in-syria-moscow-leads-effort-to-recruit-fighters-for-ukraine>

4) See, for example, Human Rights Watch of 3 April 2022. Available at

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2022/04/03/ukraine-apparent-war-crimes-russia-controlled-areas>

5) "Between 150,000-200,000 'Russian babies' were born in Soviet-occupied zone of Germany in 1945-46, and these figures make no allowance for the untold numbers of abortions, and as result of which women died along with their unwanted foetuses." Tony Judt, *Postwar, A History of Europe Since 1945* (London: William Heinemann, 2005): 2021.

6) Judith Pallot and Brendan Humphreys, "Will Russia put Ukraine dissidents into camps?," *Russian Riddle*, 17 March 2022. Available at https://ridl.io/en/will-russia-put-ukraine-dissidents-into-camps/?fbclid=IwAR3as403SwZoT5z2xYvhlL5kOalX5zyv11TTir4u73ph_g-rrr8_nzSdBJo

Both conflicts have produced huge number of refugees. Bosnia produced some 2 million refugees, both internally and externally displaced. That was with a population of only 4 million. Ukraine has a population of over 40 million, and already close to 5 million have left the country, while a further 7 million are internally displaced. Some refugees in Poland and elsewhere are now returning home out of desperation.⁷ There was a tragic precedent here in Finland; many of the Karelians displaced by the Winter War returned to their villages and farms, only to be forced out again – and permanently – by the renewed hostilities of the so-called ‘Continuation War’. Even if something similar does not transpire, there are reports of vast number of landmines left behind by Russian troops in areas from which they retreated.⁸

This callous disregard for civilian lives does point to a Bosnian precedent; the possibility that senior Russians will face prosecution for war crimes. The International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY) was one positive outcome of Bosnia’s war. Imperfect as it was, it set a good precedent. The International Criminal Court (ICC) already opened an investigation in February, although neither Russia nor Ukraine are members of the ICC. That aside, Putin and his complicit lieutenants know they are marked men.

7) See Lorcan Lovett, “‘All I can do is pray’: the Ukrainian women going home despite the danger,” *Guardian*, 20 April 2022. Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2022/apr/20/ukrainian-women-going-home-despite-the-danger>

8) See, for example, John Ismay, “New Russian Land Mine Poses Special Risk in Ukraine,” *New York Times*, 6 April 2022. Available at <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/04/06/us/politics/russia-ukraine-land-mines.html>

THE WAR ON WOMEN AND BABIES

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While women's rights has been a focal point for decades, facts and statistics demonstrate that the very same women's rights warriors are inadvertently also waging war on women and babies. This article exposes how the women's rights ideology, laced in the narrative of women's rights to reproductive healthcare, has waged war on women and babies instead of focusing on the preservation of women and babies as a sustainable unit.

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Keywords: Abortion, Pro-life, Roe vs. Wade, Overturn of Roe vs. Wade, Infanticide, Women, Women's Rights, USA.



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Girls and women constitute approximately half of a country's population. As Therese Hyden from Sweden stated in her article in 2019,¹ when she rightfully called for inclusion of women in global political discourse, "By excluding women, half of the population is left out". Women's rights activists continue to call for equal rights for girls and women, for opportunities to become part of a sustainable world society where everyone has equal rights to life, liberty, education, and work. In fact, they stress the 'equal right to life and liberty'.

However, equal rights of girls and women does not end there. We must also include the equal, unalienable right to life of the preborn at any stage in the development. Concise, indisputable facts which science has provided from decades of work studying the development of human beings from conception to death has provided precise empirical data that life begins at conception. It's that simple.

It's mindboggling that human rights activists do not consider the preborn baby a human being with equal rights to life. A senseless war on women and babies has been declared, not by Congress but by the Elite. Often, and hypercritically, they are the same people who oppose the death penalty, but they indiscriminately accept it on preborn babies. There's no logic, nor reason, in that perspective; to spare one but not the other.

In countless instances, the excuse for pro-choice views ranges from reason due to incest, rape, and women's right to choose over their own bodies. They argue the need to reduce the world population count (just not themselves included), a discourse running parallel to the pro-choice discourse.

Scientists claim to use the empirical data, not beliefs. Therefore, this article will present facts that abortion is nothing but a callous and heinous war on mothers and their babies in a sinister attempt to control world population growth in carefully selected parts of the world. In contrast, other parts of the world are largely ignored. Many of these countries appear to be largely exempt from the narrative, perhaps due to the fear of religious retaliation to impose Western, globalist ideology on their culture, ignoring the fact that in these countries the birth rate of women far outweighs that of western women.

1) *Turkish Policy Quarterly*, Spring 2019, Vol. 18, No. 1, "Sweden's Feminist Foreign Policy Illustrated".

Abortion is one of many ways the war on women and babies is practiced. Other ways, though not limited to, are unisex restrooms and bathrooms, formula shortages, transgender athletes unfairly competing with biological women and girls, promotion of LGBTQP opposing the natural relationship and procreation between a man and a woman, and activists attacking married couples (between a man and a woman) for receiving tax benefits that single people do not have such as child tax credits. The ways to attack women and their babies seem not to end.

While it should not be necessary to reiterate something that is elementary and middle school basic teaching, a false narrative has been sold by abortionists that the fetus is not really a human being until it is born. Nothing could be farther from the truth, nor more distorted of scientific facts. Therefore, it is only logical to take a moment to review the basics.

Scientific Facts Regarding the Fetus is a Living Human Being From the Day One

Science has proven beyond any reasonable doubt that cells must be living to perform functions, such as contractions, and carrying oxygen, as is the function of red blood cells, and like nerve cells that carry information. For these functions to occur, scientists have determined that cells must be alive. This is basic knowledge taught in elementary and middle school science classes, and it cannot be disputed. A dead cell is not considered to be living.

Scientists have proven that at the age of 18, in the days just into the pregnancy, the heartbeat of a fetus can be detected. The cells have thus developed and become a fetus, a baby in development. As the illustration shows, vital organs form during the first nine weeks.² The baby is alive and growing, drawing nutrients and oxygen from their mother. The thumping sound of the baby's heartbeat can be heard and the tiny human being is rapidly growing; its development can be followed meticulously day by day. At this stage, it is ethically and scientifically incorrect to claim that it is not a human being.

By the ninth week,³ the baby has begun to look like a tiny human being, and you can see its tiny protruding fingers and limbs, its nose, mouth, ears, and eyes can be distinguished. At fourteen weeks, the baby's eyes have moved into their place

2) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4l9GE_eaMSs

3) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sivegxc2Bk>

and he or she can squint, frown, and grimace in response to its senses. Note that there is scientifically two genders: male and female. At this stage, the baby can feel pain and pleasure. The little boy or girl is actively moving its arms and legs. Their hands and feet, fingers and toes, are well distinguished. Undoubtedly, it is a living human being, the blood of its mother and father running through its veins. It's not science that miraculously produced the baby. This is not like putting a bag of corn kernels in the microwave, and poof, for a bag of popcorn to come out two minutes later. Scientists do not produce living human beings. They can merely observe and study them.

Between fifteen and twenty weeks, the baby's nervous system is rapidly maturing,⁴ and the bones are starting to form. The baby's sensory system is in rapid development. At this point, the baby can feel pain if exposed to trauma, such as the excruciating pain the baby feels during an abortion, in which, as Abby Johnson explains in *Unplanned*,⁵ and many others have testified, the abortionist physician dismantles the baby limb by limb. There is no respect for the human life of the preborn in this brutal, inhuman, and disgusting act of violence.

At twenty-three weeks, the baby can swallow and may get hiccups. At this stage, the baby would be able to survive outside the womb with medical attention. At twenty-eight weeks, the baby has entered the last trimester. He can hear and sense light. He finalizing the last developments before preparation for birth. It is a fully developed human being at week 37.

In the state of New York, late-term abortions up to the time of birth are permitted, a legislation signed into law by the former Democratic governor Andrew Cuomo in January 2019. The state of New York is not the only state which allows the killing of a full term baby. Outraged erupted when the state of Virginia introduced late-term abortion, which would allow, as in New York, abortions to take place up until the time of birth. It may have contributed to the previous governor losing the election to Governor Youngkin.

Full-term abortion is murder. It is an act of evil and should be treated as crime on equal terms as premeditated murder because of the intentionality behind an abortion.

4) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VsjqkOjp0U>

5) Abby Johnson is an American pro-life activist who previously worked for Planned Parenthood (in which abortions make up 95 percent of the organization's pregnancy services) as a clinic director, until she resigned in October 2009, after she, according to her statements, witnessed an abortion on ultrasound in which the physician dismantled live the baby.

Sentenced to Death by Abortion

Before week 15, more than half of the abortions take place. In the United States, the Center for Disease Control reported that in 2019 629,898 abortions were performed.⁶ That is 1,726 abortions, or executions, per day in the U.S. Most of the them were performed by Planned Parenthood. Let's compare it to the 22 executions of criminals performed the same year in seven different states.⁷

Planned Parenthood and other pro-choice activists continue to twist the narrative that pro-choice is about women's reproductive rights, claiming falsely that they are concerned with human rights. However, their human rights activism never includes the right to life of the human preborn baby, despite, as discussed above, the fact that the baby feels the unbearable pain of having it's limbs ripped off its body one by one in pieces, as if it were a stuffed toy.

Anyone who has ever had a limp blown or torn off can testify to the pain associated with it. Thus, it is unfathomable that a physician, who is sworn to save life, will act as an executioner of a baby. This inhumane act of violence and brutality must stop. It is not sustainable for humanity to kill millions of babies, in its true sense, in a modern age in which social justice is a high priority on the progressives' agenda.

The Billionaire's Club on Population Reduction

For over a decade, numerous sources reveal discussions of the extremely wealthy billionaire's club on reducing the world's population count. In 2009, the Wall Street Journal reported that this "club's" plan is to create what they perceive as sustainable development plans for the world's population.⁸ The discussion was backed by Bill Gates own words when he in a conference spoke about the need to create a sustainable plan to reduce the world's population.⁹ In other words, kill off human life at it's source. With those word, Bill Gates openly declared war on woman and babies.

6) Kelsey Dallas, "How Common is Abortion in the U.S.? Your Questions, Answered," Deseret, 1 June 2022. <https://www.deseret.com/u-s-world/2022/5/31/23148621/how-common-is-abortion-in-the-u-s-your-questions-answered-abortion-data-pew-research>

7) Death Penalty Information Center, "The Death Penalty in 2019: Year End Report", 17 December 2019. <https://deathpenaltyinfo.org/facts-and-research/dpic-reports/dpic-year-end-reports/the-death-penalty-in-2019-year-end-report>

8) <https://www.wsj.com/articles/BL-WHB-1322>

9) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DeHLNthYTSI>; 2010 TED conference, 1:28 minutes to 1:44 minutes.

Bill Gates encouraged his audience to support his proposal and its method to reduce the world's population through vaccines, reproductive healthcare (a.k.a. abortions), and healthcare (sterilizations, vasectomy, hysterectomy, birth control). His war on women and babies through science and scientific methods, was to “successfully” reduce the world's population with 15 to 20 percent. Gates has been obsessed with abortion and reduction of world population for decades inspired by his father, who was a key player in Planned Parenthood for years, an billion-dollar organization to be discussed further below.

Since 1973, 62 million babies have been aborted in the United States. That is an average of 1,240,000 babies per year; more than the number of Jewish people Hitler killed per year during World War II.

Bill Gates' perspective is completely anti-women's rights and human rights to live, not to mention that in the United States it inarguably violates the Declaration of Independence which provides every citizen with the unalienable right to life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness, targeting women and babies is the absolute epitome of evil. Thus, abortion is unconstitutional, and legislators must be held accountable for passing legislation that does not conform to the Supreme Law of the Land.

Moreover, abortion supports the practice of euthanasia and infanticide. It's a declaration of war on innocent people using, among other sources, taxpayer money, as organizations such as Planned Parenthood receive millions of dollars yearly to continue the conveyor belt of infant and fetus body parts. At the abortion clinic, a mush of body parts is processed through a suction devise and blender to liquify the human body that was a living baby just a few moments ago.

Is that sustainable development? Or is this cruel and unusual punishment? Or is it simply premeditated first degree murder?

Systemic Warfare On Women is About Money and Politics

In the United States, according to Karen Handel, former Komer's Senior Vice President of Public Policy in 2011, Planned Parenthood is "a type of mafia collaborating with the DNC."¹⁰ At no point is it about women's rights to choose, nor has it ever been about healthcare or about the babies in the womb. In fact, it is NEVER about the preborn babies. Planned Parenthood is only about money; a so far legal way of reducing world population through human slaughterhouses falsely highjacking the name 'reproductive healthcare clinics', and we have all become too accustomed to politically correct pretty words that disguise the brutal ugliness of the truth, a truth that many cannot stomach when faced with it.

In the multi-billion dollar war on mothers and babies, no mercy is ever shown for the preborn lives, nor for the mothers. And forget about the fathers, should he ever want the baby. He has no rights in the industry of 'reproductive healthcare'. In the world of 'reproductive healthcare' (human slaughterhouses), men's opinions matter to no one. They have been degraded to mere inconvenient sperm donors that women can walk all over, deprive of fatherhood, in the name of 'my body, my choice.'

According to former clinic director of Planned Parenthood, Abby Johnson in her personal narrative *Unplanned*, Planned Parenthood's main focus is to persuade all clients (for patients they are truly not) into having an abortion. It is the objective from the moment they receive the first call from the woman, as I have experienced twice too.

Planned Parenthood does not make the majority of their money on birth control, mammograms, or other healthcare-related services for women and girls. According to Karen Handel, Planned Parenthood does not offer mammograms, which is mindboggling considering this service's important role in women's healthcare.

On Wednesday, 12 April 2023, I visited Planned Parenthood's website to research Karen Handel's claim that Planned Parenthood does not offer mammograms, as per her 2012 statement. Additionally, I wanted to find out for myself what kind of ideas the staff sells relative to the side effects and pain of abortion. Would they downplay it?

¹⁰) Howard Books, 2012.

On their website, I was met by something as impersonal as a bot. You read it right. A bot. When I asked the bot if they offered mammograms, the bot gave me the most peculiar answer I would ever have imagined, not ever having visited Planned Parenthood's website before in my life. The bot provided advise about masturbation, which has nothing at all to do with mammograms. Bizarre. It makes one wonder just what in the sick world Planned Parenthood is really about?

Subsequently, I called Planned Parenthood in Miami, Florida to inquire about mammogram services offered, and they confirmed that none of their clinics offer this service for women's health. Furthermore, I pretended I was 17 weeks pregnant, in the second trimester, and inquired about getting an abortion. While in the state of Florida abortions are illegal after the 15th week, Planned Parenthood will not discourage the caller from having an abortion at this stage. The client service representative advised me that I should contact a Planned Parenthood clinic in South Carolina, which offers abortions up to week 22.

Does the person answering the phone at Planned Parenthood know what she is telling the caller in respect to the state of development of the human being that is growing inside the mother at the age of 17 weeks of gestation? Has she ever seen a baby at this stage in development, or is she just blindly following a script and completely clueless about the fact that she just advised a mother-to-be to go kill her own baby?

In Florida, a movement is working tirelessly to amend the Florida Constitution to protect all human life at any stage in development. It's in absolute agreement with the U.S. Constitution which provides all in the country the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. You do not have a right to kill in the U.S. Abortions are essentially unconstitutional and should be abolished. You may wonder why the pro-abortionists fight so hard to keep abortion legal, and there are some on the right side of the political aisle too who support pre-natal infanticide. Is it really about women's right to choose? Or is it about keeping alive the multi-billion dollar industry of abortion? Or is perhaps convenient for legislators themselves to have access to abortion when they have cheated on their spouse (again) and sweep the evidence under the rug? Or is it a way for human traffickers to get rid of the evidence when they have raped their victims?

In conclusion, the War on Women and Babies is officially a war and not just a title of this article. The White House, under Joe Biden's Administration,¹¹ is eager to find ways to ban medical groups and physicians from sharing information pertaining to investigations of clinics performing illegal abortions. Meanwhile, they will not take steps to protect the preborn from becoming yet another statistic of the already 62 million babies executed in the name of "women's rights" and "reproductive healthcare rights".

Pro-abortion groups have donated billions of dollars since 1973 to pro-abortion politicians, as one of the many ways the redistribute wealth. Is that sustainable development or is it systemic infanticide up to the time of birth? You decide.

11) Micaiah Bilger, "Joe Biden Wants to Protect Abortion Records, but not Unborn Babies," Life News, 12 April 2023. <https://www.lifenews.com/2023/04/12/joe-biden-wants-to-protect-abortion-records-but-not-unborn-babies/>

WHAT MOSCOW HAS TAUGHT TO NON-NUCLEAR- WEAPON STATES

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In the early 1990s, newly independent Ukraine briefly possessed more nuclear warheads than China, France and Great Britain taken together. It had inherited from the USSR some 1,900 strategic and 2,500 tactical nuclear weapons. However, Kyiv decided, against the background of the 1986 Chornobyl disaster, that Ukraine would become entirely free of nuclear weapons. To be sure, Ukraine was unable to use most of its nuclear weapons. Yet, the amount of warheads, specialized technology and engineering expertise it had accumulated in the Soviet period was such that it could have preserved a small amount of enriched uranium or/and plutonium, or even nuclear ammunition and warheads. Under considerable pressure not only from Moscow but also with the generous help from Washington, Kyiv transferred its Weapon of mass destruction (WMD) arsenal, however, completely and quickly to Russia. Ukraine signed and ratified the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as a non-nuclear weapon state.

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Keywords: Eastern Europe, Non-Nuclear Weapon States, NPT,
Nuclear Weapons, Russian Invasion of Ukraine.



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In the early 1990s, newly independent Ukraine briefly possessed more nuclear warheads than China, France and Great Britain taken together. It had inherited from the USSR some 1,900 strategic and 2,500 tactical nuclear weapons.¹ However, Kyiv decided, against the background of the 1986 Chornobyl disaster, that Ukraine would become entirely free of nuclear weapons.²

To be sure, Ukraine was unable to use most of its nuclear weapons. Yet, the amount of warheads, specialized technology and engineering expertise it had accumulated in the Soviet period was such that it could have preserved a small amount of enriched uranium or/and plutonium, or even nuclear ammunition and warheads.³ Under considerable pressure not only from Moscow but also with the generous help from Washington, Kyiv transferred its Weapon of mass destruction (WMD) arsenal, however, completely and quickly to Russia. Ukraine signed and ratified the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as a non-nuclear weapon state.

In addition, Washington, Moscow, and London agreed to provide, in return for Ukraine's denuclearization, additional security guarantees based on the NPT's general guarantees. This happened at the December 1994 summit of the Conference for Security and Cooperation in Europe and emerging OSCE in Budapest. Kyiv as well as the Depositary Governments of the Russian Federation, United States and United Kingdom signed the – by now, famous – Budapest “Memorandum on Security Assurances in connection with Ukraine's accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.” In this document, the non-proliferation regime's three guarantor powers, the RF as the legal successor of the USSR, UK and U.S., assured Ukraine of the security of its sovereignty and territory, as well as freedom from economic and political pressure.

The two other official nuclear-weapon states under the NPT, China, and France, followed suit. They provided Ukraine with separate governmental declarations expressing their respect for Ukraine's sovereignty and integrity. Similar documents were provided to Belarus and Kazakhstan. These two other post-Soviet states, apart from Russia and Ukraine, also had inherited parts of the Soviet nuclear arsenal. Minsk and Almaty also agreed to transfer their WMDs to Russia.

1) Maria Rost Rublee, "From the Archive: Ukraine - a Fantasy Counterfactual," IISS (2 March 2022).

<https://www.iiss.org/blogs/survival-blog/2022/03/from-the-archive-ukraine-a-fantasy-counterfactual>

2) Polina Sinovets and Mariana Budjeryn, Interpreting the Bomb: Ownership and Deterrence in Ukraine's Nuclear Discourse, Wilson Center (December 2017).

<https://www.wilsoncenter.org/publication/interpreting-the-bomb-ownership-and-deterrence-ukraines-nuclear-discourse>

3) Mariana Budjeryn and Polina Sinovets, "Denuclearization again? Lessons from Ukraine's Decision to Disarm," War on the Rocks, 19 April 2018. <https://warontherocks.com/2018/04/denuclearization-again-lessons-from-ukraines-decision-to-disarm/>

The NPT – to which 191 States have joined, more than any other fundamental disarmament agreement – was opened for signature in 1968. It entered into force in 1970 and was extended indefinitely in 1995 – not the least against the background of the successful denuclearization of Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. The goal of the treaty is to avert the spread of nuclear weapons, foster cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, and work towards complete nuclear disarmament.

The NPT is the bedrock of the global nuclear non-proliferation regime. It contains the only binding commitment, in a fully ratified multilateral treaty, the goal of disarmament by the nuclear-weapon states. The agreement addresses the issue that preventing the proliferation of nuclear weapons cannot be achieved by individual states. It requires the dedication and collaboration of the global community.

The NPT contains the obligation of nuclear-weapon states to not transfer WMDs to other states (Article I) and of non-nuclear-weapon states to not receive, manufacture or acquire nuclear weapons (Article II). It includes a promise of nuclear-weapon states to help promote the development of civilian nuclear applications of all treaty parties (Article III). It also documents a pledge of the nuclear-weapon states to work towards disarmament (Article IV). In its preamble, the NPT recalls “that, in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, States must refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State.”⁴

The effect of the non-proliferation regime has so far been that the world’s vast majority of developed states have abstained from acquiring atomic arms. Outside the NPT, only Israel, India, Pakistan, and North Korea have developed their own nuclear weapons capacities. However, their arsenals are smaller than those of the NPT’s five official nuclear-weapon states and permanent UN Security Council members – Russia, the U.S., France, the UK, and China. More than five decades after its signing, the NPT remains thus largely intact. Its tenth review conference is scheduled for later this year after several postponements due to the pandemic.⁵

With Russia’s military as well as non-military (“hybrid”) attack on Ukraine and annexation of Crimea since 2014 and its massive escalation in 2022, the Kremlin has put the logic of the non-proliferation regime on its head. It looks now as if the NPT’s purpose is to keep weak countries defenseless and prey to nuclear-weapon states. The treaty’s exemptions provide the NPT’s five official nuclear-weapon states – incidentally, also the world’s strongest conventional military powers – with

4) United Nations Office for Disarmament Affairs, Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). <https://www.un.org/disarmament/wmd/nuclear/npt/>

5) United Nations - Tenth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). <https://www.un.org/en/conferences/npt2020/media-center-and-news>

an opportunity to extend, at low cost, their officially claimed state territories. They can do so at the expense of smaller nations governed by naïve believers in the rule of international law, and signatories of the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon states.

Russia's behavior since 2014 and massive assault in 2022 represents not only a menace towards Ukraine and other neighbors. It is also a threat to the integrity of the NPT and the global order of which it is a foundation, and on which the security of 191 states, including Russia itself, depends. The deterioration of the NPT lessens worldwide faith in the plausibility of the nonproliferation goals, diminishes the will of individual states to participate in their pursuit, and increases the potential and temptation for additional states (and non-state actors) to acquire nuclear weapons. It thus erodes the security of all.

What long-term psychological effects will the behavior of Russia vis-à-vis Ukraine have? An NPT depositary and official nuclear-weapon state, as well as UNSC permanent member, attacks a fully denuclearized, yet formerly atomic country. The repercussions of this decision on the thinking of current and future political leaders and strategists around the world may be deep.

The fateful events since 2014 - Russia's brazen annexation of Crimea and pseudo-civil war in Eastern Ukraine as well as the West's timid and belated reactions to these aberrations – were already suggestive. In 2022, Moscow was able to attack as unapologetically as it did Ukraine because Russia is a nuclear-weapon state. The Russian Federation is officially allowed to possess nuclear weapons while Ukraine does not only not have but is officially forbidden to obtain them.

These circumstances may be especially noteworthy for various middle powers which currently do not possess WMDs, yet either control or eye territories claimed by neighboring states. Countries that have the potential capacity and a realistic chance to obtain and sustain nuclear weapons may, after 2014, think twice. Does it really make sense to rely on international law, in general, and the NPT, in particular?

Current and future governments of middle powers not integrated in larger alliances such as NATO may learn three simple lessons. First, it is good to have, unlike Ukraine, nuclear weapons. Second, it is not good to give them, like Ukraine, away. Third, it is not good to rely on bi- and multi-lateral treaties, memoranda, assurances, and other verbal statements – even if they are fully ratified or/and supported by the leaders of the world's most powerful countries.

Instead, you should follow a wiser policy than Kyiv did in the early 1990s when it gave away all the Ukrainian warheads and nuclear material. Instead, your country's chances to keep its territorial integrity will be higher than Ukraine's, if you build, obtain, and keep nuclear warheads. Once a new disruptive technology makes it feasible to develop or buy nuclear weapons, you may want to get them. That is especially wise if you have rapacious neighbors that will also do so, or which already have WMDs.

Moreover, you may - as happened in 2014 - get the chance to snatch a piece from a neighboring state that is naive enough to lack sufficiently deadly weapons and blindly trusts international law. The only thing you must do is wait patiently until a convenient time to take military action. You need to carefully prepare as well as spread a semi-plausible narrative for executing your territorial expansion.

You also must make the world believe that you are ready to resolutely use nuclear warheads once necessary. To defend your new territorial acquisition, you will, if push comes to shove, be ready to use all your military capabilities. As Russia since 2014, you can then be assured that no outside powers will directly help any of those non-nuclear neighbors you have chosen to attack.

Further on, you can hope that you may not face any noteworthy sanctions at all, if you declare your newly obtained territories "independent states," as Moscow did with Georgia's Abkhazia and "South Ossetia" in 2008. Or you may decide that you are ready and have the capacity to deal with some mild sanctions, like Russia since 2014. Then you can even formally annex your neighbor's occupied area, such as Russia did with Ukraine's Crimea, to your nuclear-weapon state's territory. Or you may decide to play *va banque*, like the Kremlin did in 2022. Whatever you decide - you yourself are fundamentally safe. Your troops will not face direct resistance from third powers on the territory of your aggression's victim, as everybody will be afraid that you could nuke them.

Alternatively, you can engage non-submissive neighbors over years, sometimes in high-intensity, sometimes in low-intensity conflicts, with semi, or fully regular troops. If you choose to not escalate too much, like Russia until 2022, you also have reasons to hope that any sanctions possibly imposed can be circumvented, weakened, or abolished over time. The latter happened, for instance, regarding the minor EU sanctions regarding Russia's behavior in Georgia in 2008.

Finally, as the post-Soviet republics' experience with Russia of the past 30 years has shown, as a nuclear-weapon state you have other options to encroach, subvert and undermine recalcitrant "near abroad" with impunity. You may do so with special service operations, political warfare, cyberattacks etc. You only need to have enough WMDs to seriously scare the world. Then you can calculate that no military action by more powerful international actors will ever be taken against your country. What else do you need to know to get the bomb as soon as possible?

A EUROPEAN POLITICAL COMMUNITY?

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The European Political Community (EPC) launch in Prague on 6 October was relatively quiet amid doubts about what shape the project would take. Its overriding goal would be “stabilizing the European,” French President Emmanuel Macron said on a trip to Moldova in June. The French view has been that there is an urgent need for security and geopolitical challenges to be addressed in a broader format than the EU. Security is high on the EU agenda. The Russian war in Ukraine has brought to light the weakness of Europe’s security and defense structure and has underscored the need to modify the EU’s relationship with its neighbors. Criticisms include that the EU should step up to its geopolitical responsibility in the neighborhood.

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Keywords: Common Security, European Defense, European Political Community, European Union, Russian Invasion of Ukraine.



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The European Political Community (EPC) launch in Prague on 6 October was relatively quiet amid doubts about what shape the project would take. Its overriding goal would be “stabilizing the European,” French President Emmanuel Macron said on a trip to Moldova in June. The French view has been that there is an urgent need for security and geopolitical challenges to be addressed in a broader format than the EU.

Security is high on the EU agenda. The Russian war in Ukraine has brought to light the weakness of Europe’s security and defense structure and has underscored the need to modify the EU’s relationship with its neighbors. Criticisms include that the EU should step up to its geopolitical responsibility in the neighborhood.

The EU is struggling with security and defense issues. The Union wants to be able to protect its citizens and contribute to international peace and security. The Strategic Compass adopted in March is not a grand strategy like the 2016 Global Strategy. It is not meant to replace the Global Strategy and could perhaps best be called a politico-military strategy. It can be seen as a part strategy, part action plan, and should provide direction for the EU’s efforts in security and defense until 2030. Work on the Compass was initiated well before the Russian aggression toward Ukraine in February. It has been claimed that the Compass was not sufficiently adjusted to respond to reality.

The mutual defense clause (Art. 42.7 of the Treaty on European Union) does not make the EU a defense union. The clause is not living up to the expectations of some of the Member States. “Non-NATO members Sweden and Finland are counting on the European Union’s mutual defense clause in the event of a military attack,” Sweden’s Prime Minister Magdalena Andersson said in March after the Russian aggression towards Ukraine. Ahead of a summit of EU leaders in Versailles in March, non-aligned Sweden, and Finland sent a joint letter to “remind the other Member States of the EU’s declaration of solidarity in the Lisbon Treaty.” A couple of months later, both Finland and Sweden handed in their formal requests to join NATO. The mutual defense clause lacks an organization and a structure to back it up. The exact nature and scope of the EU’s military solidarity remain vague.

President Macron first presented the idea of a European Political Community to the European Parliament in May 2022 but did not spell out the details. Some in Paris allegedly saw the EPC as an alternative to enlargement, while others thought it could be complementary. The EPC could be seen as bringing EU candidate countries into the European family, while negotiations on full membership drag on for years. Macron’s words on 9 May were ambiguous: “joining [the EPC] would not

prejudge future accession to the European Union, necessarily.” One of the rationales for the proposal was that the EU’s neighborhood policy – a framework designed to deepen ties with the EU’s eastern and southern neighbors – is primarily perceived to have failed. It had not turned the neighbors into the ‘ring of friends’ that then Commission President Romano Prodi had called for in 2002.

France followed up Macron’s presentation in a paper submitted to the EU ahead of the June 2022 European Council meeting. The list of topics was somewhat longer than in Macron’s 9 May speech, with foreign and security policy at the top, followed by climate change, energy, food security, infrastructure, mobility, migration, organized crime, and relations with other geopolitical actors.

The EU leaders gave the green light to the idea of a European Political Community in June. The stated aim of the project was to provide a policy coordination platform for European countries across the continent and “[i]t could concern all European countries” with whom the EU “ha[s] close relations.” The aim was to foster political dialogue and cooperation to address issues of common interest to strengthen the European continent’s security, stability, and prosperity. It was stated that the EPC should offer a political coordination platform for European countries across the continent.

The launch of the European Political Community can be seen as resting on a broad conception of security. Both energy and migration featured prominently on the agenda of the 6 October summit. The inaugural meeting was in the form of a plenary session and four break-out sessions on peace and security, the economic situation, energy and climate, and migration and mobility. There was no formal written outcome of the meeting.

Alongside the 27 EU Member States, several countries at various stages of EU accession were invited: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Moldova, North Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia, Türkiye, and Ukraine. States that have aspirations to join the EU were also included: Georgia and Kosovo. There was talk before the meeting of inviting Israel, but in the end, there was no Israeli attendance.

Close EU allies Switzerland, Norway, Iceland, and the microstate of Liechtenstein were invited, alongside Armenia and Azerbaijan. The UK was also invited. Former UK Prime Minister Liz Truss said in May that she prefers to “build on structures that we already have that work successfully, whether the G7 or NATO”. But Truss changed her mind and attended the EPC meeting. It is said that UK officials were persuaded by the inclusion of migration and energy policy on the meeting’s agenda

and by assurances that the EU will not be actively involved. Truss even offered to host the next meeting in the UK. The UK is understood to have wanted the name changed to European Political Forum, although this did not happen.

The Presidents of the European Council and European Commission were also invited. It is noteworthy that in her State of the Union speech in September 2022, Commission President Ursula van der Leyen endorsed “a European Political Community”, without going into specifics. van der Leyen did not have a role at the EPC meeting in Prague, in line with the intergovernmental character of the summit.

The 44 leaders attended on “an equal footing” to discuss how best to strengthen the “security, stability and prosperity of Europe as a whole,” the European Council’s invitation letter to the EU27 stated.

The next meeting will be hosted by Moldova. Spain and the UK have volunteered to host subsequent meetings. One question mark is how a loosely knit group with no organisation or secretariat, meeting twice a year, can contribute. Peer pressure and policy convergence could be the answers. Even these are challenging goals, but they may be attainable. In addition there might deliverables in the form of bilateral activities, such as the agreement by the UK and France to hold a meeting at a later date – the first in five years – and the meeting between Armenia and Azerbaijan held in the margins of the Prague summit. For the time being, making the EPC a quasi-extension of the EU is not on the cards. The functioning working mode of the EPC comes through as solidly intergovernmental. The achievement of gathering the 44 leaders in Prague on 6 October can already be seen as a success in itself, but the crucial litmus test will be the follow-up meeting in Moldova. Time will tell whether the EPC will become a mere footnote in history – much like French President François Mitterrand’s call for the creation of a European confederation, including Russia, a few weeks after the fall of the Berlin Wall.

DECODING XI JINPING'S SPEECH: CHINA'S CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM WILL MARK THE NEXT FIVE YEARS

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On 16 October, Chinese President Xi Jinping delivered a two-hour speech at the opening of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China (CPC). From national security to global economic integration, the address covered many issues related to China's political and economic progress since 2017, new problems, and prospects for a modernized China. One of the interesting statements in the speech was that Jinping strongly opposed Cold War politics and all forms of hegemony associated with this era, rejecting the idea of power politics, and favoring a new vision for China as a benign force. For many observers, such remarks will most likely remain on paper. China's enormous economic growth over the last two decades paved the way for an outwardly oriented China, as the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and plans for a more sophisticated and modernized army (PLA) reveal. In this regard, two aspects of the speech deserve a close read: foreign policy priorities and clues about the existing international order. Both seem to characterize China as a "cautious optimist" actor in the global setting.

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Keywords: Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), Cautious Optimism,
China, East Asia, Xi Jinping.



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China as the "Cautious" Actor

First, Xi's speech is noteworthy because it gives significant insights into China's national security concerns and determined patterns of assertiveness vis-à-vis the Taiwan question in the upcoming period. Considering Beijing's strong reaction against Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taipei in August 2022, the speech should be taken seriously as it frames the issue as a "historic mission" with an "unshakable commitment."¹ The concept of "the rejuvenation of the Chinese nation," frequently used in the speech, signifies the strategic combination of nationalist sentiments and some realpolitik considerations. It is evident that Beijing, which dispatched warships and military aircraft to the Taiwan Strait as a show of force after Pelosi's visit, would make a more proactive counter-move against any possible American behavior perceived as interference in China's internal affairs.²

Nevertheless, the speaker implies that a satisfactory outcome in the Taiwan issue is not an end in itself but only a single but significant part of a broader foreign policy strategy. What China seeks to achieve is, therefore, to establish a regional balance in its favor and to preserve it at any cost, a long-term goal that cannot be limited to Taiwan. The point behind the frequent referral to the Taiwan issue in the speech is that it can effectively be a stepping-stone for China to become a more potent power pursuing regional hegemony. This aspect may explain Beijing's

1) Full text of the report to the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China, 25 October 2022. https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/eng/zxxx_662805/202210/t20221025_10791908.html

2) David Rising, "China's Response to Pelosi Visit a Sign of Future Intentions," AP, 19 August 2022. <https://apnews.com/article/taiwan-china-beijing-congress-8857910a1e44cefa70bc4dfd184ef880>

firm opposition to any possible external interference with this “delicate” question which has an unquestionable vitality in the eyes of Chinese policymakers when formulating future strategies. To put it more differently, Beijing gives an apparent response to those who compare its overt sensitivity about Taiwan to the situation in Ukraine by framing the two as entirely different.³

Another point underscored in the speech was on military modernization, a critical issue stated at the 19th Congress as well. Reforming the PLA might be one of the lessons China has learned by examining the Russian army's problems in the Ukraine War.⁴ In the speech, the emphasis is mainly placed on the technical and organizational development of the armed forces, the Military-Party unity, and even the Party's absolute leadership over the army. Together with these reforms and control over the military, Xi Jinping iterated the very necessity of being capable of organizing joint military operations and joint training of different branches within the PLA, a vital necessity for China in case of a major military operation.

The speech also mentioned the “strategic planning for running the armed forces in accordance with the law and improvement of the Chinese system for law-based administration of military affairs,” a point related to the acute corruption problem within many branches of the PLA. Therefore, the modernization of the army seems to be a wider project expected to include the procurement of cutting-edge military equipment and the training of top commanders.

Chinese Optimism Regarding Globalization

Aside from crucial realpolitik considerations of national and regional security, Xi offered some insights about his continued optimism and willingness to pursue the pace of globalization. The speech clearly emphasized that China would continue adhering to the UN Charter as a set of international norms, liberalizing trade through the WTO, and expanding multilateralism and cooperation by BRICS, APEC, and SCO. Such an orientation is framed in the context that China would not seek any form of hegemony in the future, nor does it pursue expansionism.

Nevertheless, one can better understand the speech through the prism of the U.S. National Security Report 2022. In this document, the PRC is referred to as “the only competitor with both the intent to reshape the international order and, increasingly,

3) “Chinese Foreign Minister: Taiwan is ‘Not Ukraine’,” RadioFreeEurope, 23 February 2022. <https://www.rferl.org/a/china-taiwan-not-ukraine/31718237.html>

4) TRT World Research Center, “Understanding China's Position Towards the War in Ukraine: Lessons for a ‘Superpower to-be’,” (5 May 2022). <https://researchcentre.trtworld.com/featured/understanding-chinas-position-towards-the-war-in-ukraine-lessons-for-a-superpower-to-be/>

the economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to do it.”⁵ It also asserted that the PRC “has ambitions to create an enhanced sphere of influence in the Indo-Pacific and to become the world’s leading power.” Such wariness towards China’s rise builds on Trump’s approach. Unlike the successive U.S. administrations since Bush Senior, Trump did not share the post-Cold War liberal optimism, waging substantial “trade wars” against Beijing in 2018.

Xi’s emphasis on the Chinese opposition to protectionism, unilateralism, and sanctions can be read as an alluded reference to the new U.S. policy shift from liberal engagement to economic and political containment. NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg had expressed grave concerns⁶ over China when Li Zhanshu, Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People’s Congress of China (NPC), expressed views against the NATO enlargement a few months ago.⁷ Not surprisingly, in the NATO Strategic Concept 2022, it is stated that China, which pursues its strategic alliance with Russia, is the primary challenger to the Euro-Atlantic security system, which makes the prospects for containment (instead of engagement) more adequate.⁸ Therefore, the Western coverage and threat perception vis-à-vis China remain at odds with what Xi Jinping tried to convey in the speech.

Over the last two decades, China has been very good at using the international system for its economic interests and has become more affluent. Paradoxically, it used the “liberal” characteristics of the international order by integrating into the global markets while disregarding the liberal political components domestically. As China’s economic rise continues, it will allocate budgets to other fields, especially the military. Although the speech rejects all forms of hegemonic aspirations, Taiwan seems to be the most critical stepping-stone for its unstated quest for regional hegemony.

Such a projection could well materialize given the emphasis on national security concerns, military modernization, and national rejuvenation in Xi Jinping’s address. A gap tends to exist between discourse and practice, words and actions, and framing and intentions. The main task confronting analysts is to fill these gaps with causal connections, concrete examples, and different analytical perspectives.

5) U.S. Department of Defense, "National Defense Strategy," (October 2022).
<https://www.defense.gov/National-Defense-Strategy/>

6) "Exclusive NATO Chief Stoltenberg Calls China a Security Challenge," Reuters, 21 September 2022.
<https://www.reuters.com/world/exclusive-nato-chief-stoltenberg-calls-china-security-challenge-2022-09-21/>

7) Shargh, "Russia, China to Fight Together Against NATO Expansion," 10 September 2022.
<https://www.sharghdaily.com/Section-news-3/855661-russia-china-to-fight-together-against-nato-expansion>

8) NATO, "NATO Strategic Concept 2022," (June 2022).
https://www.nato.int/nato_static_files2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/220629-factsheet-strategic-concept-en.pdf

UTOPIA AND THE LAND OF OPPORTUNITIES

DOI: 10.58867/IEPR9028

Most immigrants and people around the world perceive the U.S. as God's heaven, the land of opportunities, and dreamland. The truth, however, is that people need to work hard to fulfill their dreams and take advantage of the opportunities. The issue is that some or even many immigrants or those who seek immigration to the U.S. don't know this, and they get startled when they arrive in the U.S. and see how difficult life is and how challenging the market is. In fact, we make it more difficult than it should be due to our unreasonable expectations of ease and comfort and that we will live the American dream without any due hardships or burdens.

Ahmed Nough*

Keywords: Economic Utopia, Integration, Immigration, Opportunity, U.S.



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The United States of America is the most populous country in the world that embraces immigrants; it has over 50 million immigrants, winning the race by a long distance between it and Germany, which comes in second place by 15.8 million immigrants.¹ Consequently, the U.S. is the most diverse country on the planet, especially in major cities such as New York City in which more than 700 hundred languages are spoken.²

The U.S. in the Eyes of the Immigrants and the Rest of the World

Most immigrants and people around the world perceive the U.S. as God's heaven, the land of opportunities, and dreamland. The truth, however, is that people need to work hard to fulfill their dreams and take advantage of the opportunities. The issue is that some or even many immigrants or those who seek immigration to the U.S. don't know this, and they get startled when they arrive in the U.S. and see how difficult life is and how challenging the market is. In fact, we make it more difficult than it should be due to our unreasonable expectations of ease and comfort and that we will live the American dream without any due hardships or burdens.

Life in the U.S. is like a giant machine, and the vast majority of people are the cogs in this machine. People should understand that they are obliged to fulfill their part and their difficult task in the machinery system, or they will be replaced by another cog because the machine could not fail due to an inefficient or malfunctioning cog. But, on the other hand, if they fulfill their duty and function as the Manual states, they will be rewarded and perhaps generously rewarded. And, in the worst-case scenario, they will be able to survive, but not necessarily thrive, unless they work smart and not only hard. Because to thrive, we must also make ourselves unique and be a very important component for the functionality of the machine. Even then, we are still replaceable, but not easily replaceable because we may then cause damage, even if the damage is minor and sometimes with no noticeable consequences, but a risk of a delay in the machine, even the most minor delay could eventually lead to failure in a system that has no mercy for a -Butterfly wing flap- (Butterfly Effect) and ruthless concerning the 4th industrial revolution, and neocolonialism fierce World War.

1) According to the UN. <https://worldpopulationreview.com/country-rankings/immigration-by-country>

2) According to <https://languagemap.nyc/Info/About>

Earthly Perspective vs Heavenly Perspective

Unlike most of the world, people in the U.S. need to work hard, and they will be likely fairly awarded for the hard work they perform; in most of the world, people either do not work hard and therefore do not earn sufficient money to survive, work hard and still do not earn sufficient money to survive due to unfairness and fragility of the economy, or in the best case scenario, they can barely survive. In the U.S. it is also easier than in most of the world to start a business, nevertheless it is challenging to excel in a business, but at least you can easily, with reasonable effort, keep your business afloat for as long as you wish. Probably, it is because the U.S. economy (GDP) is, by far, the largest economy in the world,³ and the government helps businesses with financial hardships, especially, small businesses. Once more, do not unreasonably expect to be Elon Musk or Jeff Bezos overnight or even over the years because it takes decades of hard and smart work in addition to much luck to achieve such success unless you inherit a wealthy aunt or get lucky enough to win the lottery, and in the latter assumption, you will perhaps lose the money and get back to your old and miserable life because as they say "easy come easy go"

The Truth and the Solution

The U.S. is not Utopia because Utopia is only in heaven, not on earth, but from an earthly and realistic perspective, the U.S. is, in the totality of circumstances, considered one of the best, if not the best country in the world to live in considering important factors such as the stability of economy; strength of education; efficiency of the health system; technological development, and most importantly, the human rights rules and regulation against discriminatory treatment and governmental, and law enforcement harassment.

Any person who lives in the U.S. even if not a citizen has the same constitutional rights as a non-citizen; more surprisingly, even undocumented immigrants have the same rights as documented immigrants. Meaning that a permanent resident or even an unlawful resident has for instance; a fourth amendment right against unreasonable searches and seizures, which gives them reasonable immunity against being detained or even interrogated without a lawful warrant or legitimate probable cause, and that they also have a fifth amendment right to remain silent during an interrogation or law enforcement encounters or even in court –in criminal cases- to not incriminate themselves with answering any incriminatory questions. Nevertheless, this is not the case in most of the world, and some countries do not provide the same protection to their citizens.

3) According to <https://www.worlddata.info/largest-economies.php>

Fairness requires mentioning the counter-arguments that, for example, say that the crime rates are increasing in the U.S. more than in any place around the world, therefore, it renders the U.S. an unsafe country to live in, this argument is rebutted because if we, for instance, consider murder crimes in 2022 which is about 6.6 per every 100,000 people compared to almost 10 murders per every 100,000 people in the early 90s we will conclude that murder crimes have been declined.⁴ What makes it sound unsafe is the dissemination of information, especially at the time of globalization and social media, U.S. news spreads all over the world at the same time it spreads inside the U.S. itself; even many people all over the world watch U.S. main media streams and follow U.S. social media accounts more than the Americans themselves. Now, almost every person has a cellphone camera and many crimes such as Subway attacks are being filmed and instantly posted online and spread all over the world because there is no country more than Uncle Sam's that has online traffic and attracts people's attention.

In sum, if we perceive the U.S. from an earthly perspective and that Utopia is only in heaven, we will reach peace and comfort. Then we may achieve the American dream and get the most out of the land of opportunities because it is, in my opinion, and in a neutral and detached point of view, one of the best, and arguably the best place on earth to live in based on many factors which some of them are above-mentioned.

4) According to <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/09/23/briefing/crime-rates-murder-robberies-us.html>

GOVERNING SCARCITY

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For European countries, the resurgence of conflict on geographical and cultural frontiers, together with heightened tensions in the Balkans and the "Wider Mediterranean," is a severe stressor. While it's encouraging to see calls for a coordinated response to the crisis, the economic benefits of these efforts have yet to become apparent. The European Union has shown once again the effects of the political vacuum that only the renewed strength of NATO has filled, allowing for a unified action to occur in complete alignment with the condemnation of the Russian invasion. What is harder to find is unison in the application of sanctions and a counterreaction to the impending energy crisis. European nations have had to nearly completely divorce themselves from the import of Russian gas, which has had ramifications, especially in strongly reliant countries like Germany and Italy, two of the most significant European countries for industrial manufacturing. The solution for the lack of Russian gas is not impossible to find but remains unresolved as of March 2021. Any answer would not, in the short term, be without consequence on economic, social, and production systems. The replacement of energy sources in a social system based on stability and well-being is not painless.

Lorenzo Somigli*

Keywords: Energy, Europe, Energy Prices, LNG, Scarcity of Resources.



* Lorenzo Somigli is a journalist and press officer who works for industries, factories, and Italian institutions. This article was first published digitally on Saturday, 28 January 2023.

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Self-Production and National Interests

The scarcity of energy caused by the war has pressed Europe to change its strategy and to have a more planned approach to the environmental and energy transition – anyway, it remains the objective of the decade. For the first time, energy self-reliance is seen as the key to political independence.

Regarding environmental impact, the approach has shifted to a more “human” model, which is concrete and distinctively ideological, as the COP27 summit in Egypt has shown. After the phase of pessimist narratives around climate change and its effects, the approach of infrastructure and technology rather than the reduction of human activity to a minimum has won.

Europe has found itself in the unenviable position of having to abandon fossil resources. Meanwhile, it must seek other energy sources to keep up with the rising demand brought on by the pursuit of digitalization. In the future years, the options the EU will have might include diversifying natural gas supplies, increasing the import of LNG, increasing the use of renewable sources, and maybe reviving the deployment of nuclear power.

Price Cap: Too Little, Too Late?

The price cap on gas is one of the most anticipated countermeasures and the fruit of an exhausting negotiation promoted chiefly by the Italian government. Its effects have yet to be seen. Indeed, its mechanism – it's coming into effect in February and once the price has risen above 180 – has some peculiarities that might reduce its efficiency.

When imported stock is nearly depleted, the fixed price control should apply to Russian gas; this undoes the effects of sanctions on Russia; the fixed price control does not apply to LNG, which has an entirely different market and should, instead, contribute to gas demand in the coming years.

A matter yet to be resolved is how a historically useless measure, insofar as it is expensive, as a “cap price” might work nowadays, as markets are complex and interconnected. Furthermore, regarding countermeasures to the sky-high rise in prices, it is challenging to organize a unified acquisition of gas on a European scale; it is also out of the question to extend the fixed cost to other European providers such as Algeria and Norway, or even Azerbaijan, who provides gas to Italy via Tap. It makes much more sense to negotiate using political means.

As Massimo Nicolazzi suggests,¹ if the objective of fixing the price in this new market was simply to “prevent sudden and contingent price spikes,” it would suffice to introduce negotiations at TTF (Title Transfer Facility) “a circuit breaker on the example of the suspension for an excess rise.”

“New” Gas and Old Dependencies: The European Passion Interest in LNG

While the volatility of the gas market has already been mentioned above, it should also be noted that LNG is just as susceptible to market fluctuations as pipeline gas because it is transported by sea and lands wherever it will fetch the highest price; there are no long-term contracts or stable infrastructure that renders countries independent and permits regulatory policies or even the amortization of initial investments; and regasification plants are required to retransform the liquefied natural gas (LNG) – about to -160 degrees – back to natural gas at atmospheric temperature.

As demand grows, imports from the USA, Qatar, and Russia grow. Curiously, while natural gas no longer arrives, LNG imports from Russia have been growing in 2022 as 16.5 billion in the January-September period of 2022 against 11.3 in the same period of 2021.²

1) M. Nicolazzi, Staffetta online, “Più che difficile inutile: il price cap ha perso di senso”, 16 December 2022. <https://www.staffettaonline.com/articolo.aspx?id=371294>

2) C. Cooper, Politico, “The Russian gas habit Europe can't quit: LNG,” 6 November 2022. <https://www.politico.eu/article/russia-gas-europe-lng-putin/>

Given the amount of LNG exported, thanks to the North Field, it remains to be seen whether there will be repercussions from the “Qatargate scandal” – the Gulf country aims to reach 126 million tons per year (MTPA, Million Tonnes Per Annum) by 2027 – on imports to Europe.³

Projects for Self-Sufficiency in Energy: Meloni’s Government Focuses on Diversifying Resources

The new Meloni-led government started having to face the consequences of the energy crisis, and in just over two months of operation, it had to allocate enormous resources. In addition, Environment and Energy Security Minister Pichetto Fratin presented a precise plan for energy self-sufficiency to create a new energy mix. It is based on a few pillars: growth in LNG imports which requires the construction of at least two new regasification plants, in Ravenna and Piombino, where a new gas pipeline should also arrive, from Algeria, the Galsi⁴ – a project resurrected after Meloni’s last visit to the North African country; relaunching and strengthening of gas extraction from Italian fields; dissemination of renewables with the expansion of areas suitable for installation (the goal is to reach 70GW in about 6 years). The challenge is delicate and decisive, but a clear political will to intervene on the issue is positive.

Conclusions

Three years from now, from 2020 to 2023, will mark a turning point in history after 1989, and the repercussions of this series of shocks are still being tallied. Certainties are few and far between, yet they do exist. As a result of their scarcity, the prices of all resources, from gas and grain to rare earths and water, are expected to rise and likely remain relatively high. At this point, globalization either comes to a halt or enters a new phase in which new powers are firmly established and insist professionally on spheres of influence. However, the United States serves as the military and technical center, with measures becoming increasingly isolated in their little ponds. As things stand, self-sufficiency appears to be the best course of action. This has far-reaching implications, not just economically (because of a drop in traffic and commercial quotas) but also politically (due to a predictable “nationalization” of the politics of the various countries).

3) Eni, *World Energy Magazine* No. 53, “Today & Tomorrow” (July 2022).
<https://www.eni.com/static/en-IT/world-energy-magazine/today-tomorrow.html#slide11>

4) Á. Escalonilla, *Atalayar*, “Meloni resumes Draghi’s agenda in Algeria: “We will be a gas hub for Europe”, 24 January 2023.

NOTES

This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. It features approximately 20 evenly spaced horizontal grey lines across its entire width, providing a guide for handwriting or typing. The paper is otherwise completely empty, with no margins, text, or other markings.

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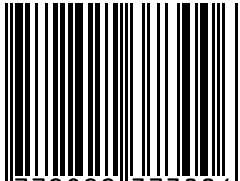
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