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A Year Since The Return of History

A NEW COLD WAR?



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The Small States and
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Shovkat Jabarova · Ali Demircioğlu

Our deepest condolences to our entire nation.

On February 6, 2023, we were devastated by one of the greatest disasters in our nation's history.

The earthquake was felt in numerous provinces and left many city centers in an unimaginable rumble, filling all our hearts with deep sorrow.

We mourn for the thousands of lives lost in the disaster.

We wish God's blessing for all those who have lost their lives in the earthquake and a quick recovery for those injured.

We offer our condolences to our nation.



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A Year After the Return of History: A New Cold War?

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Foreword

The last one year proved itself to be a very tough year, and it brought many new challenges for the international relations. Among these new challenges, the most striking one is probably the Russia's unleashing a war of aggression on Ukraine. As Russia's invasion stepped up on the 24 February 2022, many Western experts and policymakers predicted that the Ukrainian armed forces wouldn't be able to defend Kyiv, and that it would fall to the invaders before the month ended. Nonetheless, the government and people of Ukraine are still fighting, and you can see evidence of this everywhere you walk in Kyiv thanks to the flag of free Ukraine flying from rooftops.

It is clear that we are entering a new era in international relations, one that has revived the horrors and catastrophes of the past and paved the way for "The Return of History," regardless of the outcome of the conflict in Ukraine. Now that a full year has passed since the beginning of the attack, TPQ has devoted this issue to exploring the implications of the Russian invasion of Ukraine on many spheres, ranging from energy security to agriculture. At the same time, we're raising the question of whether the current era deserves to be classified as the "new Cold War." If so, who are the competing parties, and in what ways is this new Cold War differs from the one that ended in 1991, with the United States and the liberal world emerging victorious?

To come up with sufficient and informative answers for these critical questions, we assembled a large number of extremely valuable articles written by eminent researchers, policymakers, journalists, and young experts. All around the world, from the United States to Russia, and from Türkiye to Sweden, manuscripts came in from our contributors. Hence, it is with great pleasure that we provide you with this very qualified issue, which investigates several facets of the emerging global order from an international perspective.

Professor Richard Sakwa investigates the causes of the resurgence of the Cold War and examines the differences between it with the original confrontation. He thinks the Cold War mentality is once again ruling world relations. These arguments suggest that the hope that the conclusion of the Cold War in 1989 would usher in a more universal and permanent peace has largely been disproved; instead, by 2014, the centennial of the beginning of World War I, Europe was once again in the grips of bloody war. The United States and the rest of the Political West, as it had been reshaped by the Cold War, remained on one side. On the other hand, he claims that a considerably diminished Russia has replaced the defunct Soviet Union, and that this is happening alongside a China that is determined to regain its great power position.

Professor Li Bennich-Björkman argues that Russia is using bombings, attacks, and cruelty to obliterate Ukraine's history. As a result, she sees the current conflict as a struggle to maintain the recollection of what a peaceful Ukraine looked like, smelt like, tasted like, and felt like. She contends that a split between Russia and Ukraine is inconceivable for Putin because of Ukraine's strategic importance to Russia. Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk understood this as early as 1991. She says that he and other Ukrainian leaders sought to defend Ukrainian territory while assuring Moscow that amicable ties remained a possibility. Russia, she complains, has never undergone a comparable transformation.

Professor Ziya Öniş, who believes that we are in the midst of a Neo Cold War, focuses more on the conflict between "the West" and "the Rest." He claims that the clash between democratic and authoritarian capitalism, the defining conflict of the new era, was exacerbated by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. According to him, the concerted effort of Western nations to end the conflict was evidence of the resurgence of the democratic club of Western governments and their allies (G7 plus). He also argues that a significant schism in opinion has developed between "the West" and "the Rest" as a direct result of the War. He claims that the Russian War in Ukraine ushers in a new era in the post-Western world, one in which territorial conquests are accepted as the norm, setting the path for more armed clashes in a globe already riven by war.

Professor Nicolai N. Petro maintains that the healing of the Ukrainian people is often forgotten among the numerous conflicting narratives that drive the war in Ukraine. He argues that this is because the West is ignoring the "Other Ukraine," whose dissatisfaction with the actions of the Ukrainian government since 2014 has stoked tensions. According to him, the West's reaction to Russia's incursion has focused on punishing Moscow but hasn't done anything to ease the tensions within Ukraine. His work indicates that permanent societal harmony in Ukraine and peace in Europe can be achieved only via reconciliation inside Ukraine.

We encourage you to learn more about "A Year since the Return of History: A New Cold War?". On behalf of Transatlantic Policy Quarterly, I would like to express my gratitude to all the contributors who committed a significant amount of effort and work. The TPQ team has had a great time putting together this special issue. An important acknowledgment goes to our premium corporate sponsor Tüpraş. In addition, we would like to thank our online sponsor, and the sponsor of this issue, Monaco Economic Board. We also like to thank our other sponsors Gordon-Blair, Halifax, Kalekim, TEB, and The Ritz-Carlton for their ongoing support.

Before we finish our remarks, we would like to say some words about the terrible earthquakes hit Türkiye in February. We at Transatlantic Policy Quarterly want to

express our deepest deepest sympathy to the people of Turkey and the surrounding region following the tragic 7.8 and 7.6 magnitude earthquakes that struck Kahramanmaraş and had devastating effects on the nine neighboring provinces. TPQ expresses condolences to the families who have lost loved ones and wishes everyone affected by this tragic catastrophe a fast recovery.

Aybars Arda Kılıçer
Editor-in-Chief



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EAST VS. WEST: A NEW COLD WAR?

Cold War has returned to dominate international politics. Expectations that the end of the Cold War in 1989 would lead to a more inclusive and comprehensive peace seems to be practically failed, and instead, by 2014, the centenary of the start of the First World War, Europe was once again wracked by conflict. On the one side, the U.S.-led Political West shaped by the Cold War remained the main protagonist. In contrast, on the other hand, a much-weakened Russia took the place of the former Soviet Union, now accompanied by a China intent on restoring its status as a great power. The article examines why a new cold war emerges again, and analyses how such a 'Cold War II' differs from the original.

Richard Sakwa*

*Keywords: Cold War, Political East,
Political West, Post-Western Order, Russia.*



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Anticipations of a positive peace order after the end of the Cold War in 1989 soon led to disappointment. The issues in dispute then are the ones that later generated alienation, followed by conflict and the subsequent hot conflict in 2022. A positive peace order would have overcome the logic of conflict, with all sides ready to change within the framework of creating an inclusive and mutually equitable peace order in Europe. Instead, the negative peace of the cold war was perpetuated in new forms and conditions. A negative peace entails little more than the absence of war – conflict is managed rather than transcended. The quarter century of the cold peace between 1989 and 2014, despite endless proclamations of peace and ‘strategic partnership’ between Russia and the West, failed to resolve some fundamental issues and thus gave way to the Second Cold War and renewed confrontation between Russia and the West. This, in turn, was embedded in a nascent larger East-West conflict. This paper examines the dynamic that provoked Cold War II, explores the character of the protagonists, and discusses the implications.

The Political West and the East

There is an essential continuity in the years between 1945 and 2022. The international system established in 1945 endures today, although the onset of the Russo-Ukrainian war challenges it as never before. The United Nations remains the core body that shapes the normative framework of international politics. The Security Council is still the supreme body granting legitimacy to critical decisions in international affairs. The international system is the context in which international politics is conducted. Within the framework of the Charter International System, sub-orders have been established, uniting constellations of states based on similar ideologies and aspirations. These alignments contest with each other, and their conflicts shape international politics. The Soviet-led bloc has long been and gone, but the political order established by the United States, sometimes known as the ‘rules-based order,’ remains. This is the Political West, forged during the Cold War and still shaped by that conflict. Its putative victory at the end of the Cold War in 1989-91 accentuated already powerful notions of exceptionalism. This is accompanied by claims of universality, the view that the political West represents a separate and distinct form of a hegemonic and liberal internationalism. The combination of exceptionalism and universalism undermined the centrality of the UN-based norms and international law system. This does not go unchallenged. The assertion of unipolarity in the early post-Cold War era was negated by the objective development of multipolarity.

This provides an opportunity for the sovereign internationalism at the heart of the UN system to reassert itself. The Charter system is based on the formal equality of all states, which is now coming to the fore. Historical hierarchies in international

politics are increasingly challenged by the claims of the 200 states that now populate the international system. The era of formal colonialism was dismantled in the postwar years, and the new states have matured and gained enough confidence to make their weight felt in international affairs.

“The Political West, a contingent formation shaped by conflict, generates and regenerates the dynamics of the cold war and division.”

Nevertheless, the ranks of the great powers remain limited to two, the U.S. and China, giving rise to much speculation about the re-establishment of a bipolar dynamic in international politics, reminiscent of the First Cold War. India is in a category of its own, potentially a great power ready to join the other two, but by choice and necessity, forging a path of its own. Next are the legacy powers, those who once commanded empires but now find themselves diminished. Russia, France, and Great Britain’s status is bolstered by the possession of nuclear weapons and a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. Still, along with Japan and Germany, they are no longer at the top table of diplomacy and international affairs. Apart from Russia, they all strongly align with the U.S. and are thus part of the Political West. The next category is the middle powers, with Brazil, South Africa, Nigeria, Indonesia, Mexico, Turkey, Egypt, South Korea, and others with crucial regional influence but not yet asserting themselves consistently in world politics. The rest make up the constituency of the more minor powers. It should be stressed that their collective voice is essential, and they find themselves courted by the other powers as cold war-style bloc politics returns.

Amidst much talk of ‘the West’ as a homogenous category, in conceptual terms, it can be considered an agglomeration of three distinct impulses. The Political West is not the same as the Civilisational West, which came to dominance half a millennium ago and then asserted its power globally in the overseas empires. This is the West shaped by the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, and the Industrial Revolution. Its form of international society sets the standard of civilization globally.¹ Postwar anti-colonialism brought its overt dominance to an end, but ‘decolonization’ and ‘decoloniality’ remain critical discourses, even in the heartlands of the former empires. The Civilisational West represents a particular type of modernity, and it is challenged by those who argue that modernization does not necessarily equate

¹ Gerrit W. Gong, *The Standard of “Civilization” in International Society* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984).

to Westernisation. As far as critics are concerned, there can be multiple forms of modernity. Today this has spawned an enormous literature on civilization-states and civilization as a distinctive category in political analysis.² There is also a third representation of the West as a cultural formation with its roots in antiquity and still represents a particular vision of the good life and of what it means to humans. This Cultural West has always been a hybrid, with Egyptian, Greek, Mesopotamian, Persian, Indian, Chinese, and Slav influences. To that extent, the Cultural West, irrespective of the political and geopolitical claims of the Political West, remains part of the patrimony of humanity.

The same threefold distinction can be made about the East as a broad conglomerate of distinctive traditions. The Cultural East draws on many of the same traditions as the Cultural West, and it is on this basis that a revived movement for peace and development, the ideas that animated the creation of the Charter international system in 1945, can be restored. The common humanity of the Cultural West and the Cultural East is the inspiration for visions of a positive peace order that would allow the genuine fulfillment of the global developmental and peace-making aspirations of the Charter International System. Contradictions between the Civilisational West and the Civilisational East remain, but this is where the various movement for a dialogue of civilizations, as called for by the former president of Iran, Mohammed Khatami, in his famous letter to the UN secretary-general, Kofi Annan.³

The Political West, a contingent formation shaped by conflict, generates and regenerates the dynamics of the cold war and division. The transformation of international politics envisaged by Mikhail Gorbachev and other architects of perestroika in late 1980 was stymied. Instead, the Political West took advantage of the New Political Thinking to claim a victory in the Cold War that Moscow stubbornly believed as a joint victory for all humanity. The logical result of claiming victory is the assumption that its protagonist was defeated. If Russia was a spent power, its views could be safely ignored. While Russia was undoubtedly down in the 1990s, it was not out. Even then, it never renounced its claim to be a great power. As its economy recovered in the 2000s and some sort of order was restored to the polity under the leadership of Vladimir Putin, Moscow returned, obsessively in the eyes of its critics, to rectify what it considered the failings of the post-Cold War European security order. NATO enlargement was a particularly neuralgic issue, especially since Moscow believed that in return for facilitating German reunification,

² For example, Christopher Coker, *The Rise of the Civilizational State* (Cambridge: Polity, 2019).

³ The appeal for a Dialogue of Civilisations was discussed by the UN's 56th General Assembly, "Dialogue among Civilizations 'Humanity's Best Answer to Humanity's Worst Enemies' Secretary-General Tells Assembly," 9 November 2001, <https://press.un.org/en/2001/ga9952.doc.htm>

it had been promised that NATO would not expand ‘one inch’ to the East.⁴ This was only the most salient issue in a growing list of grievances, including the Political West’s bombing of Serbia in 1999, the invasion of Iraq in 2003, the emplacement of Ballistic Missile Defence systems in Romania and Poland, and much more. There appeared to be ‘no place’ for Russia in the European security order.⁵

“China refused to be boxed in by what was considered a stale and anachronistic (Eurocentric) category that failed to capture the enormity of China’s re-entry into world politics as a significant player.”

By 2014 Russian patience had run out, and it was ready to resist the expansion of the Political West. As far as Moscow was concerned, the European Union had failed to live up to its self-description as a peace project and a normative power. Instead, it becomes little more than an outrider of NATO enlargement – the soft edge of the advance of the Political West as a whole.⁶ Russia took the lead in resisting the normative and geopolitical expansion of the Political West. Moscow sought to shape a Greater Eurasia, encompassing the Eurasian Economic Union in harness with China’s Belt and Road Initiative. More broadly, a ‘Political East’ began to take shape, offering an alternative model of modernity appealing to the universality of the Charter International System against the perceived usurpation of its norms and institutions by the Political West. The practices of the cold war were restored, although not necessarily applied in the same way as in Cold War I.

Is This a New Cold War?

But is ‘cold war’ the most appropriate way of describing international politics today? Like the game of chess, every cold war follows the same rules, but every encounter is different. The drift towards entrenched and enduring conflict is apparent, but many other terms have been deployed, including the notion of ‘hybrid war’ and the struggle between authoritarianism and democracy. But a cold war is distinctive, helping to identify the differences and similarities with earlier conflicts. Robert Legvold

⁴ Mary Elise Sarotte, *Not One Inch: America, Russia and the Making of Post-Cold War Stalemate* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2022).

⁵ William H. Hill, *No Place for Russia: European Security Institutions since 1989* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2018).

⁶ An argument made by John J. Mearsheimer, “Why the Ukraine Crisis is the West’s Fault: The Liberal Delusions that Provoked Putin,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 93, No. 5 (September/October 2014): p. 77-89.

identifies five characteristics of a cold war that are relevant to the situation today. First, ideological division, with starkly different representations of the desirable political and economic order. Second, each side holds the other responsible for the conflict, with no scope for introspection or reflection about how one's own actions contribute to stoking division. Third, both sides assume that the conflict is driven not out of the interaction of two countries but by the other side's character: 'The essence of the problem [is] the essence of the adversary.' The struggle is less over interests than purpose and values. Fourth, as a result, change can only come about if the other side somehow or the other becomes something different, or at least is ready fundamentally to rethink its foreign policy. Finally, there is cooperation, but it can only be 'limited and transactional, not cumulative and transformative.'⁷ This well describes the situation today.

The context of Cold War II, of course, is very different from the earlier conflict. There is no longer such a stark ideological division between communism and capitalism, and instead, the ideological lines are blurred – although no less salient. The struggle is portrayed as one of law against anarchy, the rule of justice against the exercise of arbitrary power, and, ultimately, a struggle between the democratic world and a host of illiberal and authoritarian states. The struggle takes place in the context of the long-term shift in the balance of power away from the West towards the rising powers of Asia and Eurasia. As genuine multipolarity takes hold no single hegemonic power can shape international politics, provoking resentment and fear in the declining party and exaggerated ambitions in those who see themselves as rising. The overall context is of a more mature postwar state system. The powers described above demand parity of esteem, but their economic and military resources are unequal.

The struggle can equally be described as one against hegemonism – the view that no state or power constellation should enjoy exclusive rights to define how international affairs should be conducted. The struggle thus becomes one against the appropriation of universalism by a partial power system, generated by its sense of an exceptional destiny. In this case, the norms of the Political West are deeply embedded in the Charter International System and, in terms of human rights and democracy, more closely aligned with its norms than most countries in the Political East. However, the claim that their model of the good life should enjoy certain privileges is considered a usurpation of the genuine universalism represented by the Charter System. It is resisted not only at the political but also at the civilizational and cultural levels. Above all, the universalism and exceptionalism of the Political West

⁷ Robert Legvold, "Ending the Cold War with Russia," *The National Interest*, 2 February 2022, <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/ending-new-cold-war-russia-199997>

are expressions of geopolitical ambitions that undermine Charter-based sovereign internationalism.

Resistance to hegemonism can often act as a cover for all sorts of authoritarian and illiberal practices. Still, to the degree that anti-hegemonism is accompanied by an appeal to the impartiality of international law and the universal jurisdiction of Charter principles, anti-hegemonism can be presented as the true reflection of Charter norms. There is nevertheless an intrinsic contradiction within anti-hegemonism, appealing to universal norms but couched in the language of particularism. At its best, anti-hegemonism is more than an appeal to value relativism and the diversity of civilizations, but a more substantive call for respect for the foundational principle of the Charter international system, not only sovereign internationalism but also the values of human dignity embedded in the Charter. Normative anti-hegemonism does not deny democracy but rejects democratic internationalism when a comprehensive geopolitical power system hosts it.

A New Cold War It Is

As the cold peace gave way to renewed confrontation, the protagonists themselves increasingly applied the notion of the cold war. In an interview in April 2020, former president Dmitry Medvedev warned that American threats turned competition into confrontation and a renewal of cold war.⁸ China was initially reticent, believing the concept to be excessively Eurocentric and historically short-sighted. Regarding ideological rivalry, China was ‘anxious not to frame relations with the West as a new cold war,’ fearing that Soviet-style ideological expansionism could trigger a backlash.⁹ Chinese scholars opposed the use of the term because it misrepresented the current state of international politics and (this was only intimated) it reduced China to the status of the USSR. Even worse, it equated mighty China with struggling Russia. China refused to be boxed in by what was considered a stale and anachronistic (Eurocentric) category that failed to capture the enormity of China’s re-entry into world politics as a significant player. Wang Jisi, the head of the Institute of International and Strategic Studies at Peking University, stressed the distinctive character of the conflict. He argued that the U.S. and China are ‘embroiled in a contest that might prove more enduring, more wide-ranging, and more intense than any other international competition in modern history, including the Cold War.’¹⁰ Despite these caveats and reservations, the struggle between U.S. and China was

⁸ Dmitrii Medvedev, “Nevyuchennye uroki istorii,” [‘Unlearned Lessons of History’] *RIA Novosti*, 23 April 2021, <https://ria.ru/20210423/diplomatiya-1729522868.html>

⁹ Yan Xuetong, “Becoming Strong: The New Chinese Foreign Policy,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 100, No. 4 (July-Aug. 2021): p. 40-47, especially at p. 42.

¹⁰ Wang Jisi, “The Plot Against China? How China Sees the New Washington Consensus,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 100, No. 4 (July-Aug. 2021): p. 48.

increasingly recognized by both sides as a cold war.¹¹ John Mearsheimer argues that the U.S. had been misguided in facilitating China's rise for the half-century from the 1970s, and the two were now locked 'in what can only be called a new Cold War – an intense security competition that touches on every dimension of their relationship'.¹²

The narrative of Cold War II does indeed restore Russia to centrality in international politics, giving perhaps too much credence to Russia's claimed power and status in world politics. At the same time, it privileges European affairs and commensurately once again reduces the Global South to a periphery in which the proxy struggles of the Northern powers are conducted. When it became clear to Beijing that the U.S. 'pivot to Asia' launched by Barack Obama and later reinforced by trade and investment restrictions in the Trump years represented an enduring policy shift towards long-term containment, the term became relevant for the Asian theatre as well. Chinese commentators were forced to embrace the notion of the cold war. It meant, if nothing else, managing a conflict and ensuring that the struggle did not become a direct confrontation. Although escalation management is often dismissed today as appeasement, the threat of nuclear confrontation is higher now than even during the Cuban missile crisis of October 1962. The guardrails put in place since then have been systematically dismantled.

The second Cold War differs from the earlier one just as World War II differs from the first. In both cases, the follow-on conflict was provoked by unresolved contradictions in the way that the first ended and by long-term structural changes in international affairs and the global balance of power. The new conflict is structured by different ideologies, actors, and regions than the first, but the fundamental quality of the 'cold war' is reproduced. In such a 'Cold War II,' the struggle is no longer between socialism and capitalism and not even between democracy and autocracy, but between models of world order and paths to modernity. Today it is China rather than the Soviet Union that is the leading antagonist, but the U.S. and the Political West endures as the relevant counterpart. While Europe remains the core of one axis of conflict, East Asia plays no less of a role this time round.

The Global South and the Political East

In the earlier conflict there was a stable confrontation between what became the two superpowers, the U.S. and the USSR, whereas in Cold War II the conflict is rather more diffuse. Cold War I focused on Europe with global ramifications, while the

¹¹ As argued by Hal Brands and John Lewis Gaddis, "The New Cold War: America, China, and the Echoes of History," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 100, No. 6 (Nov.-Dec. 2021): p. 10-20.

¹² John J. Mearsheimer, "The Inevitable Rivalry," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 100, No. 6 (Nov.-Dec. 2021): p. 48-58, and especially p. 48.

second is global by its very essence. It is far more entrenched and reflects not just a temporary power shift but the culmination of a historical epoch. China is a far more formidable and enduring protagonist than the Soviet Union ever was. At the same time, the logic of cold war entails domestic controls and repression. This proved fatal for the USSR, and its fate is instructive for China and the U.S. The USSR failed to adapt to the challenges of complex modernization, the ‘Leninist trap’ into which China could well fall. The Leninist attempt to maintain control through mechanical means, the exercise of coercion, and the dominance of a single party, hinders the development of more organic forms of stability management. The market left to its own devices, is far from self-correcting, but the opposite extreme – statist controls and political authoritarianism, can be equally destabilizing.

In the U.S. and much of the Political West, increasingly illiberal approaches to domestic critics of renewed cold war practices restrict some of the freedoms in whose name the struggle is conducted. Cold war liberalism has returned, in which liberal values are suborned in defense of the core values that are ostensibly being defended. The politics of emergency, in which normal legal and other procedures are suspended, characterizes a cold war. At the same time, the UN system is also being questioned as never before. Instead of acting as a forum for adjudicating conflicts, it has become another arena in which cold war struggles are conducted. This then spills out in attempts by the Political West to force the Global South to join the struggle against its opponents. Classic cold war stratagems are deployed, including political and economic inducements, with the threat of coercive regime change measures held in reserve.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 inaugurated a new era in international politics. Russia’s action was denounced in several UN General Assembly votes, but much of the Global South and non-aligned countries refused to be drawn into a conflict that was perceived not to be their concern. A total of 131 states voted for the 2 March 2022 General Assembly resolution condemning the invasion, with only 5 voting against it and 35 abstaining. The resolution called for the complete withdrawal of Russian forces and a reversal of its decision to recognize the independence of Donetsk and Lugansk. China and India abstained and avoided openly condemning Russia. The 7 April General Assembly vote on membership of the UN Human Rights Council saw 93 support Russia’s suspension, while 24 voted against and 58 abstained. Russia, China, Cuba, North Korea, Iran, Syria, and Vietnam were among those who voted against, while those abstaining included India, Brazil, South Africa, Mexico, Egypt, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Qatar, Kuwait, Iraq, Pakistan, Singapore, Indonesia, and Cambodia. A significant part of the Global South refused to be drawn as proxies in a cold war that was generated by

the Global North's endemic inability to resolve its internal conflicts.

The world has changed. The Charter international system has now matured. Comprised of some 200 states, the old hierarchies of international power are being challenged, and cold war practices contested. A range of international organizations is coming together to constitute a nascent Political East. These include the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, the BRICS (Brazil Russia, India, China and South Africa), as well as institutions that are based in the Political East but with global reach, such as the Belt and Road Initiative, the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the BRICS' New Development Bank, as well as a plethora of regional associations. They are analogous to bodies established by the Political West but not necessarily the direct counterparts. The AIIB certainly complies with the highest standards of probity and sustainability, but the dynamic is different. The goal is not to ensure bloc cohesion and alignment with the concerns of a particular center, but to reinforce the principle of sovereign internationalism. The Political East is taking shape not just to fight the Second Cold War, but to transcend the logic on which cold wars are fought.

Conclusions

Despite deeply entwined economies and increasingly connected societies, Europe in 1914 drifted into an almost unimaginable war.¹³ In the interwar period, neither Nazi Germany nor imperial Japan was ready to abide by the rules of the international system of the time, and the rise of two revisionist powers once again led to war.¹⁴ Today all sides claim allegiance to the rules of the Charter order created after 1945; hence none are avowed revisionists, yet these competing claims to legitimacy have become a ground for contestation. Cold War II has become a genuinely global cold war, with various fronts in Asia, the Arctic, Africa, and the high seas, with a jagged 'iron curtain' in Europe. The cold war as a style of politics is back.

However, unlike Cold War I, more profound structural shifts in the balance of economic and military power to the East means that the Political West is challenged as never before. The struggle has an ideological component, but it is more ambiguous than the original conflict. The Political West is challenged by a more forthright appeal to the principles underpinning the Charter International System, and above all, by the so-called idea of sovereign internationalism. The Second Cold War is more dangerous than the first, and the outcome is far more uncertain.

¹³ For the earlier occasion, see Margaret MacMillan, *The War that Ended Peace: How Europe Abandoned Peace for the First World War* (London: Profile Books, 2014).

¹⁴ For a classic study, see A. J. P. Taylor, *The Origins of the Second World War* (London: Penguin, 1991 [1961]).

IMPERIAL OR COLONIAL: THE WAR IS FOUGHT OVER THE SOVIET PAST AND A BROKEN RELATIONSHIP

Russia is trying, through its bombs, attacks, and brutality, to erase what Ukraine was. Therefore, it is a war effort to keep remembering how Ukraine in peace looked like, how it smelled, tasted, and felt. And to never forget that this is a war against Ukraine, in its own right. Not as a representative of the West, and not as a representative of democracy. But because Ukraine is of such importance to Russia, that a break between the two is unthinkable for Putin. That was what Leonid Kravchuk, the Ukrainian president, realized already in 1991. He, and Ukrainian leaders after him, tried to protect their territory while at the same time reassuring Russia that relations could still be friendly. But Russia has never changed in a similar way.

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Russian Politics, Soviet Union, Ukrainian Politics.*



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I landed at Boryspol Airport outside Kyiv for the very first time in early May 2005. Half a year before, in November 2004, Ukraine had been on the front pages of every newspaper in the West, when the Orange Revolution shook the country and ended the infamous Kuchma regime. Hundreds of thousands poured out into the streets with orange and blue flags, demanding a political leadership that respected its people, provided them with the means for a good life, and not only enriched itself and its allies. A new government, with the Orange Revolution key figures Yulia Tymoshenko as prime minister and Viktor Yushchenko as president, rose to power, promising to take the country out of the deadlock that the intimate interweaving of politics and economics had put it in. I spoke to young women and men who were eager to show that they knew some English and laughingly wanted to try it out, who welcomed foreigners arriving for the upcoming Eurovision that were to take place in the Ukrainian capital the same month. The warm spring air brimmed with fragile expectations, of a better political and economic elite, and a better life. The hope of finally being on the road to normalcy. The former president Leonid Kuchma had derailed Ukrainian developments in the mid-1990s by opening up for heavy influence and particular rules of the game applying to the Donetsk clans that supported him in the elections. A few years later, the rise of the Ukrainian oligarchs was a fact that proved to be very hard to reverse.¹ But then, the Orange Revolution, for some months, or a year or so, seemed to change it all.

Imperial or Colonial

When Ukraine became independent in 1991, its first elected president was Leonid Kravchuk. Kravchuk was an experienced top Communist, with huge networks and a safe place in the Slavic community (even though he originated from western Ukraine). Together with Russia's Boris Yeltsin and Belarusian president Stanislav Shushkevich, he signed the Belovezha Accords, in December 1991, which marked the final dissolution of the Soviet Union. At the same time a new organization was founded, the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), where all former republics except the Baltic States immediately became members. But parallelly, and despite being among Slavic friends, Kravchuk was well aware that the Russian benevolence towards accepting Ukrainian aspirations for more substantial autonomy and independence was likely just a passing phase. The Baltic States knew that too and therefore started negotiations for NATO membership. What Kravchuk and his government in Ukraine did, and NATO was not an option at that time, was to try to strengthen the country's capacity to protect its territory; precisely that, which Russia has deliberately since 2014 challenged in Eastern Ukraine and now on a country-wide scale.

¹ Rosario Puglisi, "The Rise of the Ukrainian Oligarchs," *Democratization*, Volume 10, Issue 3 (2003): p. 99-123.

Why was that awareness, to safeguard against Russian ambitions, already present early on? Because Ukraine's perspective on the Soviet past was overall that of being treated as a colony, not as an imperial province, which has been the Russian viewpoint (also shared by the third Slavic country, Belarus). Soviet rule, according to this "imperial" perspective, had brought modernization and industrialization to the populations in the periphery, and lifted them from poverty, illiteracy, and pre-modern agriculturalism.

“Soviet rule, according to this “imperial” perspective, had brought modernization and industrialization to the populations in the periphery, and lifted them from poverty, illiteracy, and pre-modern agriculturalism.”

According to the constitution of 1977, the Soviet Union: “shall be a single union, a multinational state formed on the basis of the principle of socialist federalism as a result of free self-determination of nations and the voluntary association of equal Soviet Socialist Republics”. This goes back to the original constitution of 1923 that guaranteed national equality of the republics and – used in 1990 by the Lithuanians – the right to leave the Union. The Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic was thus just one of the fifteen republics that all possessed equal legal status, and all republics were defined as sovereign, with their own Constitutions and the right of free withdrawal from the Union. The actual level of this sovereignty, however, was quite questionable. Internationally, the Soviet Union had been a technically leading state in its progressive life model. The imperial lens envisioned relations between the Soviet center and periphery as having been harmonic, the leading Russia looking out for and making its periphery prosperous. However, competing with that is another, a colonial interpretation, that instead sees the Soviet past as one of suppression of nationality, including a privileged position for the Russian core.

In the Ukrainian colonial interpretation, which also was shared with the Baltic States and partly Georgia, but differed from that predominating in Belarus, Russia was thus regarded as the “master” republic with the overall ambition to enslave and use the others to grow stronger and more empowered itself. The Soviet past had, according to the “colonial” perspective, turned Ukraine into a poor and inert colony, a stagnating territory held down by the center and the co-opted local elite. Assessing the past affects the vision of what the contemporary is: for Russia, it has meant

holding on to a Soviet identity, for Ukraine to distance itself as strongly as possible – but preserving good enough relations with Russia.

Russia Rises from the Ashes

Perestroika and the eventual collapse of the Soviet Union in December of 1991 left Russia bereft of the centuries-long domination of the territories of the Baltics, the Slavic Belarus, South Caucasus - and Ukraine. This smaller Russia missed its periphery, its provinces. It could not cognitively acknowledge, that the provinces – at least some of them – have not missed Russia, that from their point of view, was interpreted within the frame of a colonial master. Whereas Russia under Boris Yeltsin during the early 1990s first embraced and even defended against Mikhail Gorbachev the nationalism and sovereignty of the new and re-born states, this position started to change already a few years after 1991.

However, as Russia during the 1990s went through a process of de-centralization, governors in the provinces challenged Moscow in ways that did not allow for much clout to be shown towards former Soviet republics such as Ukraine. It sufficed with North Caucasian Chechnya, and the bloody revolts and war that became the outcome there. But when Vladimir Putin from St. Petersburg was selected by an inner circle to be the new president and then elected in 2000, the first priority on his agenda was to once again strengthen central power within Russia. Thereby, a new era started. Because when central authority had safely resurfaced within Russia, by de-throne the regional governors, intimidating the economically super-wealthy, limiting the ownership of media houses, and persecuting oppositional persons, somewhere around 2007, Vladimir Putin turned to what followed next. Re-claiming the status of the Russian federation, re-claiming its imperial identity. In that pursuit, Ukraine has been central.

Ukrainian Protests

Less than ten years after my first visit to Ukraine, I stumbled upon big sacks of sand lumped together in the streets leading up to Independence Square, the Maidan. Men and women in military clothing were practicing self-defense and trained to handle machine guns on the streets around Khreshchatyk Boulevard. The air was filled with determination, no longer the fragile expectations I remembered from the spring after the Orange Revolution, but something much more concrete. A willingness to struggle, and a firm awareness of the forces that were being challenged by that.

In February 2014, when I again arrived in Kyiv, the Euromaidan, or in other words the Revolution of Dignity, was at its peak after months of protests. In the meantime,

between 2005 and 2014, I had visited Ukraine many times. My colleagues and I had arranged workshops, seminars, and conferences in various universities on how to proceed with internationalization and integrating Ukrainian higher education into the European Bologna system. Now, some of those who had participated accompanied me to the almost surreal place that central Kyiv had become. The Ukrainian civilians had constructed an entire small city in the city center that once had been the site of the Orange Revolution. It revealed a Ukrainian citizenry no longer willing to stay silent and immobile. Medical clinics, car repairs, libraries, food stalls, and temporary living quarters filled with persons from all over the country were in place.

“Protesting was the primary political language that Ukrainians spoke; still, the political parties were mostly top-down hierarchies, and most organizations were professionally run rather than based on initiatives from the grassroots. Even so, there was not really a conflict over Russian and Ukrainian identity, or over language. The peaceful coexistence between both factions was however already in the past when I departed for Sweden the day before the rounds fell that killed over a hundred.”

From Galicia in western Ukraine to Donetsk in the East, people had arrived to support the protests against the Viktor Yanukovich presidency and the vertical power structures that sucked money and well-being out of the country. Protesting was the primary political language that Ukrainians spoke; still, the political parties were mostly top-down hierarchies, and most organizations were professionally run rather than based on initiatives from the grassroots. Even so, there was not really a conflict over Russian and Ukrainian identity, or over language. The peaceful coexistence between both factions was however already in the past when I departed for Sweden the day before the rounds fell that killed over a hundred. This is because Ukraine was about to undergo a period of profound upheaval during the next several months and the subsequent seven years.

Citizens – not Subjects

Where did the firmness of Ukrainians to protest a social contract that they believed had been broken come from? Here, I turn to a study on textbooks in history for high

schools and universities covering four countries, Russia, Belarus, Moldova, and Ukraine, that I, together with colleagues in the four countries, published in 2019. The study aimed to capture how perestroika, the collapse of the Soviet Union and independence were officially narrated and thus taught in schools and universities.

It also brought forward aspects of political culture that told us something about the above question.² We found profound differences, ranging from an elite and top-down perspective dominating in Russia, Belarus and Moldova, whereas in Ukraine, from the first textbooks appearing after 1991, there was a completely different emphasis on the initiative of the people, and of the citizens, who could empower themselves and make demands. The Ukrainian history textbooks distinctly stand out in how they ascribe agency and importance to ordinary people who are described as carrying perestroika – that started as a top-down initiative – forward, transforming it into a grass-root, “from below”, movement. The elites are thus far from the only actors on the historical scene. The people have ambitions, and are equipped with will, and a strong desire to gain freedom and independence. Because of their resources, changes have taken place.

Hence, civil society – also in terms of formal organizations and societies – was an integral and decisive part of perestroika and the dissolution of a destructive state. *Rukh*, the popular front in Ukraine that later split up in several political parties plays, for example, a significant role. Ukrainian textbooks provide an impression that historical developments are possible to affect, and that is coming together as people can make a difference; that is an implicit line of thought. Large grass-root mobilizations have also de facto taken place since, not once but twice, changing the political landscape; the Orange Revolution in 2004, and the Euromaidan in 2014 as briefly described above.³ This indicates a participatory creed in Ukraine, echoing in the historiography of contemporary times. The importance given to the growing possibilities of popular mobilization and organization reveals Ukraine’s pluralist outlook; evaluating openness as a crucial resource in society. In Ukraine, democratic politics seems to be embraced as a real possibility.

In contrast, the Russian, Belarusian, and Moldovan history textbooks – like those in Chechnya – provided a narrative on perestroika and the transformation into independent states as a combination of structural developments, and the political elite’s actions. They bear a resemblance to the popular concept in the USSR in

² Li Bennich-Björkman and Sergiy Kurbatov, (eds.) “When the Future Came,” in *The Collapse of the USSR and the Emergence of National Memory in Post-Soviet History Textbooks* (Stuttgart: Ibidem, 2019).

³ Paul D’Anieri, “Establishing Ukraine’s Fourth republic: Reform after Revolution,” in *Beyond the Euromaidan: Comparative Perspectives on Advancing Reform in Ukraine*, edited by Henry E. Hale and Robert W. Ortung (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016): p. 3-20, Kostyantyn Fedorenko, Olena Rybiy, and Andreas Umland, “The Ukrainian Party System before and after the 2013–2014 Euromaidan.” *Europe-Asia Studies* Vol. 68, No. 4 (2016): p. 609-630.

the late 1980s of perestroika as a “revolution from above”. Belarusian textbooks, demonstrate a depersonalized way of presenting historical processes, pointing out structures rather than an agency, which coincides with the element of historical determinism noted earlier. What happens becomes inevitable, not associated with anybody’s real will or ambition.

A War about – the Past

It is often claimed now that the war against Ukraine is a war waged by Russia against the west. Partly, that is what it has become, since western powers and NATO have proved to be surprisingly united in standing by Ukraine despite oil and gas shortages, and economic costs have grown to be considerable. But, to regard the war as not about Ukraine itself but “the west” is, and I seldom use that word, overall, both Eurocentric and self-absorbed.

It is likewise being claimed that it is a war between autocracy and democracy. Partly, since the patrimonial model of politics, as political scientist Henry Hale (2014)⁴ has labeled it, that is the Eurasian way of conducting also democratic politics, is slowly withering away in Ukraine. Together with a growingly empowered and confident civil society, that certainly threatens Vladimir Putin and the Russian leaders, who want to deal and negotiate with persons and vertical structures that they could easily read and recognize. But to interpret the war as a war fought about regime models and principles is to make the mistake of reading too much vision and ideology into the Russian position.

The ongoing war is a war that is fought over Ukraine’s continuous road since 1991 of ceasing to be a Russian subject, and Russia’s firm stand to never accept that. It is thereby a war of decolonization, where Russia’s view of itself as a beneficial imperialist power during the Soviet decades meets Ukraine’s which is that of – as I discussed above - a colonial master that used force and violence to instill loyalty. In Yegor Ligachev’s memoirs, Ligachev was one of the top men in the Kremlin during *perestroika* and started as a supporter of Gorbachev but ended up a fierce adversary – the developments during the 1988 and 1989 perestroika in rebellious Lithuania is touched upon. Interestingly, since Ligachev is a reflecting person, there is no understanding in his mind that Lithuania could resent being in the Soviet Union. Such a position is solely the making of a small number of “terrorists” and “bourgeois nationalists”. In his view overall perception in Lithuania is that of rational gratitude, valuing the progress made during the Soviet decades.⁵

⁴ Henry Hale, *Patronal Politics. Eurasian Regime Dynamics in Comparative Perspective* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2014).

⁵ Yegor Ligachev, *Inside Gorbachev’s Kremlin: Memoir of Yegor Ligachev* (New York and London: Routledge, 1991).

Industrialization, urbanization, and a drastically increased level of education are what the Russian leadership sees when they look back on the Soviet era. Moreover, they attribute these achievements to the Soviet Union. Thus, the “provinces, or the “colonies”, should naturally be grateful. The lack of gratitude that Russia reads into Ukraine’s unwillingness to today accept the Russian lead, is, therefore also part of the war. It makes the Russian leaders, who clearly identify as representatives of a great nation and a higher culture, simply furious.

Then there is punishment. Ukraine must be punished for her lack of loyalty, for her lack of respect, for not being close anymore. This eternal logic of honor dominates many patriarchal societies, including Russia, often on an individual level, but here taken to the international one. Through such punishment, aside from putting the country in a constant condition of suffering, Ukraine is becoming “damaged goods”, not attractive to anyone else – regardless if they are investors, entrepreneurs, George Soros, or young people from the West.

Resisting the Image of Damaged Goods and Victimhood

I miss Ukraine. I often visualize how Kyiv’s glimmering lights by the Dnipro looked when I arrived by car into the huge city. The calm streets of the bohemian quarters of Podil that over the years for every visit became more and more creative, and the hills surrounding the city of Lviv. The war-zone pictures that now flood the newspapers and television hide what Ukraine also is. Because what they result in, in all its humanitarian credo to show the ugly face of war to arouse sympathy and support, is, despite the intentions a de-humanization of the universe that once was Ukraine. Where good, evil and everything in between is part of everyday life, courage and cowardness, corruption, and civil society initiatives exist side by side, in a complex context, not one-dimensional as the war turns it into. Ukraine, and the Ukrainian people, are certainly victims today, but they are so much more than that. Funny, creative, machos, hipsters, pundits, and idealists.

That is also what Russia’s war does, is what I am thinking when I try to force my own thoughts beyond the pictures of shelled houses, destroyed roads, and people hiding in the Kyiv subway. Russia’s war wipes away the uniqueness of Ukraine and what it had achieved since its independence in 1991, and before that in the 20th century, and in the 19th. Instead appears a “Ukraine at War”, which could be anywhere. It could be Lebanon, Bosnia, and Hercegovina, Somalia, Syria, Afghanistan, or the Middle East. Russia is trying, through its bombs, attacks, and brutality, to erase the memory of independent Ukraine. Therefore, it is also a war effort to remember how Ukraine in peace looked like and how it smelled, tasted, and felt. And to never forget that this

is a war against Ukraine, in its own right. Not as a representative of the West, and not as representative for democracy. But because Ukraine is of such importance to Russia, that a break between the two is unthinkable for Putin. That was what Leonid Kravchuk, the Ukrainian president, realized already in 1991. He, and Ukrainian leaders after him, tried to protect their territory while at the same time reassuring Russia that relations could still be friendly. But Russia has never changed.

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THE WEST VERSUS THE REST: THE RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE AND THE CRISIS OF THE “POST-WESTERN” ORDER

The Russian invasion of Ukraine intensified the defining conflict of the new age, the conflict between democratic and authoritarian capitalism. The unified Western response to the war highlighted the revitalization of the democratic club of Western states and their allies (G7 plus). Another critical implication of the War has been that a clear divide has emerged between “the West” and “the Rest” in their reactions to the War. The Russian War on Ukraine signals the beginnings of a new phase of the post-Western world, where territorial conquests could be considered the new normal, paving the way for further military confrontations in a conflict-ridden World.

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*Keywords: Authoritarian Capitalism, Democratic Capitalism,
Global South, Human Security, Post-Western Order*



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Introduction

The Russian invasion of Ukraine marked a significant point of rupture and the beginning of a new era with dramatic consequences. The long-term consequences of the War on the international system might be as dramatic as other early 21st century crises such as the 9/11 terrorist attacks or the global financial crisis of 2008-2009. The post-Western or post-liberal order was already in the making, with the rise of China as a potential hegemonic power and the return of Russia as a global power, on the one hand, and the relative decline of the United States and the Western alliance, on the other. These processes were accelerated by the global financial crisis, which helped to shift the distribution of power away from the West to the rest, with key countries of the “global South” playing an increasingly important role in shaping the contours of the emerging post-western order.

One of the critical characteristics of the new post-liberal international order is the growing conflict between “democracies” represented predominantly by Western democracies and their few major Asian allies (Japan, South Korea, and Australia) versus “autocracies” led by Russia and China, in an increasingly unified system of global capitalism. The emerging international order looked distinctly different from the original Cold War context, where Russia and China, with their communist regimes, were effectively isolated from Western capitalism. Following the end of the Cold War, these two countries were increasingly integrated into the global capitalist system. However, their national models of capitalism differed sharply from Western styles of capitalism.

A vital issue that requires serious analysis is how the growing conflict between “democracies versus autocracies” is likely to be influenced by Russia’s War on Ukraine. Our central hypothesis is that whilst the primary fault line in the emerging international order (or disorder, considering the instability and fluidity of the emerging international system) is likely to be between the Western Alliance (G7 plus) and the Russia-China axis, in terms of economic, technological and military competition, the rest of the world or “global South” will also be a crucial element in shaping the outcome of this increasingly bipolar conflict. The article, in this context, attempts to probe into one of the striking and fascinating developments in the aftermath of the invasion. The war has created a strong impetus for Western unity. “The Rest,” in contrast, differed sharply in its reaction to the invasion, its approach to Vladimir Putin and Russia, and the whole tragedy of the War in Ukraine. Much of the global South or the non-Western world has adopted a relatively passive attitude towards the Russian invasion, in some ways similar to the Chinese reactions. How do we explain this paradox, and what are the likely consequences of this contrast involving the

West versus the Rest for the future of the post-Western international order?¹

Does the West Bear Any Responsibility?

The frequently made argument, popularized by the leading American IR scholar John Mearsheimer, that the overexpansion of NATO precipitated a natural reaction from Putin, who saw this as an imminent security threat. By enlarging NATO towards Eastern Europe and offering the promise of NATO membership to Ukraine, the West prepared the groundwork for the inevitable Russian counter-attack involving the invasion of Ukraine.

“Although the invasion of Ukraine was part of a process that started in 2007 or 2008, few people in early 2022 expected the extent of the military invasion that Putin had in mind regarding a full-scale war on Ukraine. The conventional wisdom was that Russia would continue to co-operate with China to strengthen the autocracy coalition in its neighborhood and around the world and use a variety of tactics in this process, but not extending much beyond limited military engagements.”

Indeed, this seems to be an argument that has gained currency in many parts of the world. Yet, the argument is open to serious challenge. First, it in no way justifies the military invasion intruding on the sovereign space of a sovereign state. Even if Ukraine were to become an EU and NATO member, no serious analyst would contemplate the possibility of a severe security risk to Russia emanating from this. It is hard to visualize NATO considering an attack on Russia unless the original move came from the Russian side. Indeed, the later pronouncements by Putin as

¹ For debates on the crisis of liberal international order, the end of American hegemony, and the broad contours of the emerging post-Western order, see Amitav Acharya, “After Liberal Hegemony: The Advent of a Multiplex World Order,” *Ethics and International Affairs*, Vol. 31, No. 3 (2017): p. 271-285; Amitav Acharya, *The End of the American Order*, Second Edition (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2018); Richard Haass, *A World in Disarray: American Foreign Policy and the Crisis of the Old Order* (London and New York: Penguin Press, 2017); Richard Haass, *The World: A Brief Introduction* (London and New York: Penguin Press, 2020); G. John Ikenberry, “The End of Liberal International Order?,” *International Affairs*, Vol. 94, No. 1 (2018): p. 7-23; Ziya Öniş and Mustafa Kutlay, “The New Age of Hybridity and Clash of Norms: China, BRICS, and Challenges of Global Governance in a Postliberal International Order,” *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, Vol. 45, No. 3 (2020): p. 123-142. On the crisis of liberal democracy as a key component of the emerging post-western order, see Ziya Öniş, “The Age of Anxiety: The Crisis of Liberal Democracy in a post-hegemonic Global Order,” *The International Spectator*, Vol. 52, No. 3 (2017): p. 18-35; and Mustafa Kutlay and Ziya Öniş, “Liberal Democracy on the Edge: Anxieties in a Shifting Global (Dis)order,” *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* (2022), Published Online on 25 May 2022. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1177/03043754221096511>

the war proceeded evidently pointed towards his real intentions, which were also pinpointed by the famous Munich Security Conference of 2007. His real intention was to reconstruct the Russian Empire and end the humiliations that Russia had experienced due to the collapse of the Soviet Union.² A combination of personal ambition (seeing himself as the disciple of Peter the Great) and revanchism was at the heart of his strategy. In Putin's mindset, Ukraine was not a truly sovereign state but an integral part of greater Russia. He had already indicated his intentions through invasions of Georgia and Crimea. His intentions to fragment and weaken the Western alliance were also aptly illustrated by election interference in the United States, support for far-right parties in Europe, and a campaign of assassinations using chemical weapons to name a few. Although the invasion of Ukraine was part of a process that started in 2007 or 2008, few people in early 2022 expected the extent of the military invasion that Putin had in mind regarding a full-scale war on Ukraine. The conventional wisdom was that Russia would continue to co-operate with China to strengthen the autocracy coalition in its neighborhood and around the world and use a variety of tactics in this process, but not extending much beyond limited military engagements.

Even if the "direct responsibility" argument is not convincing, there are several more subtle and indirect ways that the West might have contributed to or precipitated Russia's War on Ukraine. One obvious argument is that the Russian regime considered a reasonably well-functioning democracy right at its borders as a security threat, not a military but more in ontological terms. 70 percent of the electorate in Ukraine had elected Volodymyr Zelensky on the promise that he would push for the integration of his country into Western institutional and security structures to consolidate a fully-fledged democracy. This clearly posed an existentialist threat to authoritarian rule in Russia, which the regime could not tolerate. There were already signals that Putin would take similar actions in countries with similar indications of democratic opening. In Belarus, for example, massive protests from the ground against the long-standing authoritarian rule of Lukashenko were effectively crushed with Russian

² For a vivid account of the evolution of Putin's regime, both in terms of consolidation of power at home and turning against the West from about 2007, see Catherine Belton, *Putin's People: How the KGB Took Back Russia and then Took on the West* (Dublin: Harper Collins Publishers, 2020). Concerning the linkages between Russian domestic politics and foreign policy objectives, see Nigel Gould-Davies, "Russia's Sovereign Globalization: Rise, Fall and Future," Chatham House Paper (2016), Available at <http://policycommonsnet/artifacts/1423383/russias-sovereign-globalization/2037652/>. On the complex historical relationship between Russia and Ukraine, see Anna Reid, "Putin's War on History: The Thousand Year Struggle over Ukraine," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 101, No. 3 (2022): p. 54-63. On the importance of domestic politics and diverting attention from domestic problems in understanding Putin's decision to invade Ukraine, see Daniel Treisman, "Putin Unbound: How Repression at Home Presaged Belligerence Abroad," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 101, No. 3 (2022): p. 40-53. For an early assessment of the War and Putin's motives in the direction of creating a "multi-ordered World", see Trine Flockhart and Elena A. Korosteleva, "War in Ukraine and the Multi-Order World," *Contemporary Security Policy*, Published online on 24 June 2022. Available at <https://doi.org/10.1080/13523260.2022.209191>. On Putin's real intentions, see also BBC, "Vladimir Putin: Russia's Border Doesn't End Anywhere," *BBC News*, 24 November 2016. <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-europe-38099842>. Accessed on 21 July 2022.

military assistance. In Kazakhstan, large-scale demonstrations against the regime, primarily driven by economic grievances, were again put down with the help of the Russian military. Finally, the Russian presence in Syria since 2014 effectively saved the notoriously authoritarian and brutal Assad regime. In all three cases, the outcome could have been quite different and positive from a democratization perspective if Russia had not actively intervened.

“Energy shortages (given that Russia is the major supplier of oil and natural gas to Europe and many parts of the world) and food insecurity (given that both Russia and Ukraine are major producers and exporters of wheat) have emerged as serious problems. They will contribute to a global recession and rising inflation throughout the globe.”

In retrospect, the Western actors bear part of the responsibility for failing to estimate and react with sufficient pace and vigor to the process of aggression, which had been building up stage by stage for over fifteen years. The Western actors, the EU in particular, considered the earlier military aggressions in Georgia, Crimea, or Syria as being sufficiently distant and limited in scope not to pose a genuine security threat. Furthermore, the degree of economic and energy dependence built up with Russia (and with China) over the past few decades rendered extensive sanctions unattractive, given the perception of indirect and limited military threats. However, the invasion of Ukraine, in contrast to earlier episodes, was treated as a genuinely European War, that constituted a direct existentialist threat to the heart of Europe and the Western Alliance. From a longer-term historical perspective, the claim of irresponsibility could be extended to the early 1990s and the early years of the reform process involving Russia’s painful transition to capitalism. The West could perhaps have performed a more constructive role in integrating Russia effectively into Western economic and security structures (possibly involving partial affiliation with the EU and NATO). Yet, the 1990s and early 2000s were the peaks of the “unipolar moment.” The Western Alliance was at the peak of its self-confidence. It was naturally assumed that post-communist states like Russia and China could be safely integrated into the globalist capitalist economy in combination with the democratization of their political systems taking place on a more gradual basis.

Continuing with our theme of the West's indirect contribution, one can also draw attention to some of the significant attempts in recent years in key Western states to reform the underlying weaknesses of their domestic political economies. In the United States, Joe Biden replaced Donald Trump with an ambitious agenda for government spending to deal with problems of inequality, infrastructural development, and climate change. In Western Europe, similar patterns were evident. After several years of crises, the EU, and notably as a reaction to Covid-19, managed to put together a massive recovery fund to deal with problems of innovation and competitiveness, infrastructural development, and climate change. In Germany, the new coalition government, with Social Democrats as the dominant partner, also contemplated active energy, innovation, and environmental policies. The original Cold War had contributed to the rise of the Keynesian welfare state. The new Cold War, emanating from the challenge of China, Russia (and other major emerging powers), created the foundation of a unique style, "green Keynesianism," which seemed to offer a significant promise of revitalized Western capitalism by the end of 2021, which could also serve as a role model for many countries in the European periphery and the wider world.

Biden's "Alliance of Democracies" initiative was based on the notion that established democracies, the United States and key Western European countries, would set their own house in order as a precondition for serving as effective role models for neighboring states and the rest of the world. What Putin did by invading Ukraine was to cause a severe setback to this green Keynesian revival in the West, diverting their attention to geopolitics and security issues.

Here, it might be helpful to underline that the growing preoccupation by the United States with its domestic challenges left a vacuum, which authoritarian states like China and Russia were able to capitalize on by extending their respective spheres of influence. The hasty and premature withdrawal by Joe Biden from Afghanistan was a mistake. The EU has also been in a defensive mood in recent years, and the absence of enlargement on the policy agenda did not help the cause of democrats in many neighboring states ranging from the Western Balkans to Belarus and Türkiye. The fact that the vital Western actors were increasingly preoccupied with their domestic problems also signaled to Putin that this was the right time to advance, and the possibility of a significant counter-reaction would be remote (which ultimately proved to be a miscalculation on his part).

The Russian Invasion of Ukraine as a Critical Rupture: Identifying Losers and Winners

Perhaps looking at Russia’s War on Ukraine in cost-benefit terms may be entirely inappropriate, given the scale of the human tragedy and the atrocities involved. Indeed, this was no ordinary war. It was the most significant military conflict on European soil since the end of the Second World War. Nevertheless, it might be useful to distinguish between losers and winners for analytical purposes. The war has been in progress for several months.

The losers are relatively easy to identify, whereas there are no clear-cut “winners” except the producers and merchants of armaments and military equipment. Undoubtedly, the primary victims of the war have been the citizens of Ukraine. Thousands of people, both soldiers, and civilians, have been killed. Major towns have been devastated, and millions of people had to evacuate their homes and seek refuge in neighboring countries.

Ukrainians have shown fierce and unexpected resilience against attacks. However, it is highly likely that given the asymmetries of military capabilities (despite significant support from the U.S. and Western Alliance), this heroic resistance will ultimately fail to prevent the loss of a major chunk of Ukrainian territory to Russia. The second major victims of the war have been ordinary Russian citizens. Thousands of Russian soldiers have been killed in an unnecessary war. Many citizens who came out onto the streets and protested have been repressed and imprisoned. Thousands, especially highly educated citizens critical of the regime, were forced to fly out of the country. The regime moved further in the direction of totalitarianism, with the war eliminating even limited sources of opposition from the media or civil society. The third major losers are undoubtedly the citizens of the world.

Given the degree of interdependence built up in the capitalist world economy in the post-Cold War period, the war is already causing severe economic dislocations. Energy shortages (given that Russia is the major supplier of oil and natural gas to Europe and many parts of the world) and food insecurity (given that both Russia and Ukraine are major producers and exporters of wheat) have emerged as serious problems. They will contribute to a global recession and rising inflation throughout the globe. Developing countries in Africa and disadvantaged groups in middle and high-income countries throughout the world are likely to feel the impact as income inequality worsens further due to these massive shortages and insecurities. The costs are likely to be magnified over time as more and more resources are channeled to military expenditures leaving fewer resources for social assistance and humanitarian

aid. Significant efforts to deal with existentialist climate challenges will be pushed aside as states are increasingly trapped in geopolitical competition and try to deal with direct security threats. Global governance to deal with common challenges will inevitably suffer and the G-20 will become marginalized as the world moves into competing blocs of G7 plus and BRICS plus. Even more significantly, the War in Ukraine may signal the beginning of a new age, a “new age of conquest”, where military attacks and conquest may become a new normal as part of great power rivalry, which may no longer be confined to rivalries in trade, technology or clashes over normative positions.³ The second step in this direction, perhaps not immediately but over time, would be China’s annexation of Taiwan, which would be an even more significant source of conflict between the Western Alliance and the China-Russia axis, with serious negative repercussions for the rest of the world.

The War in Ukraine is not only a European war but a truly global war in its broader repercussions. There is no doubt that one of the critical consequences of the War has involved the reunification of the Transatlantic Alliance, which had experienced a certain degree of fragmentation in recent years due to a combination of Trump, Brexit, and the EU’s search for greater autonomy in economic and strategic terms. The War in Ukraine generated a robust and unified response in the West to the perception of an existentialist threat posed by the Russian invasion. The EU, in particular, has undergone a major paradigmatic shift by recognizing the growing importance of hard power and military capabilities. This recognition was rhetorical and involved significant increases in military expenditures by key member states like Germany. The West was firm in its opposition to the War and its support for Ukraine. Sanctions of unprecedented magnitude were implemented against Russia.

There was a concerted move to punish Russian oligarchs situated in the West with close ties to Putin’s regime by seizing their assets and restricting their economic activities. Although the Western Alliance refrained from direct participation in the war, justifiably so because of the fear of a full-scale nuclear war, it provided substantial military assistance to Ukraine, which clearly contributed to Ukraine’s extraordinary resilience against an enemy five times as strong in terms of its capabilities. NATO was given a new lease on life and regained its position as a central actor of the unified Western Alliance. The enlargement of NATO is on the agenda as Sweden and Finland look to the NATO umbrella for their future security. The War also contributed to the resurgence of G-7 (in the form of G7+ to include some of the key Asian democracies) as a bloc formed by major democracies. Yet another major move involved the promise of EU membership to Ukraine coupled

³ For a good discussion of this critical issue, see Tanisha Fazal, “The Return of Conquest? Why the Future of the Global Order Hinges on Ukraine,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 101, No. 3 (2022): p. 20-27.

with significant help for massive reconstruction in the post-war context.⁴

At the same time, however, the War in Ukraine created problems and anxieties for Western democracies. Energy shortages will constitute a serious problem considering the EU is heavily dependent on oil and gas imports. It will naturally try to diversify away from Russia, which can only be a long-term process. Yet, its negative consequences in terms of severe shortages and energy prices may be quite hard to tolerate, especially in democratic societies, posing major dilemmas for democratically elected governments in the process. If the war is prolonged, it is quite possible that support in the West for Ukraine may diminish, and pressures may mount to end the war at a relatively early stage. This may, in turn, lead to the acceptance of a “peace settlement,” which may well work in Russia’s favor. There are already debates in Western and primarily American circles that there might be limits to the degree of help to be provided to Ukraine, coupled with the argument that it is ultimately their own war and the point at which they will end the war will be their own decision.⁵ The momentum of the green Keynesian resurgence will undoubtedly suffer as Western states find themselves confronted with a mixture of slow growth, squeezed budgets, high inflation, and changed priorities, with security considerations gaining ascendancy over social assistance and the environment.⁶ There are already signs that states like Germany, which have great sensitivity to environmental issues, are ready to go back to coal and nuclear energy to circumvent their energy shortages.⁷

Could Russia and the Putin regime (as distinct from Russian citizens) be considered major losers of the War? At first sight, there are many indications to suggest that this is indeed the case. Putin seems to have miscalculated the extent of Ukrainian resistance and the degree of Western unity displayed in defiance of Russia and in support of Ukraine. As the War proceeded, the weaknesses of Russian conventional military forces also became increasingly visible. Putin predicated his actions on the twin assumptions that Ukraine would surrender over a short period of time and the Western reaction would be relatively muted, as was the case in earlier episodes in 2008 and 2014, and these two assumptions were clearly invalidated. The war will likely be a prolonged struggle, with significant human and material losses for

⁴ See Timothy Garton Ash, “A Larger EU with Ukraine in it would Stand up to Russia Better,” *The Guardian Weekly*, Vol. 206, No. 26 (2022): p. 45-46.

⁵ See Dan Lamothe and Karoun Demirjian, “As Ukraine War Bogs Down, US Assessments Face Scrutiny,” *The Washington Post*, 2 July 2022, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2022/07/02/ukraine-russia-us-assessments/>. Accessed on 21 July 2022.

⁶ See Anatol Lieven, “The War Ukraine will only Deepen the Climate Crisis,” *New Statesman* (2022), available at <https://www.newstatesman.com/ideas/2022/05/the-war-in-ukraine-will-only-deepen-the-climate-crisis>

⁷ See Kate Connolly, “Germany to Reactivate coal Plans as Russia Curbs Gas Flows,” *The Guardian*, 8 July 2022. <https://www.guardian.com/world/2022/jul/08/germany-reactivate-coal-power-plants-russia-curbs-gas-flow>. Accessed on 21 July 2022.

the Russians. Russia also faced massive sanctions, which clearly have and will continue to weaken the Russian economy. Russia has been effectively isolated from Western economies and financial markets, which constituted a big economic blow. To resume the war effort in the future would require a much larger conscription effort to mobilize armed forces, which have already started to create tensions and resistance. At a deeper level, significant setbacks could be identified concerning the international standing of Russia as a state and Putin as a leader with global reach and popularity worldwide. Many nationalist-populist leaders around the world, ranging from Bolsonaro to Orban, who looked towards Putin as a role model, could no longer openly identify themselves with Putin and endorse his actions.⁸ Arguably, the Russian strategy for re-establishing its global status could have been much better implemented without resorting to a full-scale war with Ukraine with its costly consequences for Russia itself.

Yet, The Russian economy has proved to be more resilient than originally anticipated. The resilience of the Russian economy was boosted by high energy prices, as many Western economies could not sever their ties with Russia in the short run, given the degree of their energy dependence. Putin's regime also proved to be far more resilient than expected in major Western capitals. The typical reaction in the West was that the depth of the unified Western response and the sanctions implemented, coupled with major sanctions on the Russian oligarchs would undermine the foundations of Russian authoritarianism. Through a process of intra-elite conflict, Putin's regime would collapse and pave the way for the opening up of the Russian political system. What happened instead was quite contrary to this benign scenario.⁹ Putin managed to extend his grip on the Russian state. The regime became even more totalitarian, using the opportunity to eliminate any remaining forms of dissent in the process.

The oligarchs have clearly experienced a major blow to their wealth and comfort zones in the West. However, this does not mean their huge fortunes have evaporated. Although it is hard to estimate the damage inflicted on the oligarchs themselves, it is fair to assume that large segments of their wealth remained intact through diversion to other locations. In any case, their fortunes are closely tied to the Russian state, which suggests their fortunes are likely to grow over time. By and large, there are no indications that Russian oligarchs have turned their back against Putin. Even more striking is the extent of popular support for Putin and the War in Ukraine,

⁸ On the rise of right-wing populism as a global phenomenon, see Ziya Öniş and Mustafa Kutlay, "The New Age of Hybridity and Clash of Norms: China, BRICS, and Challenges of Global Governance in a Postliberal International Order," *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political*, Vol. 45, No. 3 (2020): p. 123-142.

⁹ For a good analysis of the resilient nature of the Russian regime and the degree of consolidation of Putin's grip on power, which rendered regime change highly unlikely, see Tony Wood, "Matrix of War," *New Left Review*, No. 133-134, (2022). Available at <https://newleftreview.org/issues/ii133/articles/tony-wood-matrix-of-war>

which is publicized as a “special military operation.” Part of this is due to the highly centralized nature of media, which now has a monopoly on shaping public opinion and projecting the dominant narrative of the Russian state, which many people accept without criticism. At the same time, the solid nationalist and anti-Western sentiments held by large segments of the Russian public mean that Putin continues to enjoy significant political support, which the repressive policies of the Russian state cannot simply explain.

Perhaps China is close to being classified as a “winner” of the War on Ukraine. Although there are important reservations about handling the Covid-19 crisis, the Chinese economy was able to emerge from that crisis in a decisive fashion. The war in Ukraine strengthened the alliance between China and Russia and increased the asymmetry between the two superpowers in China’s direction. China continues to be heavily integrated into the global economy. The fortunes of Western economies tend to be heavily tied to the performance of the Chinese economy, despite recent trends in the direction of partial de-globalization and rising protectionist tendencies. This process had been fueled by a reaction to rising competition from China as well as the insecurities experienced during the Covid-19 crisis.

This does not mean that the Chinese leadership approved of the War. Sympathies have been expressed by the Chinese elites as well as sections of the public for the tragic plight of the Ukrainian people. What the Chinese leadership would probably have preferred would be to compete and weaken the Western alliance through economic and technological competition as well as providing support for like-minded regimes, without necessarily resorting to an active war effort. The weakening of the global economy and the growing segmentation of global governance will also hurt China’s efforts to establish itself as the new “responsible” hegemonic power, even though they continue to support Russia on international platforms.

A Divided World: The West Versus the Rest

One of the most striking developments, as the War unfolded, involved the sharp differences in the reactions of the Western or G-7 plus world and the rest of the world, or the global South. The Western Alliance appeared to be firm in its unequivocal opposition to Russia and its support for Ukraine. The verdict was clear. It was non-provoked aggression by Putin on a sovereign state, which had no justification whatsoever. It was a clear violation of international law, which had to be countered by all means at their disposal, military or otherwise. It was also seen as part of a broader struggle between autocratic versus democratic regimes, which had already started but seemed to reach a climax with the Russian invasion posing an

existentialist threat to the democratic world. Perhaps the only outlier in the Western camp was Victor Orbán's Hungary, which continued to support Russia behind the scenes and did not share the concerns of his Western allies, even as a full member of the EU. Hungary's position in this context is much closer to the position of the global South. Interestingly, the two major post-communist EU members, Hungary and Poland, had followed a parallel trajectory of democratic backsliding in recent years. Yet their responses to the War were quite different. Poland was vigorously in the camp of Western countries and pushed firmly in support of Ukraine. Indeed, Poland became the home of several millions of Ukrainian refugees, which seemed to make a sharp contrast with its previous closed-door approach to Syrian refugees.

The rest of the world, however, displayed a radically different reaction. Leaders worldwide and the public at large expressed their disapproval of war *per se* and expressed their sympathies for the Ukrainian people. Nonetheless, the argument that was generally accepted in the rest of the world was that the West itself had major responsibility for precipitating the War through the unnecessary expansionism of NATO to the east and by promising to accept a country like Ukraine, right on the borders of a rival great power Russia, as a full member. Hence, it was ironic that Mearsheimer's argument, based on an earlier essay, attributing the responsibility of the War to the West and NATO appeared to have enjoyed wide currency in the Rest.¹⁰ It is also quite striking that Lula, the popular left presidential figure in the 2000s and the presidential candidate with a strong possibility of victory in the upcoming Brazilian elections, attributed only part of the blame to Putin and claimed that Zelensky (and implicitly the West) was also responsible for the Russian invasion.¹¹

What are the major reasons underlying the widely differing reactions from the Rest? The initial hypothesis is that the Rest seems to have regarded the War as a European War rather than their own war, in the same way perhaps that the Europeans did not consider the Syrian Civil War as their own war. One needs to remember that the Syrian War, still ongoing, was as dramatic as the War in Ukraine in terms of its tragic humanitarian consequences. However, the Western response was largely muted and driven by self-interest. The Syrian crisis started to be a center of reaction only after 2016 when a refugee crisis started to cause serious problems and populist backlashes leading to divisions between member states and fragmentation of the EU. The asymmetrical treatment of refugees coming from different destinations is also attracting attention in the Rest. The EU member states have been much more welcoming to Ukrainian citizens (perhaps because of their closer white-Christian

¹⁰ See John, J. Mearsheimer, "Why the Ukraine Crisis is the West's Fault? The Liberal Delusions that Provoked Putin," *Foreign Affairs*, No. 94 (2014): p. 77.

¹¹ Guardian Staff and Agencies, "Brazil's ex-President Lula Claims Zelensky Equally to Blame for War," (4 May 2022). Available at <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/04/brazil-lula-zelenskij-blame-war>

identity), whilst they have been much less receptive (perhaps with the notable exception of Germany) to the influx of Syrian and Mediterranean refugees (because they did not fit into their perception of European identity).

The second hypothesis is that the growth of anti-Western sentiments in much of the world is associated with the emerging post-western order. The roots of anti-Westernism have multiple causes. Many countries of the global South are reacting to colonial legacies as well as to the disastrous military campaigns ranging from Vietnam to Afghanistan and Iraq, which have severely undermined American popularity in much of the world. In that context, it is perhaps rather sad that a well-intentioned attempt by President Biden to forge an Alliance of Democracy initiative against autocratic regimes seems to have generated very little enthusiasm in much of the global South. Given the intensity of anti-American or anti-Western sentiments, the natural tendency in the global South is to view the Russian invasion as a natural outcome of great power competition, and not different from the earlier examples of American military interventionism in the Cold War and the immediate post-Cold War era.

A third related hypothesis is that democracy has been seriously declining in much of the Rest. Even some of the established democracies like Brazil and India have been experiencing major democratic backsliding under authoritarian populist leaders like Bolsonaro and Modi. Many of those regimes are closer in value terms to the authoritarian camp and derive part of their popularity from the promotion of strong anti-Western sentiments.¹² For many countries of the global South, which involve different shades of illiberalism and authoritarianism, the natural strategy seems to maintain a neutral stance on the conflict.

Last but not least, is the fourth hypothesis; namely, there are strong economic benefits to be derived from adopting balanced, neutral positions concerning both blocks. Many of the regimes in the Rest approach the Russian invasion pragmatically and try to generate economic benefits from a purely interest-driven, transactional perspective. None of these countries had any inclination to impose sanctions on Russia. As Western sanctions are implemented on Russia, there is a clear realization that Russia will shift its trade and investment to non-Western countries, which will clearly benefit the economies of such countries at the expense of the Western Alliance. In the current international context, India may be singled out as the outstanding example of this balancing strategy as the country tries to benefit from its close interactions with the U.S., on the one hand, and its equally

¹² For a perceptive analysis of Russia and China serve as gravity centers for authoritarian rule in other parts of the World, see Marianne Kneuer and Thomas Dommelhuber, “Gravity Centres of Authoritarian Rule: A Conceptual Approach,” *Democratization*, Vol. 23, No. 5 (2016): p. 775-796.

strong economic and diplomatic relationship with China and Russia, on the other, using this balancing strategy as a means of countering the rising hegemonic power of China at the same time.

China and Russia: The Growing Asymmetry in a Robust Partnership

Admittedly, the Russian invasion of Ukraine created a mini-crisis in the Russia-China partnership, as Chinese leadership did not directly endorse the decision to invade Ukraine. It is important to remember that Putin had visited China before the start of the Winter Olympics in February 2022 and there was a joint declaration by Putin and Xi Jinping concerning the common Russian and Chinese visions regarding the future of the world order. Whilst China did not actively support Russia; it did not condemn it either (which effectively meant implicit support). The Ukraine crisis showed the robust nature of the partnership. It is also interesting that there was no condemnation of Russia in the recent BRICS Summit (where the major BRICS led by China appeared to display a unified front). In contrast, there were strong reactions to Russia in the ensuing G-20 meeting. What is critical in the present context is the position of China in the broader global conflict surrounding the Russian invasion of Ukraine. In the original context, the kind of sanctions implemented by the West could probably have ruined the Russian economy. In the present global setting, where China and major emerging powers are key players, sanctions are likely to be less effective. They can be diverted by changing the direction of trade, investment and energy linkages. If China had opposed the war, Russia would be isolated. China's implicit endorsement of Russian actions also sends dangerous signals of new military conflicts, in line with the new era where conquests by great powers become a normal state of affairs once again as in the 19th and early 20th centuries. The possibility of annexation of Taiwan may follow in the footsteps of the Russian invasion of Ukraine; but, given the longer-term strategic vision of Chinese leadership, this may not happen in the immediate future.¹³ What is also striking is that the War in Ukraine not only bolstered the strategic partnership between Russia and China but has also rendered the relationship even more asymmetric than before. With a weakened economy in the face of sanctions, the pendulum will swing further in China's direction. Russia is likely to become even more dependent on China than before, which is clearly not in line with Putin's vision of a returning great power.

An essential question in this context is whether the Western alliance can shift the balance in favor of the "Alliance of Democracies" in this rapidly changing and hostile global context. The West has formidable resources. However, it faces significant

¹³ See the comment of the CIA Chief in Guardian, "Ukraine War Forcing China to Rethink 'How and When' It May Taiwan, CIA Chief Says," *The Guardian*, 21 July 2022. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jul/21/ukraine-war-forcing-china-to-rethink-how-and-when-it-may-inavade-taiwan-cia-chief-says>

trade-offs as it tries to deal with internal structural problems and generate more funds for military expenditures. It will need to generate massive funds for foreign aid to pull countries closer to its orbit, to match the scale of economic benefits offered by China’s Belt and Road Initiative. There are talks of a new Marshall Plan (G7 Infrastructure Plan) involving the financing of major infrastructural projects. It will be interesting to see the extent to which this plan will be implemented. The West also needs to fulfill its promises and increase its assistance for environmental protectionism and climate change-related policies to the developing world. One also needs to remember that the West did not have a strong record of assisting poorer countries by sharing the benefits of its vaccines during the recent Covid- 19 crisis. In concrete terms, however, the most direct route to enlarge the democratic coalition involves the path for EU enlargement in Europe’s immediate neighborhood. The decision to offer EU membership to Ukraine and Moldova constitutes an important step in this direction. The new wave of enlargement could have an even more substantial impact if the program becomes even more ambitious and includes Western Balkan countries, Georgia and Türkiye in the agenda. The pace of enlargement is also important. The rhetoric of enlargement will not suffice if it is associated with prolonged negotiations and the absence of credible incentives.

Türkiye Between the West Versus the Rest

Türkiye constitutes an interesting case in the broader discussion of the West versus the Rest divide vis-a-vis the War in Ukraine. Türkiye has traditionally been a member of the Western Alliance as a member of NATO, an associate member, and more recently a candidate country of the EU. Türkiye’s membership of the Customs Union with the EU signaled a deep form of integration yet falling short of full membership. There have always been tensions in Türkiye’s relationship with the Western Alliance. Yet in the later phase of the Justice and Development Party, during the 2010s, Turkish foreign policy started to shift significantly away from the Western Alliance as a new partnership with key non-Western powers, like Russia and China started to be increasingly more important.¹⁴

With President Erdogan playing an increasingly dominant role in foreign policy, Türkiye started to situate itself as a key member of the global South. Foreign policy was driven by the logic of “strategic autonomy,” which aimed to balance its relations

¹⁴ For assessments of Türkiye’s changing foreign policy over the course of the past decade, Mustafa Kutlay and Ziya Öniş, “Turkish Foreign Policy in a Post-Western Order: Strategic Autonomy versus New Forms of Dependence,” *International Affairs*, Vol. 97, No. 4 (2021): p. 1085-1104; Mustafa Kutlay and Ziya Öniş, “Understanding Oscillations in Turkish Foreign Policy: Pathways to Unusual Middle Power Activism,” *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 42, No. 12 (2021): p. 3051-3069. For a balanced assessment of Türkiye’s domestic politics and foreign policy orientation and the decline in its relations with the West, see Dimitar Bechev, *Turkey under Erdoğan* (New Haven Conn: Yale University Press, 2022).

with the West with its new Eastern orientation. Strong relationships were forged with Russia during the period, facilitated by the personal affinity of two key leaders, Erdogan and Putin. Although there were crises and tensions in the Turkish-Russian relationship (e.g., Türkiye and Russia have been on different sides in the Syrian conflict, with Russia supporting the Assad regime and Türkiye taking a strongly anti-Assad position), the relationship could still be effectively managed.¹⁵ What is paradoxical from a comparative perspective is that Türkiye's intention has been not to leave its institutional links to the Western Alliance, notably its membership of NATO and the CU with the EU. Nevertheless, in normative terms, Türkiye has increasingly diverged from the EU. As a NATO member, Türkiye also displayed a unique outlier position by buying S-400 missiles from Russia, creating significant tensions and resentments within the Western Alliance.

The underlying reasons for the dramatic shift in Turkish foreign policy over the past decade would take us beyond the scope of the paper. There were several factors at work. Humiliations of the membership process contributed to a serious nationalist backlash. There were also disappointments with Western partners for paying insufficient attention to Türkiye's security concerns with respect to the Kurdish conflict, which had been magnified by the onset of the Syrian Civil War. The arguably dramatic shift of Türkiye's politics in a more struggling direction, and a highly centralized and personalistic presidential system also meant that Türkiye came into conflict with the key Western powers over critical issues, including the implementation of several democratic norms and values.¹⁶ The failed coup attempt of July 2016 aggravated the anti-Western sentiments, which already existed and accelerated the path to a fully-fledged presidential system.¹⁷ The leadership has effectively used strong anti-Western sentiments, which were not confined to religious conservatives, but were equally shared by large segments of Turkish society. Indeed, a highly nationalistic and assertive foreign policy based on strong anti-Western sentiments brought substantial populist dividends in terms of domestic political support. In spite of the pro-active use of anti-Western rhetoric, the administration, nevertheless, was careful in maintaining its commitment to Western Alliance in transactional terms. The fact that Türkiye is dependent economically on the West and has been in the process of deepening economic crisis over the past few years is

¹⁵ For a detailed assessment of growing ties between Türkiye and Russia over the course of the past decade, see Ajdin Didic and Hasan Kösebalaban, "Turkey's Rapprochement with Russia: Assertive Bandwagoning," *The International Spectator*, Vol. 54, No. 3 (2019): p. 123-138.

¹⁶ On the dramatic shifts on Türkiye's domestic front involving the transition to a highly centralized and personalistic presidential regime, see Berk Esen and Şebnem Gümüşçü, "Rising Competitive Authoritarianism in Turkey," *Third World Quarterly*, Vol. 37, No. 9 (2016): p. 1581-1606; Yunus Sözen, "Competition in a Populist Authoritarian Regime: The June 2018 Dual Elections in Turkey," *South European Society and Politics*, Vol. 24, No.3 (2019): p. 287-315.

¹⁷ On the strong anti-Western sentiments promoted by the government in Türkiye, which, in some ways is rather like what Putin has been doing in Russia, see Alper Kaliber and Esra Kaliber, "From De-Europeanization to anti-Western Populism: Turkish Foreign Policy in Flux," *The International Spectator*, Vol. 54, No. 4 (2019): p. 1-16.

a key driving force in this process.

Given the context we outlined, The Russian invasion of Ukraine left Erdogan and the AKP elites in an awkward situation. Whilst they opposed the war, in principle and sympathized with the tragedy suffered by Ukraine, they had no intention of cutting down on strong relations established with Putin's Russia over the years. In many respects, Türkiye's position on the War was in line with the Rest. The broad perspective shared by large segments of the Turkish public, on the right and left of the political spectrum, was that it was not Putin but NATO and Western Alliance that provoked the War at first. At the state level, Türkiye endorsed the UN Resolution against Ukraine, but abstained from voting on Russia's suspension from the Council of Europe. There was certainly no intention of implementing Western-style sanctions, which would have been suicidal in any case given the degree of economic dependence, particularly in the realm of energy. Türkiye's position diverged from many countries of the Global South who decided to keep themselves distant from the conflict. Türkiye tried to position itself as a key mediating power, capitalizing on the strong relations it had managed both with Russia and Ukraine over the years. Through this mediation process, Türkiye was able to strengthen its position, where it was already in a strong place in terms of the size of its army and the strength of its military capabilities. In fact, Turkish drones sold to Ukraine were used in the early part of the conflict and proved to be quite effective. This helped to restore a certain degree of goodwill for Türkiye among the NATO partners. Türkiye organized meetings to bring the representatives of Russia and Ukraine for negotiations. Whilst these negotiations did not fundamentally alter the course of the war, they were nevertheless important for other reasons. On balance, this active mediation effort appeared to work well and was effectively used as a means of expanding political support for Erdogan and the AKP and helped to deviate attention from an ongoing domestic crisis, whilst at the same time, reinforcing and extending its role in the context of NATO. These efforts helped to expand the visibility and enhance the importance of Türkiye as a critical actor in the international arena. The Grain Deal, which was signed on 22 July in Istanbul, was one of the profound examples of how Türkiye has been utilizing the connections it has with both Ukraine and Russia. In the face of a severe food crisis, especially for the developing countries, facilitating grain exports from Ukraine and Russia was a crucial success of Turkish foreign policy. The establishment of the grain corridor through Turkish and UN initiatives helped to bolster the standing of Erdogan both internationally and in the domestic context.¹⁸ At the same time, Türkiye's opposition to enlargement and the inclusion

¹⁸ The statement of Mykhailo Podolyak in Twitter who is one of the advisors of the President Zelenskyy can be used as an example to demonstrate the Turkish role in this deal explicitly where he said “Ukraine does not sign any documents with Russia. We sign an agreement with Türkiye and the UN and undertake obligations to them. Russia signs a mirror agreement with Türkiye and the UN” (Mykhailo Podolyak, 2022), hence Türkiye is the crucial element that made this deal possible. According to the Grain Deal itself, Türkiye is regarded as one of the parties along with Ukraine, Russia and the UN that is responsible for establishing monitoring centers for shipments and ensure their safety (Ragıp Soylu, 2022) which elevates Türkiye's position not just a mediator between parties but one of the guarantors as well.

of Sweden and Finland (although a consensus was reached, and the Turkish veto was subsequently withdrawn) also indicated that Türkiye was not on the same page with the Western alliance and was an outlier in terms of its basic orientation and values in the NATO context.

How long can Türkiye maintain this fine balancing act, which rests on awkward foundations? Türkiye has been trying to combine a contradictory position. This involves a commitment to NATO where the principal “other” is Russia (and in broader global terms, Russia and China). At the same time, it involves an attempt to play the role of an autonomous, mediating actor, which involves maintaining strong relations with Russia behind the scenes whilst refraining from active support for Putin and the Russian War. There is no doubt that from Putin’s perspective, Türkiye’s “neutral” position is interpreted as a sign that Türkiye is in the Russian camp. Türkiye may gain significantly from this “neutral” position, as Russia increasingly looks for new avenues for diverting Western sanctions. There are already indications that there is a strong inclination on the part of the Russian state to expand economic relations with Türkiye. Growing Russian presence in Türkiye may, in turn, precipitate further tensions with the Western Alliance, which may push for the implementation of sanctions, which Türkiye will naturally resist.

The brief excursion into the Turkish experience in the context of Russia’s War in Ukraine is striking and important for the following reason. It shows how a country like Türkiye, which was firmly embedded in the Western camp in previous decades, has moved in the direction of the Rest in recent years in the emerging Post-Western order. Moreover, Türkiye’s position during the conflict shows that it will be difficult to reverse this Eastern orientation, even though Türkiye may remain part of key Western institutions and maintain its relations with the West in pragmatic, transactional terms. An exit strategy would not be a rational option for both sides. NATO is likely to tolerate deviant behavior since the cost of losing Türkiye would be too high. For Türkiye, weakening its economic and security ties to the West would be an extremely costly option. Bringing Türkiye back to the Western camp would probably require some dramatic changes, which would involve a combination of domestic political change in Türkiye leading to the reversal of changing dynamics in domestic politics and a credible signal of EU membership. In that sense, the role of the EU could be critical in terms of including Türkiye in the next wave of enlargement, starting with the membership of Ukraine. In the absence of such dramatic changes, the combination of the already existing challenges due to the changing domestic dynamics, with a neutral foreign policy abroad will continue and is likely to bring Türkiye closer to the Russia-China axis in the process.

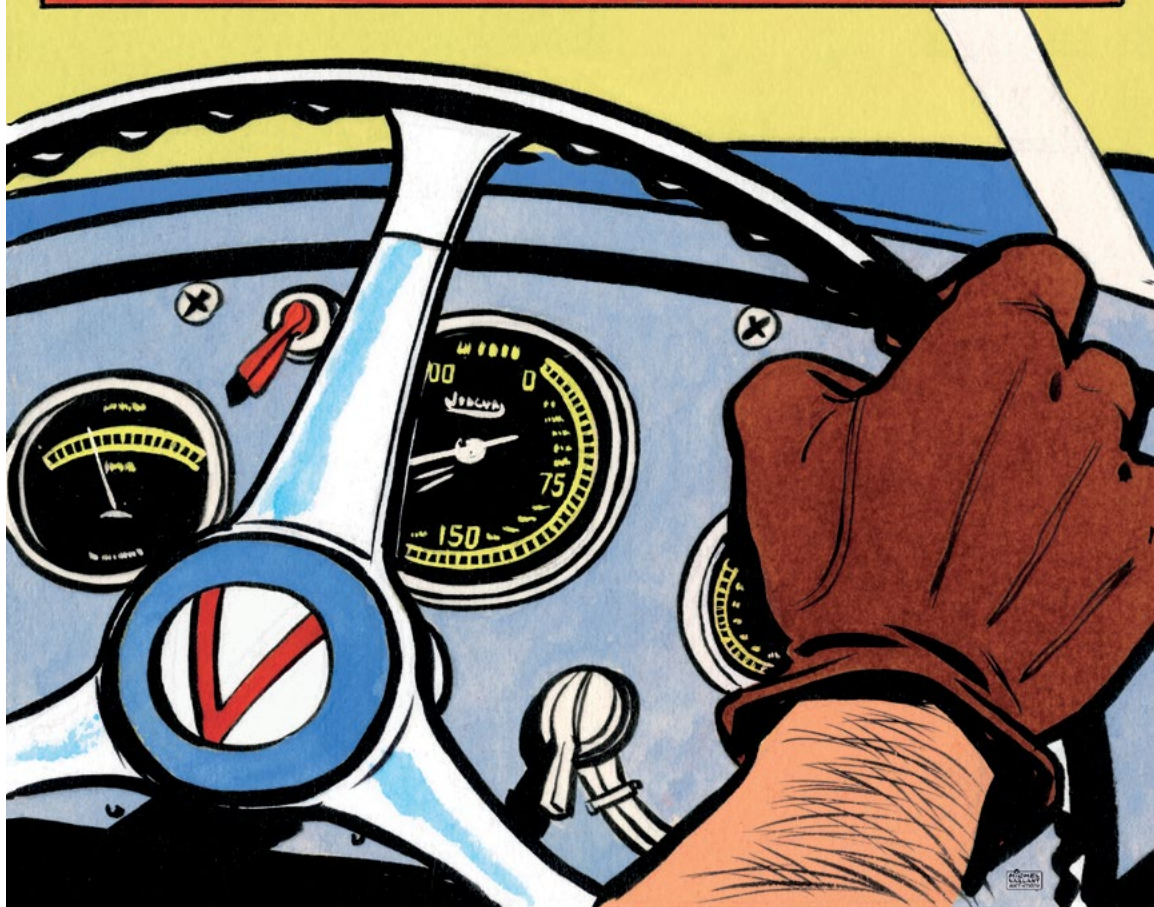
Conclusions: Towards a Synthesis

The Russian invasion of Ukraine intensified the defining conflict of the new age, the conflict between democratic and authoritarian forms of capitalism. From a global, systemic perspective the war had some important repercussions. The unified Western response to the crisis highlighted the revitalization of the democratic club of Western states and their principal allies. G7 (plus) and NATO re-emerged as significant actors and the group of democratic states displayed a common resolve to protect and promote democratic values worldwide. The active support for Ukraine was a clear reflection of this broader objective. At the same time, the War also showed the limits of the West's ability to revive the post-war liberal international order. The West will continue to be a dominant force in the post-Western world, but its normative position is likely to apply to a certain subset of the system. Another important repercussion of the War, which is still an ongoing process, has been to bolster the already strong partnership between Russia and China, with the balance in the relationship shifting significantly in China's favor. Another critical implication of the War has been that a clear divide emerged between the West and the Rest regarding their reactions to the War. Whilst Putin may have lost some of his previous popularity, the predominant reaction in the Rest differed dramatically from the natural reaction in the West, which held Putin responsible for unprovoked aggression. The dominant perspective in the Rest was that the West was responsible, and the excessive enlargement of NATO towards the East caused a security threat and a major reaction from a rival global power in an age of intense geopolitical competition.

The contours of the emerging world order point towards a three-tier structure (a) a bipolar world involving competition between the democratic capitalist (G7 plus) and (b) the authoritarian capitalist bloc (the Russia-China axis), (c) a large part of the world, the rest of the global South falling in between these two competing blocs and trying to manage relations with both sides in their quest to achieve strategic autonomy. The future of the democratic project will very much depend on the domestic politics of countries located in this third, in-between category. The task of Western powers to extend the liberal project to the Rest will be difficult given that many of the regimes in the Rest are illiberal-semi-authoritarian or even fully consolidated authoritarian states. Furthermore, strong feelings of nationalism and anti-Western sentiments in such countries suggest that they will try to keep their distance from the Western bloc and maintain strong relations with the Russia-China axis. At the same time, unlike Russia and China where totalitarian regimes are firmly established and unlikely to fade away in the foreseeable future, the regimes in the global South are more fluid. They may evolve in a more democratic direction over time.

Finally, the Russian war on Ukraine aptly illustrates the importance of democracy for human security. It is authoritarian states that face legitimacy problems and typically resort to military aggression. We contend that the democratic peace theory continues to be highly relevant. Many of the grievances against the West may be valid. At the same time, a world dominated by different shades of authoritarianism, with states acting solely in terms of their narrow self-interest is unlikely to bring peace and stability and generate the will to deal with significant global challenges of our age, notably in the realms of inequality and environmental protection. Ending on a frightening note, the War in Ukraine may signal the beginning of a new phase of the post-western world, where territorial conquests could once again be considered the new normal, paving the way for further military confrontations in a conflict-ridden world, with enormous human costs on a global scale.

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RUSSIA, UKRAINE, AND LASTING PEACE IN EUROPE

Among the many competing narratives that drive the war in Ukraine, the healing of the Ukrainian people themselves is often overlooked. That is because current Western policy overlooks the Other Ukraine, whose disagreement with the policies of the Ukrainian government since 2014 led up to this conflict. The Western response to Russia's invasion has been tailored to punishing Russia, but not necessarily to healing the domestic tension within Ukraine. This article suggests that only a reconciliation within Ukraine can bring lasting social harmony to Ukraine and peace to Europe as a whole.

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Russian Invasion of Ukraine, Ukrainian Politics.*



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Competing Narratives are Driving the Current Conflict in Ukraine

The official Ukrainian narrative about the war goes more or less like this: In an effort to end Ukraine's existence as a state, Russia launched an unprovoked attack on Ukraine. Testing the waters, before that, Russia annexed Crimea and invaded Eastern Ukraine. Thus, the sole reason for today's conflict is Moscow's military intervention, which is part of a larger effort by Russian President Vladimir Putin to reconstitute the USSR.

The official Russian narrative, by contrast, focuses on the events that led up to Russia's military invasion. It goes more or less like this: By disbanding the Warsaw Pact, post-communist Russia thought it had laid the foundation for a mutual security arrangement with NATO based on the principle that the latter would not expand eastward.¹ Instead, however, the West reneged on this commitment, and began to build up its military infrastructure in its newly acquired territories. Russia also repeatedly inquired about Russian NATO membership (no less than four times), but was consistently rebuffed.² Subsequent efforts by some Western governments to have Ukraine join NATO, only exacerbated Russia's sense of insecurity.

There is, however, a third narrative about the current war. It focuses not on the external violence, but on the internal violence that culminated, in the seizure of the Ukrainian Parliament by antigovernment militants. Fearing a repeat of the 2004 Maidan, which they believed had been used to steal the 2004 elections, two regions, Crimea and Donbass, demanded that the political agreement signed on 21 February 2014 be honored. When this did not occur, rebels in these two regions appealed to Russia for protection. Russia responded by annexing Crimea, but urged Donbass to return to Ukraine, and proposed the Minsk Accords as a roadmap for its re-integration.³

Over the next eight years, Russia sought a political compromise that would end the rebellion. The Minsk II Accords proposed a simple formula: greater cultural and political autonomy for Donbass, in exchange for rejoining Ukraine. These efforts, however, were routinely thwarted by the Ukrainian government, with, it now seems,

¹ "NATO Expansion: What Gorbachev Heard," *National Security Archive*, <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/russia-programs/2017-12-12/nato-expansion-what-gorbachev-heard-western-leaders-early>

² Carlos Manuel Sanchez, "El día que Rusia quiso entrar en la OTAN," *ABC.es*, 13 March 2022. <https://www.abc.es/xlsemanal/historia/rusia-otan-union-sovietica-putin-historia.html>; Hélène Richard, "No room for Moscow in 'common European home,'" *Le Monde diplomatique*, October 2018.

³ The history of this rebellion is discussed in detail chapter five of my book, *The Tragedy of Ukraine: What Classical Greek Tragedy Can Teach Us About Conflict Resolution*. Berlin and Boston: De Gruyter, 2023.

the tacit support of the West.⁴

Many Western governments wholeheartedly endorse the official Ukrainian narrative. The Biden administration, for example has made the defeat of Russia in Ukraine a national security priority. To quote U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, “the U.S. is ready to move heaven and earth to help Ukraine win.”⁵

“Instead of embracing an ineffective strategy that prolongs the conflict indefinitely, Western governments should consider a peace strategy that focuses on the interests of the Ukrainian people—all the Ukrainian people.”

The argument in favor of war with Russia rests on the belief that nothing short of a humiliating defeat in Ukraine will deter Putin from future aggression. Since Russia is a nuclear power, however, its defeat must be accomplished without the direct engagement of NATO fighting forces, but rather by supplying the Ukrainian army with NATO weaponry, intelligence, and guidance. To this end, Western governments have sought to prolong the conflict as long as necessary, in order to achieve the strategic objective of defeating Putin.⁶ As German Chancellor Olaf Scholz has explained, “this is not merely a war about Ukraine... it is part of a larger crusade. Moscow is fighting against liberal democracy... against freedom and progress.”⁷

But now that the conflict has dragged on for more than a year, some are beginning question whether the West’s strategy, aptly described by U.S. Senator Lindsey Graham as fighting “to the last person,” is really in the best interests of the Ukrainian people?⁸

⁴ Ted Snider, “Did Europe Lie to Russia About Peace?” *Antiwar.com*, 11 January 2023. https://original.antiwar.com/Ted_Snider/2023/01/11/did-europe-lie-to-russia-about-peace/

⁵ “Leopards vs. the Russian Bear,” *Antiwar.com*, 25 January 2023.

<https://original.antiwar.com/Veteran-Intelligence-Professionals-for-Sanity2/2023/01/25/leopards-vs-the-russian-bear/>

⁶ Fiona Hill and Angela Stent, “The World Putin Wants,” *Foreign Affairs*, September/October 2022, <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/russian-federation/world-putin-wants-fiona-hill-angela-stent>) revealed that a settlement of the war was close in March 2022, but scuttled by the West. This has recently been confirmed by former Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett, who was its main intermediary: “Bennett Speaks Out,” [רעדמ טנגב](https://www.ynet.co.il/article/naftali-bennett-4-february-2023) | Naftali Bennett, 4 February 2023. <https://youtu.be/qK9tLDeWBzs> (2:36:15 to 3:00:41).

⁷ “Germany’s Scholz: Putin’s war against Ukraine part of larger crusade against West,” *Reuters*, 13 October 2022. <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/germanys-scholz-putins-war-against-ukraine-part-larger-crusade-against-west-2022-10-13/>

⁸ “Special Report: War in Ukraine,” *The Phoenix Magazine*, 9 February 2023. <https://www.thephoenix.ie/article/is-na-to-helping-ukraine-to-fight-russia-or-is-it-using-ukraine-to-fight-russia/>

On the one hand, the West's massive financial and military assistance has undoubtedly helped to shore up Ukraine's resolve to fight against Russian aggression, at least in the short term. In the long term, however, shutting down a diplomatic solution, which Ukraine was apparently willing to consider in March 2022, may, over time, lead to losses so great that they undermine the country's viability.⁹

The vast disparity between the population, wealth, and resources of Ukraine and Russia has led some analysts to suggest that Ukraine's costly battlefield victories will only last until Russia decides to mobilize its resources fully.¹⁰ Should that occur, and assuming that NATO support for Ukraine remains limited to sanctions, weapons, and financing, then Russia's military victory could be simply a matter of time.¹¹

Instead of embracing an ineffective strategy that prolongs the conflict indefinitely, Western governments should consider a peace strategy that focuses on the interests of the Ukrainian people—all the Ukrainian people. This would require policies that focus first and foremost on domestic reconciliation and the restoration of social harmony among Ukrainians.

While it may be politically incorrect to say so now, there is another Ukraine that has been struggling to achieve cultural, political, and religious recognition within Ukraine since the country's independence in 1991. President Zelensky himself recently alluded to them at the 2023 Munich Security Conference, saying: "To be honest, many have fled our state. Many remained with the invaders of their own accord. And there is plenty of information of this kind."¹²

I refer to this segment of the population as the Other Ukraine, and suggest that if this conflict is ever to be resolved, it will be through a better understanding, both within Ukraine and without, of what it has been trying to achieve since Ukrainian independence, and why this has led to war in Eastern Europe.

What is The Other Ukraine, and What Does it Want?

The diverse settlement patterns East and West of the Dnieper river, which bisects

⁹ Ishaan Tharoor, "The argument for settling for talks and 'avoiding long war' in Ukraine," *The Washington Post*, 1 February 2023. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2023/02/01/ukraine-avoid-long-war-rand-talks-argument/>

¹⁰ Michael Gfoeller and David H. Rundell, "Lessons From the U.S. Civil War Show Why Ukraine Can't Win," *Newsweek*, 6 December 2022. <https://www.newsweek.com/lessons-us-civil-war-show-why-ukraine-cant-win-opinion-1764992>; Christopher Caldwell, "Russia and Ukraine Have Incentives to Negotiate. The U.S. Has Other Plans," *New York Times*, 7 February 2023. <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/02/07/opinion/russia-ukraine-us-tanks.html>

¹¹ Ted Galen Carpenter, "Unwarranted Optimism," *The American Conservative*, 13 February 2023. <https://www.theamericanconservative.com/unwarranted-optimism/>

¹² "Zelensky na Miunkhenskoi konferentsii: 'Glubinnoi korruptsii v Ukraine net'," *Zerkalo nedeli*, 17 February 2023. <https://zn.ua/POLITICS/zelenskij-na-miunkhenskoj-konferentsii-hlubinnoj-korruptsii-v-ukraine-net.html>

Ukraine, established the historical-cultural pattern of eastern Ukraine as bicultural. A self-sustaining regional identity developed there, in which both the Russian and Ukrainian languages interacted freely. It is interesting to note that, whereas in the Ukrainian constitution, the Ukrainian language is the only official language, in the first constitution of the rebel-held portions of Donetsk, and to this day in Lugansk and Crimea, both Russian and Ukrainian are given official status.

“It is the view of many senior Ukrainian government officials that after the war, the Other Ukraine will need to be subjected to a generation or more of military occupation, much like the South was after the American Civil War.”

Regional voting patterns have also been very different from the rest of Ukraine. While critics often attribute this to nostalgia for the Soviet Union, it is better understood as a yearning for Soviet-era cosmopolitanism, which embraced the region’s mixed cultural heritage and industrial accomplishments. This manifested itself politically in a visceral rejection of the monoethnic nationalism popular in western Ukraine, and in the affirmation of a Ukrainian identity that is inextricably tied to Russian culture, if not to Russian politics. This pattern manifested itself strongly in both the 2004 and 2014 Maidans. Whereas in Western Ukraine, support for the Maidan rarely fell below 80 percent, in Eastern and Southern Ukraine, it rarely topped 20 percent. Prior to 2022, this Other Ukraine comprised about 40 percent of the total population.¹³ They tend to be Orthodox Christians, rather than Greek Catholics; they speak both languages fluently, but tend to regard Russian their native tongue, and they see their Ukrainian heritage as an integral part of Russian culture, rather than something separate from it. When given a choice, they typically opt for a closer alliance with Russia than with the West.

In his 1991 electoral “Appeal to Russian Compatriots,” Ukraine’s first president Leonid Kravchuk promised the Other Ukraine “full-fledged co-ownership” of the country. He vowed that “any attempt to discriminate against them on ethnic grounds

¹³ In July 2021, the Ukrainian polling agency Rating asked Ukrainians whether they agreed with President Putin’s statement that “Russians and Ukrainians are one people, who belong to one historical and spiritual space.” Nationwide 41 percent said they did. “Suspilno-politychni nastroi naselennya (23–25 lypnia 2021) – Ukraina – Doslidzhennya – Sotsiologichna hrupa Reitynh,” http://ratinggroup.ua/research/ukraine/obschestvennopoliticheskie_nastroeniya_naseleniya_23-25_ilyulya_2021.html

would be resolutely suppressed.”¹⁴ Vyacheslav Chornovil, the leader of *Rukh*, an independence movement popular in Western Ukraine, also endorsed this approach, and advocated for a federal Ukraine with a bi-cameral legislature that would give all regions a voice.¹⁵ This spirit of accommodation peaked in 2012, when the Ukrainian parliament voted to allow any region with a 10 percent minority population the right to use that language for official purposes. Within weeks all the regions in the Eastern half of the country adopted Russian as their second language.

This was the very first law rescinded by the rump Ukrainian parliament that ousted President Yanukovich in February 2014. Crimea, the only region of Ukraine in which the majority identified itself as ethnically Russian, then opted, with Russian military support, to leave Ukraine. The goal of the rebellion in Donbass, however, was not to leave Ukraine, but to have its autonomy enshrined in the Ukrainian Constitution. This was also the solution advocated by Russia at the time, which refused to recognize the Donbass independence referenda, and instead proposed the Minsk Accords, which would have forced Donbass to rejoin Ukraine, in exchange for limited regional autonomy.

As we know, this effort failed, and in February 2022 Russia decided that the only way to ensure both the rights and safety of the local population would be to incorporate them into Russia. However, wherever the demarcation line ultimately winds up being drawn, it will once again split families and relatives, just as the border between Ukraine and Russia did in 1991.

Wars Changes Public Attitudes (For a While)

Western and Central Ukraine have long espoused the idea of an independent Ukraine. For just as long, however, Southern and Eastern Ukraine have been fiercely loyal to the idea that Ukraine and Russia share a common destiny. In these regions, while positive attitudes toward Putin and the Russian government fell sharply after 2014, personal sympathy for average Russians did not. As late as July 2021, a national survey of Ukrainians revealed that 41 percent (and nearly two-thirds in the East and South) agreed with Vladimir Putin that Russians and Ukrainians are one people.¹⁶ As pro-Maidan journalist Vitaly Portnikov remarked disconsolately in early 2022: “As long as Ukrainians and Russians cry over the same television shows, the president of Ukraine is definitely Vladimir Putin, not Vladimir Zelensky.”¹⁷

¹⁴ “Obrashchenie L.M. Kravchuka ‘K Russkim sootchestvennikam,’” [1991]. <https://perma.cc/CG8D-SBZ3>

¹⁵ Nicolai N. Petro, *The Tragedy of Ukraine* (Boston and Berlin: De Gruyter, 2023), p. 78.

¹⁶ “Suspilno-politychni nastroi naselennya (23–25 lytnia 2021) – Ukraina – Doslidzhennya – Sotsiolohichna hrupa Reitynh.”

¹⁷ “V Kieve zayavili, chto bolshinstvo Ukrainsev schitaet Putina prezidentom,” [In Kiev, they say that the Majority of Ukrainians Consider Putin Their President] *Regnum*, 1 January 2022. <https://regnum-ru.turbopages.org/regnum.ru/s/news/3467722.html>

But wars can change people's attitudes dramatically, and it is indisputable that Ukrainian hostility toward Russia is currently at an all-time high. At the same time, however, it would be foolish to assume that this will always be so.¹⁸ As President John F. Kennedy remarked in 1963, just a few weeks after the Cuban missile crisis, "history teaches us that enmities between nations, as between individuals, do not last forever. However fixed our likes and dislikes may seem, the tide of time and events will often bring surprising changes in the relations between nations and neighbors."¹⁹ We need only think of how dramatically attitudes have shifted between England and Ireland, Mexico and the United States, or France and Germany.

I suspect that any long term shift in the mentality of the Other Ukrainians away from Russia, if it occurs, will result not from the war *per se*, but from the political and cultural restrictions that Kiev is likely to impose on the Other Ukraine afterwards. It is the view of many senior Ukrainian government officials that after the war, the Other Ukraine will need to be subjected to a generation or more of military occupation, much like the South was after the American Civil War.²⁰

One problem with such a policy is that it may not work. Thirty years of independence have failed to make Ukrainian nationalism more appealing in Eastern and Southern. Surveys taken at the end of 2021 showed that Russian language books, television, and music, were consistently more popular than Ukrainian.²¹ While censorship and political pressure will reduce this popularity for the current generation, the appeal of Russia's cognate culture for future generations of Ukrainians should not be underestimated.

A second problem is that the monoethnic nationalism that is currently being

¹⁸ The reliability of wartime polling in Ukraine is discussed in detail by Gerald Toal, who concludes: "considerable skepticism is required about the representativeness of wartime polling, especially when it comes to possible sea changes in geopolitical attitudes." Gerard Toal, "Public opinion polls in wartime Ukraine: do they tell the full story?" *Canadian Dimension*, 31 January 2023. <https://canadiandimension.com/articles/view/public-opinion-polls-in-wartime-ukraine-do-they-tell-the-full-story>.

¹⁹ John F. Kennedy, "Commencement Address at American University, Washington, DC, June 10, 1963," *JFK Library*, <https://www.jfklibrary.org/archives/other-resources/john-f-kennedy-speeches/american-university-19630610>

²⁰ Pavlo Vuets and Stanislav Gruzdev, "Oleksiy Reznikov: Bezpecha reintehratsiya Donbasu zaime minimum 25 rokiv," [Oleksiy Reznikov: A Safe Reintegration of Donbass Will Take at Least 25 Years] *Glavcom.ua*, 11 July 2020. <https://glavcom.ua/interviews/oleksiy-reznikov-bezpechna-reintegraciya-donbasu-zayme-minimum-25-rokiv-692369.html>; "Gennady Moskal: Prorossiiskie nastroyeniya v Luganskoj oblasti 80–95 percent," [Gennady Moskal: Pro-Russian Moods in the Luhansk Region are 80–95 percent] *Ukrainska pravda*, 30 October 2014. <https://www.pravda.com.ua/rus/articles/2014/10/30/7042701/>; "Vsemu Donbassu gotovyat pravilo 'Moskalya,'" ["Moskal" Rule Is Being Prepared for the Whole Donbass] *Vesti.ua*, 2 June 2015. <https://vesti.ua/donbasu/101944-vsemu-donbassu-gotovjat-pravilo-moskalja>

²¹ Viktoriya Venk, "Zrada pod elochku," [Treason under the Christmas Tree] *Strana.ua*, 2 January 2021. <https://strana.one/news/309931-chto-ukraintsy-iskali-v-google-i-smotreli-v-youtubena-novyj-hod.html>; Olena Barsukova, "'Ukraina' zamist 'Ukrayna,'" [Ukraina instead of UkrAina] *Ukrainska pravda*, 4 January 2022. <https://life.pravda.com.ua/society/2022/01/4/247047/>

proposed by the Kiev regime as the solution to Ukraine's cultural and political divisions is incompatible with the principles of the EU. It is hard to see how the EU can reconcile two conceptually incompatible tracks: on the one hand trying to suppress nationalism among its more "enlightened" Western members, while on the other hand endorsing nationalism in Ukraine. The attempt to do so has already led to severe friction between Brussels, on the one hand, and Warsaw, Budapest on the other.

A Path Forward

A better way to resolve this conundrum would be for European institutions to overcome their present indifference for the aspirations of minority communities that, like the Other Ukraine, retain a profound sense of kinship with Russia, and begin to think of Russians and Russian culture as essential components of European identity. This is more or less what Jacques Attali, former counselor to French President François Mitterrand, and founding head of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, recently called for. He argued that the war in Ukraine cannot be won without forging pan-European institutions that would help to cement the peace afterwards. For Attali, this means bringing Russia into a European democratic space through "un plan massif de reconstruction de la région, de la Biélorussie à l'Albanie, de Kiev à Vladivostok. Un plan intégrant les uns avec les autres, et qui ne serait activé dans un pays que lorsque celui serait de retour sur le chemin de la démocratie."²²

While Attali admits that such a vision seem inconceivable today, he reminds us that it was just such a vision, conceived before the end of the Second World War, that eventually led to the creation of the European Union.

Unfortunately, such a vision has proved to be beyond the imagination of the first generation of post-Cold War leaders. It must therefore become an essential priority for the next generation, for without such a vision, expressed in concrete policies, Europe as a whole will be condemned to perpetual conflict with Russia.

²² Jacques Attali, "La guerre en Ukraine, et après?" 29 January 2023, *Les Echos*. <https://www.lesechos.fr/idees-debats/editos-analyses/la-guerre-en-ukraine-et-apres-1901202>

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EAST-WEST RELATIONS: A NEW COLD WAR?

The Cold War bipolar order was characterized by two camps isolated from each other, competing along four dimensions: global governance, security, economics, and ideology. The end of the Cold War, with the Soviet Bloc collapsing, did not produce a U.S.-dominated unipolar but a multi-centered world. The Americans, losing power and influence and the Russians to restore their superpower status have been trying to reconstruct bipolarity. If reconstructed China, not Russia, would likely constitute the other pole, an outcome Russia does not want. Economic relations and Chinese disinterest currently prevent a bipolar world like the one we have left behind. We may be moving toward a multi-centered world with many unpredictable aspects, including armed conflicts such an order may entail.

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International Security, Post-Cold War.*



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hen the Cold War ended, the world rejoiced that a problematic state of international relations had ended. The competition between the free world characterized by politics of liberal democracy and economies driven by market forces and the socialist world run by authoritarian single-party regimes and state-operated economies had been concluded in favor of the former. Presumably, all countries would now gravitate toward competitive politics and market economies.

Two major developments brought about the conclusion of the Cold War. First, the Warsaw Pact that had been established under the leadership of the Soviet Union collapsed, thereby ending the “perceived” threat of Soviet expansion toward Western Europe. Second, the Soviet Union itself collapsed, with many of the republics constituting the union declaring their independence. In this way, the USSR came to an end, to be replaced by the Russian Federation which experts predicted would be occupied with internal questions for many years to come.

Under these conditions, questions were raised regarding what kind of an international order would emerge to replace the bipolar order that had evolved after the Second World War. Some initial evaluations suggested that the bipolar world was now being replaced by a unipolar system in which the U.S. would be the dominant power. In retrospect, such prognoses appear to have been based on continuing to use the Cold War analytical framework where the disappearance of one pole was predicted to lead to the prevalence of the other. However, the collapse of the bipolar order led all actors to review how they related to the world, the extent they would accept the leadership of a single country to prevail in global politics and the kind of global order they aspired to build. Furthermore, the end of the Cold War stimulated domestic debate in the U.S. as to whether foreign and security policies that had been developed during the Cold War calling for substantial investments in the security domain should be continued under such widely altered conditions.

Soon it became clear that the world would not head in the direction of becoming a uni-polar system. As the most powerful country in the world, the U.S. would naturally play a major role in shaping what happens. Still, it was not in a position to become the leader of a single pole, determining what others would do in multifarious ways. Instead, regional groupings and power centers began to emerge, leading to assertions that a multi-polar world was being born. Before offering judgments on whether we are headed toward a world order characterized by multi-polarity, it may be useful first to take a look at the concept of Cold War and the bipolarity it represented and then how this has changed after the Cold War came to an end.

Polarization and the Bipolar World

The concept of polarization was initially employed to describe the nature of relations that came to prevail between the Socialist and Western Blocs that emerged as the Second World War was coming to a close. The term continued to be employed after the war as long as the nature of those relations retained the basic characteristics that had initially come to define it. The world or regions had been divided into competitive camps in earlier parts of history¹ but the state of relations between those camps had not been described as polarization, suggesting that we were faced with a phenomenon that we had not witnessed before.

“Initially, the Alliance adopted the doctrine of massive retaliation whereby Soviet encroachments, irrespective of the level they were committed, would be countered by a nuclear response. In a highly contentious security environment, however, as the Soviets eventually developed means of delivering nuclear weapons with the capability of directly reaching the American continent, the U.S. felt the need to modify this defense doctrine to avoid becoming a direct nuclear target in case hostilities commenced.”

What was meant by polarization? As WW II was coming to a close, the countries that had been fighting each other began to assemble, in part voluntarily and in part by coercion by the victorious powers, around two major countries that engaged in a multi-lateral competition with each other. These configurations that began to be referred to as “poles” were competitors and often adversaries along four dimensions: politics, security, economics, and ideology. Their cooperative interactions were minimal. It may be useful to take a brief look at these dimensions to comprehend the nature of the competition in each domain.

Politics of Global Governance

As the War was coming to a close, the victors including the U.S. and Russia agreed that a new organization called the United Nations would be established as the proper instrument of global governance. This would be a more comprehensive

¹ A good example is the recent work by Ayşe Zarakol, *Before the West: The Rise and Fall of Eastern World Orders* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022).

organization than the League of Nations that was narrowly based and did not have the U.S. as a member. Furthermore, the new organization would address almost all questions of global governance through a comprehensive set of organizations whose functions extended from questions of collective security to economic and social development and even cultural cooperation. There would be a two-tiered decision-making structure with presumably² global powers of the time serving as permanent members of the major decision-making organ called the Security Council that also included elected members from among the members of the General Assembly that was, again presumably,³ in the nature of a world parliament.

Initially, the UN was dominated by the U.S. while the U.S.S.R. could only use its veto to restrain the Americans. Yet, at a time when they were boycotting the meetings of the Security Council, the Soviets were taken by surprise as the Council decided to extend military support to South Korea that faced a Chinese-backed invasion effort by North Korea. Throughout the Cold War, the Americans and the Soviets competed, Americans to prevail upon the institution and the Soviets to prevent it, which meant that the U.N. could only pursue meaningful actions in limited areas where the two major countries could reach agreement. This meant that the international organization that would be the pillar of global governance was reduced to an ineffective organization that could not address any of the major international questions in which the leaders of the two poles had substantial interest but disagreed.

Security

The area in which the American-Soviet competition became most manifest was in security. Early on, the U.S. organized much of Western Europe into a defense organization under North Atlantic Treaty Organization or NATO.⁴ The alliance's goal was to stand in the way of Soviet expansion toward Western Europe. It was

² France was included as an act of courtesy since it had been occupied by Germany early in the war and did not contribute in any significant way to Germany's defeat and the conclusion of the war. China, on the other hand, was embroiled in domestic conflict that ended with the victory of the Communists in 1949. But Taiwan, the small republic on the island of Formosa to which the Nationalists had retreated rather than the Communist government of the mainland, represented China on the Security Council. The People's Republic replaced the Republic of China (Taiwan) in 1971 after President Nixon changed American policy toward the People's Republic.

³ Again, while all independent countries could theoretically qualify for membership, up to 1954, countries that were judged to be pro-Soviet Union were not admitted to membership inviting a potential Soviet veto of perspective candidates judged to be pro-Western, leading to a situation of non-expansion. After 1955, a *modus vivendi* allowed countries to be admitted in pairs, that is, one more sympathetic to the U.S. and another closer to the Soviet camp. The U.N. became a more genuine universal organization only as the Cold War began to thaw and then come to an end.

⁴ Some countries that had not come under Soviet domination did not join NATO for different reasons. Sweden, Finland and Switzerland preferred to maintain their neutrality. The fate of Austria was still being negotiated at the time NATO was established. Eventually, it was agreed that it would have neutral status. Spain, under Franco's fascist rule was found to be ill suited for membership in an alliance that brought democracies together, although Portugal possessing a similar regime at the time, was made member since its location was judged to be important for Atlantic security.

judged that, unless resisted, the Soviets would try to expand their domination of Europe with military means starting with West Germany. NATO's goal would therefore be to deter the Soviets from pursuing such a course of action. Accordingly, the doctrine of containment was developed aiming, as the name indicates, to prevent Soviet expansionism and if possible, to push them back from areas they had brought under their control. Greece and Türkiye, both fearing that they might constitute targets of expansionary Soviet moves, received American support to join the Treaty in 1952.

“The efforts in the nuclear field were cemented by efforts to reduce conventional forces in Europe that faced each other. Conventional Forces Europe talks and agreements eventually led to the founding in 1973 of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.”

The Soviets eventually responded to the establishment and expansion of NATO by establishing a rival security organization in 1955, the Warsaw Pact, as a reaction to the inclusion of the German Federal Republic in NATO, which the Soviets interpreted as the final confirmation of the division of Europe. The founding treaty is almost a replica of the North Atlantic Treaty with the USSR playing a role comparable to that of the United States in NATO. Ironically, the formalization of the division of Europe into two security blocs with a country leading each paved the way for an increasingly stable relationship since trying to change it would open the way to a conflict of major proportions that might prove hard to contain and possibly lead to a nuclear holocaust. The rival sides had established nuclear parity because they would still have the capabilities to inflict unacceptable harm on the other side even after they had been the target of a first strike. An uneasy but reasonably stable balance of terror was established, promising *mutually assured destruction* (MAD) if any party attacked the other. The major concern was ensuring minor incidents, or skirmishes would not escalate into more comprehensive and unstoppable clashes.

The Americans had initially hoped that they might get the European members of NATO to develop large conventional armies to stop the Russians. It soon became apparent, however, that the latter not only gave priority to post-war reconstruction but also felt that the only way the Soviets could be stopped was by relying on the American nuclear deterrent. Such conceptualizations of European defense gave

the U.S. the privilege of planning the defense of the alliance by itself with other members becoming passive recipients American provided security. Initially, the Alliance adopted the doctrine of massive retaliation whereby Soviet encroachments, irrespective of the level they were committed, would be countered by a nuclear response. In a highly contentious security environment, however, as the Soviets eventually developed means of delivering nuclear weapons with the capability of directly reaching the American continent, the U.S. felt the need to modify this defense doctrine to avoid becoming a direct nuclear target in case hostilities commenced. Massive retaliation gradually became replaced first by “graduated deterrence” and finally by the more systematically formulated doctrine of “flexible response,” meaning that any Soviet military action would be met at the level it is committed.⁵ While other NATO members depended on the U.S. as the leader of their pole for their security, the U.S. was concerned that its allies would not drag it into conflicts against its will or fight among themselves, a contingency that would weaken the alliance. For example, when France and Great Britain launched an invasion of the Suez Canal after Nasser nationalized it, the U.S. that had not been consulted simply gave an ultimatum to its “allies” to terminate their intervention. Similarly, when Türkiye appeared to be planning a military intervention in Cyprus in 1964 to protect the Turkish community, was told by President Johnson that it would not receive NATO protection if the Soviets became involved. More generally, the U.S. tried not only to manage conflicts that might emerge among the Alliance members but also to ensure that any other interests that other members might have should be rendered subsidiary to those pertained to NATO.

The stability in Europe was also threatened by eruptions of anti-Soviet mass movements such as the Hungarian revolution in 1956 or the Prague Spring in 1968. While such events generated much sympathy in Western Europe, NATO members treated them as internal affairs of the Soviet Bloc. They did not use them as occasions through which the Soviet domination of either these countries or more broadly Eastern Europe would be questioned. Until the end of the Warsaw Pact and the dissolution of the Soviet Union, both sides moved slowly, searching for ways of building mutual trust, developing instruments of cooperation, and constructing a predictable environment. But the nature of the relationship was always characterized by a sense of competition and an understanding that the rival systems were not compatible if not fully mutually exclusive.

Economics

The U.S., assuming the Western Bloc’s leadership as the bipolar world was beginning

⁵ In this discussion, I have relied on my *NATO İttifakının Stratejik ve Politik Sorunları* (İstanbul: İstanbul Üniversitesi İktisat Fakültesi Yayınları, 1971).

to take shape, also developed a framework within which the international economy would operate. The institutions of global economic governance that the American leadership envisioned, included the creation of several institutions that would work to ensure the smooth functioning of the international economic system. First, there would be the International Monetary Fund or the IMF whose mission was to ensure the stability of exchange rates. It would function in a way that is reminiscent of central banks. Increasingly it found itself promoting economic stabilization programs in societies that ran into balance of payments problems. Second, a World Bank would be established that would extend credit to infra-structural investment projects, mostly in countries that could not finance such projects on their own. These two organizations got established and quickly began to perform the functions that were expected of them. A third instrument, the World Trade Organization or WTO that would work toward standardizing and reducing barriers to international trade proved somewhat more difficult to establish. Until the end of the Cold War, a series of global meetings under the title General Agreements on Tariffs and Trade or GATT for short, served to fulfil somewhat more modestly the functions that were expected of the WTO. The WTO was finally established in 1995.

“The lack of trust in the U.S. and the economic benefits that accrue from expanding trade relations have guided both European and Pacific actors to maintain a moderate relationship with China.”

Understandably, the instruments of global economic governance developed by the U.S. as the leader of the so-called “Free World” were based on the idea of operating market economies in which private enterprise prevailed. It assumed that member societies in Western Europe and North America would be trading extensively with each other and open to international investments. The economic order envisioned by the Soviet Union, on the other hand, constituted marked contrast to that preferred by the Americans. In the Soviet Bloc, the state rather than the private enterprise would be the primary economic actor; the driving force behind economic development would not be profits but other values such as achieving full employment, meeting the minimum economic needs of all citizens, and more broadly, achieving the welfare of the public. To summarize, the West promoted equality of opportunity while the Socialist Bloc subscribed to achieving equality of condition. Although there is little question that higher levels of prosperity characterized the Western Bloc, each side treated its model as superior, serving the needs of societies better, and pursued

propaganda wars against each other. What is important to note from the perspective of bipolarity, however, is the reality that the two blocs each tried to build a world onto themselves and engaged in limited economic interaction with the other. Each bloc tried to advance its internal economic integration to meet its needs internally and not become dependent on the other. They carried their economic competition to regions and countries that were not a part of the two blocs.

Ideology

At the root of the conflict between the two blocs, the factor that led to alternative conceptualizations how societies would be organized, governed and the societal goals they would aspire to achieve was ideology: liberal democracy and market economy versus “scientific” socialism. Each side claimed to possess a superior ideology and competed intensely with the other to persuade its own citizens, the citizens of the rival pole and those not a part of the bipolar system that they possessed the proper answer to constructing a society that would respond best to human needs and aspirations. This constituted the background on which propaganda wars raged between the two poles. These wars were more than just an open rivalry of ideologies. Each camp tried to indoctrinate its people to believe in the virtues of their system and the shortcomings and failings of the other.

Among many members of the Western camp, propagating communism was controlled and limited in various ways, from limiting the content of public education to placing limits on the freedom of expression and organization. More broadly, for example, in societies where Communist parties were allowed as part of the package of liberal democracy, measures were taken not to allow them to become partners in national governments. In the Socialist Bloc, ideological controls were even more strict and anyone who tried to extol the virtues of the rival ideology was branded as betraying the socialist system and suffered a variety of deprivations imposed either by government or the Communist party that enjoyed a monopoly of power in politics and ensured, among other things, ideological conformity.

The ideological competition was also carried to societies that were not a part of the bipolar system. In fact, as the relations between the two blocs stabilized, the inter-bloc competition for being more influential in other parts of the world only intensified. The Soviet model that promised industrialization, a goal that a typical leader of a developing society craved to achieve was often found to be rather attractive in less developed parts of the world. But many also needed economic assistance that the Soviets could meet only to a limited extent in contrast to the Western Bloc that generated and therefore had more access to economic resources

that could be allocated for development purposes.

The Sources of Discord in the Bi-Polar System

We have now seen that the bi-polar system that emerged after the Second World War involved competition between the two rival camps in politics, security, economics and ideology. Polarization, as may be inferred from the preceding discussion, was a state of affairs where the congregation of states that constituted one pole tried to maximize competitive relations with the other. In each pole, the leading state mobilized other members to form a unified front against the “adversary,” an approach that served two related purposes. First, such an approach not only enhanced the bloc’s solidarity but also strengthened the sense of dependence on its leader. Second, the approach rendered it costly and difficult to entertain leaving the bloc. In summary, the bi-polar system, in its heyday, had led to the division of Europe into two irreconcilable worlds competing with little common interactions among them.

The fact that under conditions of intense polarization, members consent to the pole’s leadership should not be interpreted as the absence of conflict between the leader and others. After all, the poles are comprised of nation-states, each having its own interests, some of which may hardly be in harmony with those of the leading state. In fact, as an example of within-alliance or pole conflict, we have already alluded to American displeasure and intervention in the Suez Crisis in 1956 that forced the British and the French to suspend their operation. We also made a brief reference to America’s subverting Turkish plans in 1964 to extend protection by military means to Turks of Cyprus. Other conflicts of interest have included the deployment of nuclear weapons on the territory of a member country, the amount a member country should spend for its defense or even the status that should be accorded to the American forces deployed in a Western European country.

We may now look at inter-pole conflicts of interest in a somewhat more systematic way. Generally speaking, what happens when a member of the pole has a conflict of interest with the pole’s leader and how the conflict is resolved has been determined by the way and the extent to which the member is dependent on the latter. For example, Türkiye and Germany, as two states directly exposed to the “Soviet threat,” were more accommodating to American security considerations and policy preferences than some other members such as France. Also at the time, Türkiye was dependent on the U.S. for economic assistance and its military modernization, two factors that invited it to conform with American preferences. On the other hand, France could afford to behave in ways that ran counter to American alliance leadership. Germany constituted a security wall on land before Warsaw Pact forces would reach France.

On the Atlantic side, security was provided by Great Britain and the U.S.. Since France was in a position to free ride on security that was provided by NATO, it felt it could even withdraw from the military wing of the alliance without exposing itself to unacceptable risks as it did in 1966.

As already noted in the case of Portugal, being important for NATO's security gave member countries some leeway in not conforming with all the imperatives of the alliance. In the Portuguese example, the authoritarian nature of its system was overlooked first under Salazar and then under Caetano since the country was considered important in ensuring Atlantic security. Franco's Spain was kept out not only because it was not democratic but also because Spain was not deemed to be important for western defense. Spain joined NATO only after it became a democracy. Also tolerated were the temporary military interventions occurring in Türkiye.

Stabilizing the Bipolar System

Since a conflict between the poles could unintentionally escalate into a nuclear holocaust, pole members, particularly pole leaders, wanted to avoid such a contingency that would at minimum threaten their well-being and possibly their existence. This concern led them pursue policies that would render their competitive relationship predictable. Two different paths were followed to that end. First, the poles moved their "struggle" to third areas outside the geography of the poles and second, they tried to render the inter-alliance relationship more predictable.

Moving the "Struggle" to Third Areas

As the Cold War commenced and intensified, many countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America that were not members of the blocs adopted neutralist foreign policies, meaning that they would not take sides in the Soviet-West conflict but interact with both sides and develop beneficial relations. Many of these countries were in need of development, some of them had acquired independence from colonial powers only after the Second World War. The two blocs perceived these areas as targets to attract to their side in their competitive relationship to dominate the world. They extended economic assistance, funded infra-structural investments, and tried to develop lasting economic links to ensure that a target country would not become closely linked with the other side. The inter-bloc competition did not preclude the conduct of proxy wars where each bloc, hoping to achieve a dominating position in a particular locale, would extend support to one side of what might otherwise have been a local conflict. If the locale were perceived to be strategically important, "polar" involvement was likely to be more comprehensive. Afghanistan may constitute a case in point. In some instances, on the other hand, the conflict was instigated by the Soviet side as a

deliberate effort to unify divided countries under the banner of communism as was the case in Vietnam.

The two sides conducted propaganda wars that targeted not only third areas but also each other's publics. Propaganda appears to have constituted an exception, remaining outside those relations where there was a deliberate effort to achieve greater predictability to avoid escalation.

More Predictable Inter-Alliance Relations

The ever-present fear that an armed conflict might break out either accidentally or by making mistaken judgements about the intentions and actions of the other side and escalate to the nuclear level, guided pole members, particularly pole leaders to search for ways of developing mutual trust and creating mechanisms to prevent armed conflict. Such a search began rather early when the Cold War was still raging. It gained speed and grew more comprehensive as the sides recognized that they would have to get used to the idea of peaceful coexistence. The first step was the Nuclear Test Ban treaty that banned nuclear tests in the atmosphere (1963) which was followed by the Non-Proliferation Treaty that aimed to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons while allowing peaceful uses of nuclear energy (1968). Then came SALT 1 or the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty (1969), followed later by a second. The idea of limiting the size of the nuclear stockpiles received an additional boost with START 1 or the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (1991) between the U.S. and the USSR. These treaties contained verification procedures, actual monitoring mechanisms and instruments of consultation. Not all were rendered formally binding but they were observed in practice. The Americans and the Soviets also cooperated in space research, establishing space stations where international crews carried out exploratory work.

The efforts in the nuclear field were cemented by efforts to reduce conventional forces in Europe that faced each other. Conventional Forces Europe talks and agreements eventually led to the founding in 1973 of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe.

These measures were intended to render the relations between the two camps more predictable. Interestingly, the stability achieved in East-West relations also allowed ordinary members of the Alliances, particularly NATO members, to enjoy greater flexibility in their relations with the Soviet Union and other members of the Warsaw Pact. For example, the moderation of inter-alliance conflict allowed Federal Germany to develop the idea of Ostpolitik aspiring to closer relations between the

two Germanies. Similarly, Türkiye began to develop closer economic relations with the Soviet Union. However, it should immediately be added that such moderation of relations was not what brought the Cold War to an end.

The End of the Cold War

The bipolar world and the Cold War which was an expression used to describe how the poles interacted with each other collapsed in 1990-1991 mainly because the Soviet Union, leading the Socialist pole did not possess an overall equality with the U.S. but only matched it in the field of armaments. True, the balance of terror and the nuclear parity it represented guaranteed the security of the members of the Warsaw Pact. Still, it hardly provided sufficient compensation for the deprivations all felt they were suffering due to economic failures of their alliance. The Soviets, while aware of problems in the economic domain, were concerned that changes needed for improving economic performance would undermine not only their domination of their allies but also challenge the domestic monopoly of power the Communist Party of the Soviet Union enjoyed domestically. Therefore, in response to claims for economic betterment, they mobilized security-related arguments.

It is generally thought that two developments led to the economic exhaustion of the Soviet Union. The first is its involvement of in Afghanistan. The Soviets entered Afghanistan in 1979 ostensibly to extend support to a pro-Moscow government that had achieved power more than a year earlier but was experiencing difficulties maintaining its rule. The intervention lasted almost a decade. During this interim, the Soviets had to devote much energy and resources to fighting a civil war in which varieties of Islamic opposition supported by the West, mainly the U.S. This involvement that became more comprehensive over time as they failed to achieve control of the country, proved to be a major drain on Soviet material resources and conventional military capabilities. In 1989, they decided they could no longer sustain their intervention in Afghanistan. Economically exhausted and impoverished, they departed.

The other development that is judged to have imposed unbearable burdens on the Soviet budget is the decision of the Reagan administration in 1983 to develop an anti-ballistic missile system that operated in part with satellites that would neutralize missiles directed at the U.S. before they reached their target. Named the Strategic Defense Initiative but quickly dubbed the Star Wars project, this undertaking did not reflect an achievement but an inspiration toward which research efforts would be directed. The project would have transformed the nuclear parity that included both weapons and delivery systems. If the Americans could prevent the delivery of Soviet

weapons to their territory, the idea of the balance of terror and the accompanying concept of mutually assured destruction would be invalidated. The Soviets felt pressured to meet the challenge and start working toward developing their own systems. Again, the burden, combined with that generated by Afghanistan proved too big to bear by the Soviet economy.

The deterioration of economic conditions was accompanied by a loss of faith in Communist ideology. Communism had failed in achieving the results it had promised to achieve. It had created a privileged class of political elites who displayed incompetence in addressing the economic woes of the general public. Many among the elite lost their faith in the system in which they occupied a privileged position. Eventually the proponents of glasnost and perestroika (opening and restructuring) defending a comprehensive revamping of the system achieved power but could not contain the societal pressures for change. First, as then the Soviet Union could no longer hold it together, the Warsaw Pact disbanded. The USSR itself came to an end as many of its constituent republics declared independence.

Developments did not stop there. The newly independent Baltic republics along with East European and Balkan members of the former Warsaw Pact quickly joined NATO to defend themselves against the possibility of a Russian effort to reconstitute its influence in the region. They also proceeded to join the European Union, stating clearly that they did not look forward to being incorporated into a Russian zone of influence as they had been obliged to do after WW II. Russia tried to maintain its influence in its former republics both to its West (Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova) and in the Caucasus and Central Asia (Georgia, Azerbaijan, Armenia) and (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan) by leading several economic and political cooperation and security arrangements. None proved successful enough to reconstitute the Soviet Empire. All the newly independent states, no matter how close they felt to Russia or depended on it for economical or security reasons, tried to maintain their independence and pursue courses of actions that did not always conform with Russian preferences. Russia proved not sufficiently powerful economically or militarily as most recently substantiated by the difficulties it is encountering in Ukraine, to restore its superpower status and constitute a rival pole to that led by the U.S.. The bi-polar world had come to an end.

The Post-Cold War Period: From Unipolarity to Multi-Polarity

I presented a rather detailed account of the Cold War and the bipolar world. If we are to analyze whether a new Cold War is in the making, we have to have a clear idea of what the original bipolar system was like, how it was born, how it operated and

finally how it came to an end.

When the bipolar world came to an end somewhat abruptly (since no one including the experts on the USSR had predicted the ease with which the Warsaw Pact would disband and the Soviet Union break up into its constituent units), questions as regards what kind of a system the world would head toward began to be asked? Would the world now be unipolar under American leadership, or would it evolve in a multi-polar direction?

A Unipolar System Did Not Emerge

The initial response to the breakdown of the bipolar world was to suggest that if one of the poles had disappeared, the other pole would come to dominate the global system, leading the system in a unipolar direction. What was meant was simple: The U.S. was the dominant power and the strongest country in the world. It could use its position to define the features of a new global system. There was no competing center of power that could resist the Americans or offer an alternative to shape the global system according to their visions and in ways that would serve their interests. Yet, such expectations were not borne out. Why?

It appears that the bipolarity was a dialectical relationship. The idea that if one of the poles broke down, the other would come to dominate the system missed the essential point that the other side would no longer be perceived as a pillar around which all actors would congregate. In other words, the rivalry between poles constituted the driving force of bipolarity. Once one of the poles collapsed, the other would also become weaker. Let us see how this happened. The end of the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union, for example, rendered the members of the Western Bloc less sensitive to securing American protection and therefore less responsive to American expectations and requests. Although there were rumors that the United States was intending to lessen its military presence on the Continent, American concerns that the Europeans should bear a bigger portion of the expenses of securing Europe were ignored. When the United Kingdom and France decided to strike Libya during the Arab Spring to remove Gaddafi from power, they did so without consulting the United States. There have been instances where some have questioned whether or not NATO is still necessary.

NATO has chosen to take a more proactive role in overseas operations. It soon became apparent that it was difficult to achieve consensus on what operations would be included. Some members were interested in joining operations while others were either not interested or actually opposed. Two cases in point are the American

intervention in Iraq to end the Saddam regime and the operation in Afghanistan after the 9/11 radical Muslim attack on the Twin Towers. In both cases, the U.S., sensing that there was no consensus on how to proceed, came up with the notion of “Coalition of the Willing.” Those participating in these American led efforts included both NATO and non-NATO members. Although developing consensus was somewhat easier in NATO operations within Europe as in the case of Bosnia and later Kosovo, unity was still lacking,

Equally interesting is the fact that after many years of involvement in global affairs and investing in fights with no clear outcomes, the American public grew tired of being involved in prolonged conflicts here and there where it seemed difficult to identify the specific American interests being served. These frustrations were shared or sometimes capitalized upon by American political leaders. Some talked about bringing the soldiers home while others suggested courses of action that were reminiscent of isolationism (e.g. Trump) that characterized American foreign policy before WW II. The debate regarding how active a role the U.S. should play in global politics is still raging.

While the debate will be influenced by what happens in the world as we shall see later, it is clear that America is no longer in a position to aspire to leading a unipolar world. Undoubtedly, it continues to be the most powerful country in the world. Yet, it is not in a position to impose its will easily on others. Furthermore, American attention is becoming increasingly focused on the rise of a new rival, China. Future predictions on the structure of the international system need to consider this.

The Rise of China: A Return to Bipolarity?

Soon after the end of the bipolar world, the People’s Republic of China began its rise to a prominent place in the international system, second only to the U.S.. It is predicted that it may replace it as the world’s biggest economy in the foreseeable future. China’s rise has immediately led to questions as to whether there will emerge a new bipolar world in which the U.S. and China will serve as the leaders. It is tempting to argue that this will indeed be the case, but caution is in order. After WW II the World was divided into two camps with very clear lines where the emergent camps had minimal relations with each other. This does not seem to be the case concerning China. To answer why, we might return to the four dimensions where the poles diverged from each other. Let us look at them:

Politics of Global Governance

While China is a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council, the

world organization is not divided into American and Chinese camps. Membership in the organization is already universal. The relationship among permanent members of the Security Council is not always contentious. China creates the impression that it favors peaceful instruments of international problem-solving. In its actions in the United Nations, it sympathizes with the developing and underdeveloped countries. Still, it does not assume a leadership role and try to mobilize these countries against the Western World. There may also be questions regarding the extent member countries are ready to united under the Chinese banner to challenge others. Furthermore, Russia is still trying to reconstitute itself as a superpower and does not want to acquiesce to Chinese leadership and accept a subsidiary role.

In contrast to the time of the initial Cold War, where a multifarious set of institutions of global and regional governance was lacking, these days there is a multiplicity of organizations, global and regional through which international relations are conducted, neither the U.S. nor China are involved in all of them. Depending on the subject matter they deal with, there are different coalitions in each, rendering leadership a rather diffuse function. Examples include G-7 and G-20 that bring the major economies of the world together, major conferences on questions of universal concern such as those on climate change as well as regional organizations among which the European Union is particularly outstanding as well as Commonwealth of Independent States, the ineffective organization that aspired to bring states of the former Soviet Union under Russian leadership. This ineffective organization aspired to bring states of the former Soviet Union together under Russian leadership. Under such circumstances, a bipolar configuration appears unlikely to obtain in international politics at this particular time.

Security

China is not the leader of a security bloc like the Soviets were after WW II. In fact, from the perspective of security, China appears to be a regional power trying to consolidate its position in the Eastern Pacific region. It is not in a position to assume the burden of providing for the security and defense of other countries, particularly those that are not in its immediate region. Currently, it does not possess the military power that it could project in various parts of the world. Whether it wants to pursue policies in that direction is also unclear.

In terms of nuclear capabilities, Russia is clearly ahead of China. China has not so far engaged in a competitive relationship with Russia in the nuclear field. Russia is also more advanced in arms production including military aircraft and missiles. This is an area where China needs time to catch up with the U.S. and Russia but seems

not to be in a hurry. In contrast, Russia seems interested in restoring its role as a superpower. It therefore is unlikely to accept assuming a subsidiary role to China in global politics. However, at the moment, the two seem united in their rivalrous relationship with the West, particularly the U.S.. Furthermore, some speculation has been that Russia constitutes a natural area of expansion for China and that their interests will clash in the long run.

In summary, the conditions do not favor the emergence of China as an alternative global security provider, another condition needed for the construction of a new bipolar order.

Economics

Chinese economy is integrated with the world economy in marked contrast to the initial bipolar world where the economies of the two camps had limited interactions. The important role China has assumed as a major producer and importer of many goods derives largely from the fact that the Chinese government is at peace with the idea of private enterprise as long as economic actors do not challenge its monopoly on political power. It does not promote an alternative path to economic development, a line which was the case with the Soviet Union.

The economic interdependence between China and its rivals has a tempering influence on their relations. Attempts to drive China out of the international economy and isolate it, a policy that the U.S. seems somewhat interested in presumably for reasons of security, impose hardships not only on China but also on those who initiate measures to reduce trade with China.

Turning to Chinese investments abroad and international credit policies, these have produced negative reactions. Chinese personnel have experienced difficulties in adjusting to foreign environments and are often found to be arrogant and therefore not well liked in countries where they operate. China has been generous with international credit but when repayment fails, it has insisted on acquiring the ownership of major infrastructures like ports, storage facilities, airports and the like. This has led to a decrease in confidence in taking out loans from China and abandoning several previously agreed upon projects.

The Chinese economy, which was developing rapidly during the recent years, often achieving growth rates of ten percent or more, has slowed down. Xi Jing Ping's policies to give priority to state companies and investments is likely to have contributed to the slowing down. One outcome of this has been the almost

disappearance of references to the Belt and Road project that was intended to link China to Europe through a network of land and sea routes from which many countries on the routes hoped to benefit. Chinese economic activity on the international front is also slowing down.

In conclusion, the integration of China to the world economy, its openness to private enterprise and its abstinence from trying to promote an alternative model of economic development stand in the way of its becoming the leader of a rival pole in a new bipolar system.

Ideology

The Communist Party rules China. It has extended some support to Communist parties in the neighboring countries. But, unlike to USSR, it is not in the business of organizing Communism around the world and creating Beijing modeled parties that submit to China's leadership. It is interesting to note that while China has not actively pursued ideological competition with the U.S. and the West in General, it has been the target of criticism of human rights violations, particularly in Sinkiang and Tibet. Chinese failure to respect basic human rights is likely to continue to be an issue of ideological contention between it and its rivals. It is unlikely, however, to constitute basis for bipolar rivalry.

American Attempts to Bring Bipolarity Back

As already noted, the end of the Cold War had led the U.S. to reevaluate its own involvement and role in global politics, a process during which preferences to reduce it became manifest. It soon became apparent, however, that reducing engagement in global politics would be accompanied by a decline in American power and influence. For example, when Trump cancelled two major economic cooperation projects, one with Europe and the other with the countries of the Pacific (Trans-Atlantic Trade and Investment Partnership TTIP and Trans-Pacific Partnership TPP) as failing to serve American interests, countries that had relied on the U.S. as an economic and security partner suddenly found themselves abandoned. In the Pacific where competition with China was closely felt, potential members of TPP tried to find ways to develop more cooperative relations with China. In contrast, in Europe, it looked as if America would increasingly become a competitor interested in reducing European access to the American market. Trump's policies led to general erosion of trust in the U.S. and hence reliance on it as a partner.

With Biden's election as president who recognized that the go it alone policies proposed by Trump would lead to a significant decline in America's global power

and influence, the U.S. has tried to make a comeback to the world stage as leader. America's current leadership is well aware that the growth of Chinese economic power is at the expense of the U.S.. It has tried to mobilize allies and friends to organize against the expansion of Chinese influence, arguing that growing relations with China presents a security threat to the Western world and countries in the Pacific region. For the latter, it is clear that China's expansionist proclivities constitute a security concern. China has raised questions about the ownership of islands that currently belong to others, claimed ownership of uninhabited sand bars and built military facilities on them, and insists that Taiwan is an integral part of China that will be reintegrated to the mainland even by force, if necessary. Regional countries are interested in containing China but shy away from forming confrontational relationships with it since such an approach would deprive them of the economic benefits of maintaining good relations. In addition, they are unsure of the extent to which they can confide in the U.S. after the experience with Trump showed them that policies could easily change with the change of president. In short, they are reluctant to become a part of a bipolar world in which a constellation of states around the U.S. and around China are pitted against each other.

The Americans have also tried to reduce the growing relations with China on the European front. An early example was asking major European countries not to become shareholders in the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank that China established mainly to finance Belt and Road projects. The American advice was not heeded. Later, the Americans warned the Europeans that they should refrain from buying 5G technology from Huawei because it would constitute a security risk, a request that was only partially accommodated. More recently, the Americans have encouraged to move the production of computer chips to the U.S. and barred importing chips from China, causing temporary disturbances in the production of many items since computer chips are used these days in manufacturing almost everything. The effects of such restrictions have been particularly felt in automotive production. Further, there are American based allegations regarding the exploitation of cheap labor, violations of human rights and schemes by which the Chinese would secretly collect intelligence about European societies.

The lack of trust in the U.S. and the economic benefits that accrue from expanding trade relations have guided both European and Pacific actors to maintain a moderate relationship with China. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has challenged this general approach. The U.S. has tried to capitalize on the opportunity to create a democracy and human rights front to counter the Russo-Chinese alliance of authoritarian states inclined toward military aggression. China's recent shows of military power in the Taiwan Straits, a return to emphasizing state capitalism under Jing Ping and

poor record on the observation of human rights and its accommodating approach to Russian aggression tend to lend some credence to American allegations. However, China has refrained from fully endorsing the Russian invasion and has indicated in clear terms to the American president during a recent G-20 meeting that while their relationship may be a conflictual one, China is determined to limit it to the employment of peaceful means.

One might thus conclude that China has no intention of establishing a bipolar world in which it would serve as the dominant pole. What type of global order can we expect if we are not moving toward a bipolar world?

Where Is the World System Heading?

In trying to identify the direction toward which the global system is headed, it may be useful to remember that unexpected events may easily invalidate predictions in this area. In an earlier part of this paper, for example, we noted that no one predicted the demise of the Soviet Union. However, everyone was aware of the problems it was encountering.

What are some of the data on which we may build our view of the future? First, looking at the European Union, we may note that while it constitutes a center of economic power, it seems incapable of global economic power because of various conflicting interests among its members and its slow and elaborate decision-making mechanisms. In the security field, on the other hand, it is not a security provider for others, its major powers have their own autonomous agendas and possess widely varying outlooks on achieving security. In the final analysis, the European Union continues to rely on American leadership to attaining its own security.

Looking at Russia, we may conclude that it is moving away from constituting a center of power, both militarily and also economically. The Ukraine Invasion has shown that the Russian army is not the powerful force that everyone feared. The invasion has also generated a number of unfavorable economic consequences. First, Western investments in Russia have stopped, a step that will slow down Russian economic growth. Second, Western Europe has discovered that becoming too reliant on Russia's energy supplies is risky and has turned to different ways of reducing its energy dependency. These include among others finding other sources of gas and oil, resuming nuclear power production, expediting programs for generating clean energy from winds, sunshine and waves. It is unlikely that even if better relations are restored, the demand for Russian energy supplies will go back to its former levels. Third, even former Soviet Union countries want to reduce Russia's influence in their

domestic and international relations. Russia's difficulties in Ukraine has encouraged them to practice greater autonomy. Fourth, the balance of terror continues to restrain Russia from using nuclear weapons to advance its foreign policy goals. Finally, China has refrained from fully backing Russia in Ukraine, serving more as an advocate of restraint. Put together, it appears unlikely that Russia will reestablish itself as a superpower in the foreseeable future.

The power position of India has been improving but it is still too weak for it to aspire to a global role. It has difficulties in countering Chinese challenges on its own borders and in its vicinity. It has a wealth of internal problems that need addressing, and there is no indication that it is currently entertaining plans to assume a major and expanding role in global politics. It has resisted American overtures to join the anti-China front. Similarly, Latin American countries like Brazil and Argentina, or African countries like Nigeria and South Africa are too deeply embroiled in their domestic troubles to offer even regional leadership, let alone ascending to the level of a major global actor.

Finally, we must note that globalization as a component of the neo-liberal ideology that prevailed in the international economy in the post-Soviet period is receding. Even countries that were perceived as having been the main beneficiaries have moved away from it. There is a greater emphasis these days in strengthening national economies and protecting them from unfavorable competition. The arguments to buttress national economies are reenforced by those about protecting national culture, limiting migration and defending against child or forced labor.

In view of the data, how does the foreseeable future look to us? It appears that we are moving not so much toward a multi-polar but rather toward a multi-centered world where centers behave reasonably independently from each other. Will this state of affairs gain permanence or whether it is transitory is challenging to say?

It appears likely that, despite American efforts in the opposite direction, America's "weight" in the international system is expected to decline while China's power position is likely to improve, but this is not going to lead us to a bipolar world that resembles the world of America-Soviet Union bipolarity characterized by two rival economic-political-ideological systems constituting two separate worlds competing with each other without significant economic interactions. In this context, it is interesting to note that the Americans have turned to employing economic weapons to penalize rivals and force them to change their policies. These have included measures like freezing the accounts some countries in American banks, denying countries to use the American operated Swift system to transfer money around the

world, depriving citizens of some countries from using locally issued credit cards or limiting their access to the American market. Apart from the fact that target countries always develop means of getting around the sanctions, such measures invite search for ways to reduce the role of the U.S. in the global financial system, therefore possibly reducing in the long run the instruments through which the Americans have come to play a determining role in the operation of the global economic system.

While a multi-centered world may sound attractive, it constitutes an unpredictable environment that is difficult to manage. I would therefore be concerned that we may be heading toward a world in which there will be more conflict rather than less. A bipolar world, despite the many problems it has presented for our societies, was marked by a period of peace among members of the poles. A multi-centered world may not contain elements like mutually assured destruction that made all parties shy away from armed conflicts since they could escalate into conflicts of a higher order. A multi-centered world may not contain the brakes against armed conflicts that were integral to the bipolar world. We are entering a time of great unpredictability.

THE THE SMALL STATES AND THE WAR IN UKRAINE

The War in Ukraine signals a return to the sphere of influence politics and great powers' use of military instruments against their weaker neighbors. The consequences for the the the small states are negative. Although some the small states will find new opportunities for hedging and brinkmanship, most the small states will see their chances of shaping international agendas reduced as they increasingly focus on defensive aims. To meet these challenges the small states must work together to promote their shared interests: 1) A modus vivendi between the great power, which minimizes the risk of great power war as well as the annexation and invasion of smaller states, 2) a rule-based international order; 3) a relaunch the United Nations as the central arena for debates on international society among sovereign states.

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Russian Invasion of Ukraine, The Small States, United Nations.*



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The War in Ukraine marks a return to militarized great power rivalry. The war is yet another manifestation of the liberal international order's ongoing crisis, which began with the attacks on New York and Washington on 11 September 2001. It has continued with controversial and ultimately unsuccessful wars in Afghanistan and Iraq since the early 2000s, a near collapse of the international financial system followed by a global economic crisis in the late 2000s, and the rise of increasingly nationalist responses to international security.

This development presents the small states with several challenges – no matter if they are “loyal supporters and helpful fixers” of the liberal international order (like some of the the small states in Northern Europe),¹ seeking full membership of the order and its core institutions (like a number of the small states in the post-Soviet space and the Asia-Pacific region), or more critical of the adverse consequences of liberal ordering and globalization (like many the small states in the Global South). This article identifies the challenges, discusses their potential implications for the small states in international affairs, and points to possible ways of meeting them.²

How and Why the War in Ukraine Matters to The Small States

The War in Ukraine matters to the small states for two reasons. Most importantly, it matters because it is an inter-state war. The number of inter-state wars reached a historical low in 2020 after declining substantially since World War II ended.³ Strong institutions, norms of self-determination, and the declining returns on conquest in a globalized world created the most beneficial international environment since the birth of the modern state system.⁴ The most important effect was transforming the fundamental challenge of the small states in international relations from “how do we survive as an independent political entity?” to “how do we maximize influence to meet our challenges and take advantage of our opportunities?”⁵ The War in Ukraine reminds us that for many the small states in international affairs, great power invasion remains a threat to be reckoned with. This has potentially important

¹ Rita Abrahamsen, Louise Riis Andersen and Ole Jacob Sending “Introduction: Making liberal internationalism great again?,” *International Journal*, Volume 74, No. 1 (2019): p. 5-14. See p. 13.

² I understand the small states as “states that are characterized by the limited capacity of their political, economic and administrative systems” and internationally typically find themselves as the weaker actors in asymmetric relationships that they can do little to change on their own. See Godfrey Baldacchino and Anders Wivel “The small states: Concepts and Theories,” in Godfrey Baldacchino and Anders Wivel *Handbook on the Politics of The small states* (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2020): p. 7.

³ Greg Cashman and Leonard C. Robinson *An Introduction to the Causes of War: Patterns of Interstate Conflict from World War I to Iraq* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2021).

⁴ Matthias Maass *The small states in World Politics: The Story of Small State Survival, 1648–2016* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016).

⁵ See the discussion in Anders Wivel Wivel “The Grand Strategies of The small states”. In T Balzacq, & R. R. Krebs (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Grand Strategy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021): p. 490-505.

consequences for small-state foreign policy as more the small states may opt for defensive strategies emphasizing national security rather than seeking to shape international agendas.

The second reason that the War in Ukraine matters to the small states is that it is the so far clearest manifestation of sphere of influence politics in the post-Cold War world. The post-Cold War liberal international order, dubbed “Liberal Internationalism 3.0” by G. John Ikenberry, was global in scope, increasingly intrusive of state sovereignty, and kept together by a rule-based governing structure combined with network-based methods of collaboration.⁶ Some policymakers and academics, including Ikenberry, saw it as post-hegemonic, but it was supported by the United States’ ability and willingness to promote a globalized international order based on a deeper and broader understanding of President Woodrow Wilson’s vision for international society after World War I. This is what we have come to call “the liberal international order.”

“Strong institutions, norms of self-determination, and the declining returns on conquest in a globalized world created the most beneficial international environment since the birth of the modern state system.”

Recently, “spheres of influence” have come back as a central idea in international relations, which threatens this order and its political and institutional manifestations.⁷ Some recent examples of this trend include China’s territorial claims and military construction in the South China Sea, Russia’s invasion of Georgia in 2008 and its annexation of Crimea in 2014. Moreover, it is possible to extend this list with the previous administration of the United States’ endorsement of the Monroe Doctrine and the necessity and desirability of dividing the world into “one of the grand spheres of influence apportioned to the United States, China, and Russia.”⁸ At first glance, President Biden’s “Alliance for Democracy” might look like a return to “Liberal Internationalism 3.0.” Still, the administration’s sustained focus on a “foreign policy

⁶ G. John Ikenberry “Liberal internationalism 3.0: America and the dilemmas of liberal world order,” *Perspectives on Politics*, Volume 7, No. 1 (2009): p. 71-87.

⁷ Graham Allison “The New Spheres of Influence,” *Foreign Affairs*, Volume 99, No. 2 (2020): p. 30-40.

⁸ Nathan Gardels “Trump is not the leader of the U.S. – just of his base”, *The Washington Post*, 19 July 2018. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/theworldpost/wp/2018/07/19/trump-us/>

for the middle class” indicates that a different international order is being accepted and even promoted.⁹

Great power acceptance and promotion of a sphere of influence-order have three implications for the small states. First, it creates new dividing lines between insiders, outsiders and in-betweeners in the emergent order(s). The small states stuck inside a great power’s sphere of influence see their autonomy reduced as great powers become less willing to negotiate the rules of engagement. This has for some time been evident in the post-Soviet space and the South China Sea. More recently, the small states in the Euro-Atlantic community have faced increased demands and expectations of defence spending. The United States is increasingly conducting bilateral negotiations and concluding bilateral agreements with small Euro-Atlantic allies securing U.S. access to critical infrastructure such as ports in return for U.S. security shelter.

In contrast, the small states located outside the great powers’ immediate orbit may see an increase in autonomy. In the first decades after the end of the Cold War, many of these states found themselves increasingly on the margins of the liberal international order having lost their Cold War bargaining power when courted by the Soviet Union and the United States. Today, these countries show that the resurgence of geopolitics isn’t all negative for tiny nations. For example, basing rights may be awarded based on a country’s location, and small countries’ access to rare earth and metals makes them attractive cooperation partners for the world’s superpowers. Like in the Cold War, great power rivalry increases some the small states opportunities for hedging and playing hard to get. Finally, the War in Ukraine shows how states caught in-between spheres of influence are in the most precarious position. Some will rush for shelter – as illustrated by the eagerness of Sweden and Finland to give up their status as non-aligned - others will not be allowed the luxury of deciding their own fate as illustrated by the Russian annexation of Crimea and subsequent invasion of Ukraine.

Second, the War in Ukraine illustrates how differences between spheres are increasing. In a sphere of influence-world, power politics becomes more important, but so does the ideological underpinnings of the spheres. The opportunities and challenges of the small states are affected not only by their limited capabilities and the probability of military conflict but also their ideological distance to and ideological substance of the great power(s), whose orbit the the small states are part of.¹⁰ It matters if the

⁹ See, e.g., Andrew Gawthorpe “Taking US foreign policy for the middle class seriously,” *The Washington Quarterly*, Volume 45, No. 1 (2022): p. 57-75.

¹⁰ Birthe Hansen, Peter Toft and Anders Wivel *Security Strategies and American World Order: Lost Power* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2009).

hegemon leads through diplomacy and institutions or by military threats and action, and it matters if the small state agrees or disagrees with the regional hegemon on fundamental values. The the small states in the Euro-Atlantic community may feel the pressure from the United States to spend more on defence and face limitations on decisions on critical infrastructure and trade, but the United States continues to be their best bet to preserve national security, not a threat against it.

“Finally, a more militarized, more regionalized, and more marked by great power competition international order alters the foreign policy roles accessible to small nations as well as the costs and advantages of performing these positions.”

Finally, a more militarized, more regionalized, and more marked by great power competition international order alters the foreign policy roles accessible to small nations as well as the costs and advantages of performing these positions. It also creates more variation among the small states on which roles may benefit the state. For instance, whereas non-alignment becomes potentially more costly in the borderlands between spheres of influence, it is coming back in other parts of the international system. As noted by Shivshankar Menon in *Foreign Policy*, “[t]he more the United States, Russia, China, or other powers pressure other countries to choose sides, the more those countries will be drawn to strategic autonomy”.¹¹

What Should the Small States do?

The small states respond differently to the the War in Ukraine, because they are affected by the war in different ways and vary in their capabilities and capacities to meet the challenges following the war. Nordic non-aligned countries Finland and Sweden were quick to apply for membership of NATO. They were welcomed by most NATO members, because they are democratic, resilient and able to strengthen NATO by their geopolitical location, knowledge and competencies of the Baltic Sea and the High North, military capabilities, and ability and willingness to invest in defence in the future. In contrast, many other the small states have no options to seek security shelter or prefer to ‘go-it-alone’ by neutrality, hedging or brinkmanship.

Despite variation in capabilities, options, and preferences, the small states share at

¹¹ Shivshankar Menon “A New Cold War May Call for a Return to Nonalignment,” *Foreign Policy* (Summer 2022): p. 34-35.

least three interests in reconstructing international order after the War in Ukraine. First, the small states have an interest in a *modus vivendi* between the great powers, which minimizes the risk of great power war as well as the annexation and invasion of smaller states. This requires accepting a less-than-perfect international order from the small states and great powers. Great powers will have to accept the co-existence of visions for domestic and international orders rivalling their own. The small states will have to accept an order in which the great powers have a special role in maintaining and developing international society. This is not too different from previous eras in the history of the modern state system. Still, it is different from the “new world order” vision promoted by the United States in the immediate post-Cold War era and Liberal Internationalism 3.0, which in many ways was implementing that vision.

Second, the small states have an interest in a rule-based international order. A rules-based international order is good for the small states because it creates a level playing field (because everyone has to follow the same rules) and makes it expensive for big powers to break the rules (at the very least they need to spend resources on explaining why and risk the loss of status and influence).¹² Luckily for the small states, we have a rule-based international order, which has so far proven relatively resilient despite ongoing crisis. However, at a time when great powers are more explicit about their national interests, and more likely to view these interests as independent from – or even detrimental to – a rule-based order, the small states need to step up, if they are to preserve and develop the rule-based international order. The lessons from the Covid19 pandemic will prove helpful in this regard. With great power relations in crisis and stronger states focused on their own national interests, small managed to network on knowledge sharing and best practices, while simultaneously using this to boost their own international status.¹³

Finally, the small states should aim to relaunch the United Nations as the central arena for debates on international society and an important platform for action. For the small states in the West, this requires humility and willingness to scale down some of the more ambitious initiatives from the past decades to remake the UN as a the organization, it was originally intended to be: a forum for voice and negotiation among sovereign states.¹⁴ Fortunately, they will find much support from non-Western the small states agreeing to Winston Churchill’s old maxim that “Jaw Jaw is better

¹² Iver B. Neumann and Sieglind Gstöhl “Introduction: Lilliputians in Gulliver’s World?” in Christine Ingebritsen, Iver Neumann, Sieglind Gstöhl and Jessica Beyer (eds.) *The small states in International Relations* (Seattle: University of Washington Press): p. 3-36, see p. 20.

¹³ Rebecca Pedit and Anders “Small State Diplomacy after the Corona Crisis,” *The Hague Journal of Diplomacy*, Volume 15, No. 4 (2020): p. 611-623.

¹⁴ Louise Riis Andersen “Curb your enthusiasm: Middle-power liberal internationalism and the future of the United Nations,” *International Journal*, Volume 74, No. 1 (2019): p. 47-64.

than War War”, but skeptical of how the liberal agenda has been pursued over the past decades.

Concluding on The Small States and the War in Ukraine

Russia’s interventions in Ukraine exemplify a return to classical great power foreign policy instruments: annexation and invasion. However, at the same time it illustrates why these instruments have gone out of fashion. Like the United States and its allies in Afghanistan and Iraq, Russia has a hard time securing victory over what seemed to be a much weaker enemy. To be sure, military instruments have been part of the great power foreign policy toolbox since the advent of the modern state system. The U.S.-led “liberal wars of choice” were part of, or maybe even a consequence of, “Liberal Internationalism 3.0”. Nonetheless, a reasonably peaceful and stable international order was ensured by robust rules on the right to self-determination, strong international institutions, and shared great power interests in a globalized international system, allowing even the small states to pursue riches, security, and (niche) influence in international affairs.

The war has refocused international attention on the importance of military might and reminded the small states of their vulnerability in case of great power rivalry and conflict. They are now more dependent on regional security complexes and less affected by global dynamics in a post-unipolar international system seemingly drifting towards “non-polarity”, rather than a new bipolar or multipolar order. In this emerging order, the small states need “to choose their battles wisely, to prioritize their resources and to foster networks with other the small states seeking to survive and thrive in a post-unipolar international order.”¹⁵ The capacity to develop an international system that stays rule-based and relaunches the United Nations as the major platform for articulating interests and finding solutions that may not be perfect, but are still better than murder and devastation, and essential for the small states to succeed in this endeavor.

¹⁵ Rebecca Pedit and Anders Wivel “What Future for The small states After Unipolarity? Strategic Opportunities and Challenges in the Post-American World Order,” in Nina Græger, Bertel Heurlin, Ole Wæver and Anders Wivel (eds.) *Polarity in International Relations: Past, Present, Future* (Cham: Palgrave, 2022): p. 127-147, see p. 142.

U.S. FOREIGN POLICY AND THE WAR IN UKRAINE

This essay assesses the impact of the war in Ukraine on American foreign policy. The thesis provided here is that the war in Ukraine must be viewed as a painful but maybe necessary shock therapy that has helped to relieve the residual hangover from America's two-decade-long, ill-advised war on terror and the lost wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. In parallel, the war has served as a vehicle for the reinvigoration of national grand strategy and the foreign policy that provides the vital connective tissue between ends, ways, and means. In this trinity, the foreign policy represents an instrumental tool to connect the assumptions that undergird grand strategy to the practical, real-world of international politics.

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*Keywords: Grand Strategy, Russian Invasion of Ukraine,
U.S. Foreign Policy, U.S. Primacy, War on Terror (WOT).*



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The Prelude

America's reaction to the war in Ukraine is nested in a broader phenomenon that, some would argue, has seen America wandering in a foreign policy wilderness since the end of the Cold War. As nonsensical as it may seem, given the "victory" over the Soviet Union, the post-Cold War era saw the United States struggle to articulate sensible, straightforward strategic priorities around which to structure grand strategy, and foreign policy, and to specify the role of force as an instrument thereof. The Clinton administration used then-Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's references to the threat presented by "rogue regimes" such as North Korea, Iran, and Iraq to successfully avoid the "peace dividend" budget chop, which threatened to eliminate defense programs and reduce force structure. By contrast, the European social democracies and NATO members disarmed, gutting their militaries and defense budgets to strengthen their social contracts. By and large, European states redirected funds spent on their armies to health care, education, and infrastructure.

The strategic and sideways drift of the 1990s eventually ended with the 9/11 attacks, and the full-throated militaristic embrace of the global battlefield proclaimed and packaged up under the so-called "War on Terror," or WOT. The WOT proved far worse than the more benign conceptual drift of the 1990s. In the 1990s, the United States became enamored of aerial policing in places like the Balkans and the Middle East as the preferred instrument to influence objectionable politics on the ground. After 9/11, the country's land forces got handed the job of directly refereeing local politics on the basis to disastrous effect, accumulating staggering monetary and human costs in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the broader Middle East. America's trail of blood-soaked wreckage indeed stretched far and wide in the post-9/11 era.¹

However, America's foreign policy choices of the 1990s and the post-9/11 era did not appear in a vacuum but instead grew from conceptual and theoretical roots in the academic and broader foreign policy community. A constant of America's post-Cold War era has been the continuous and unresolved argument between various foreign policy schools that indelibly shaped the choices of multiple administrations that moved through the White House. The Biden Administration and its reaction to the war in Ukraine is no exception.

Over the 30 years since the Cold War's end, three schools of thought have dominated

¹ The *Costs of War Project* compiled by researchers at the Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs, Brown University estimates that the United States incurred over \$8.04 trillion in direct budgetary costs on the WOT during the period between FY 2001 – FY 2022. The project estimates another additional \$2.2 trillion in future costs of veteran-related health care related to the wars. Civilian and military casualties in the various war zones totaled between 897,000-920,000, according to the project. An estimated 38 million people were displaced by the post-9/11 wars. Figures available online at <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/costs>

the foreign policy debate: (1) Liberal interventionists who argue that the United States can and should use its pre-eminent global position to shape the global order in ways that redound to America's (and its allies) advantage by adhering to normative rules governing trade, immigration, interstate relations, the use of force, and international law; (2) Liberal internationalists who mostly agree with the first school but also add in need to enhance global multilateralism as practiced through global institutions. This group also agrees with those from the first school that force can and should be used for moral purposes; (3) Realists, who, over the last three decades and during the Cold War, argued for a foreign policy based on a cost-benefit analysis of whether actions made the country more robust and more prosperous.² Realists mostly have argued against the interventionist tendencies of the first two schools that, in their view, have led to America needlessly over-extending itself and frittering away political and military power in wars that were of tangential interest to the state.³

“In the 1990s, the United States became enamored of aerial policing in places like the Balkans and the Middle East as the preferred instrument to influence objectionable politics on the ground. After 9/11, the country’s land forces got handed the job of directly refereeing local politics on the basis to disastrous effect, accumulating staggering monetary and human costs in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the broader Middle East.”

There is little doubt that interventionist supporters won the foreign policy argument during the previous 20 years, a discussion molded partly by the 9/11 assaults. The realist’s message of calculated restraint was peremptorily cast aside by the think-tank-based foreign policy establishment. Indeed, the first two decades of the 21st

² These categories are offered up as illustrative and in the opinion of the author represent the mainstream thought in U.S. foreign policy over the last quarter century. Of course, all foreign policy categories, or schools of thought, are muddled – with overlap between each of the different approaches. See Michael C. Desch, “Liberals, Neocons, and Realcons,” *Orbis*, Vol. 45 No. 4 (Fall 2001): p. 519-533. Desch summarizes the differing approaches to humanitarian interventions in this piece to draw distinctions between different schools of foreign policy. A useful summary of these schools and the debate referenced in this piece is contained in Emma Ashford, “Strategies of Restraint,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 100 No. 5 (Sept.-Oct. 2021): p. 128-141. Also see Steve Smith, Amelia Hadfield, and Tim Dunne, *Foreign Policy: Theories, Actors and Cases*, 3rd ed. (Oxford University Press, 2016).

³ Perhaps best represented by Stephen Walt M. Walt and his various realist-oriented commentaries offered on *Foreign Policy* online at <https://foreignpolicy.com/author/stephen-m-walt/>

century featured a trigger-happy American foreign policy featuring its military forces deployed worldwide – even if to mixed effect.

All these factors precede and frame American foreign policy in the war in Ukraine.

Shifting Geopolitical and Functional Attention

Perhaps the most important development is that the war in Ukraine finally has wrenched U.S. strategy and foreign policy away from its geographic focus on the Middle East and South Asia towards the principal Eurasian land powers.⁴ The push to extract the United States from its ill-fated misadventures in the Middle East is not necessarily new. Indeed, the Obama Administration announced a much ballyhooed “pivot” to Asia as far back as 2012. But almost as soon as the ink dried on that press release, the Obama Administration found itself forced back into the Middle East with various military operations against ISIS, dealing with the aftermath of the failed Libyan intervention, and trying to contain the 2nd order effects surrounding the disintegration of Syria and Iraq.

In 2018, the Trump Administration, enunciating an “America First” preference, once more attempted to wrench America’s attention away from the Middle East in its *National Defense Strategy*, noting that managing strategic competition between near-peer competitors in China and Russia had become a national priority. That “shift,” however, like the Obama Administration’s, became undermined by a growing confrontation with Iran following the U.S. unilateral withdrawal from the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action. The Trump Administration’s virtual abandonment of America’s European/NATO partners while simultaneously withdrawing from the Obama Administration’s painstakingly negotiated Trans-Pacific Partnership compromised any attempt to shift strategic attention towards peer competitors in Moscow and Peking.

The Biden Administration has aggressively seized the opportunities presented by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine to thankfully consign the WOT to the dustbin of history. It’s about time.

In its place is an American foreign policy centered on geopolitics across Europe and Asia with a decided Atlanticist center of gravity. In foreign policy terms, this means that the U.S. has traded authoritarian, sclerotic, and untrustworthy states in the Middle East for historical and capable allies in Europe and Asia, with whom it

⁴The geographer Halford Mackinder forecasted over a century ago that the Eurasian land mass constituted the most important global strategic theater. See Halford Mackinder, “The Geographical Pivot of History,” *The Geographical Journal* 23, No. 4 (April 2004).

can collaborate on more fruitful endeavors than the WOT's obsession with defeating violent Islamic extremists.

“Russia’s invasion of Ukraine allowed the Biden Administration to breathe life into this strategic formulation and virtually overnight reinvigorated NATO and the European Union, restoring both to their rightful positions as significant global institutions. NATO, in particular, found itself front and center as the preferred transatlantic security institution to manage the allied response to the invasion.”

Reasserting U.S. Primacy

The return to geopolitics free from the WOT straight-jacket has allowed the United States to reassert itself as the political fulcrum of the West, positioning itself as the global bulwark against the anti-Western regimes in Moscow and Peking. Indeed, the United States has embraced a much more comfortable and manageable strategic formulation that divides the world between freedom-loving democracies and authoritarian, rights-denying dictatorships. While not a purely Cold War formulation, the global contest between these two different systems certainly draws upon the era’s metaphor of pitting good vs. evil along the geographic divide.

Russia’s invasion of Ukraine allowed the Biden Administration to breathe life into this strategic formulation and virtually overnight reinvigorated NATO and the European Union, restoring both to their rightful positions as significant global institutions. NATO, in particular, found itself front and center as the preferred transatlantic security institution to manage the allied response to the invasion. Returning to a role not seen since the Cold War, NATO military staff immediately began integrated and coordinated planning to return U.S. forces to Europe and NATO’s new members in Eastern Europe and the Baltic. The Biden Administration leaped at the opportunity created by the invasion to move ground and air units back into their former Cold War stomping grounds, once more inextricably tying American and European security together as an integrated “West” under American leadership.

Just as important, the Biden Administration took full advantage of the changed

political circumstances in Europe created by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Virtually overnight, Vladimir Putin turned what had been European deaf ears to America's 30-year burden-sharing mantra calling for more defense spending into aggressive new rearmament plans. European political unity undermined by the United Kingdom's pullout from the European Union under BREXIT in 2020 disappeared in the rear-view mirror as Finland and Sweden actively and successfully petitioned for admission to NATO, turning the Baltic into a NATO-dominated lake. In the summer of 2022, the U.S. Marine Corps trained with its Swedish counterparts in various island archipelagos in the Baltic – a previously unthinkable idea for the historically neutral country.⁵

The reassertion of U.S. primacy in the transatlantic relationship had another substantial salutary effect. It has provided a proper political accompaniment to the undeniable strategic reality of 21st-century European politics and security: Germany is now clearly the most powerful country on the continent, returning to a position it has not held since before World War II. The old formulation of “keeping Germany down” as one of the main Cold War benefits of U.S. primacy in NATO clearly has been overtaken by changed strategic circumstances.⁶ Germany must now be seen as the most important European anchor in the alliance as it embarks on an aggressive rearmament program to defend itself (and its alliance partners) from potential Russian aggression.⁷ Germany's assumption of this responsibility working with the United States and its European allies represents one of the central dramas unfolding in the post-Ukraine war period that has given added urgency to the NATO article 5 commitments that call for all members to collectively defend each other in the event of an attack.

Not only has the return of American primacy stiffened European resolve to defend itself, it has also used this position to generate support for confronting China in the Asian theater – a case made stronger by the announcement of a “no-limits” strategic partnership between Russia and China 20 days before Russia's invasion of Ukraine. At the NATO Madrid Summit in June 2022, the new alliance *Strategic Concept* identified China for the first time as a malign actor that potentially threatened alliance “interests and values.”⁸ During the last two years, various NATO navies

⁵ Helene Cooper, “Back in the Fight,” *New York Times Magazine*, 4 October 2022. As noted by Cooper, “...Russia's invasion of Ukraine upended 200 years of global pacifism for the children of the Vikings,” Article online at <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/10/04/us/politics/sweden-ukraine-nato-marines.html>

⁶ NATO Secretary General, Hastings Lionel Ismay, 1st Baron Ismay is widely credited with the formulation that the purpose of NATO was to “keep the Soviet Union out, the Americans in, and the Germans down.” He served as NATO's first secretary general.

⁷ The same is true of Japan in the Pacific theater and the confrontation with China.

⁸ *NATO 2022 Strategic Concept* posted online at https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2022/6/pdf/290622-strategic-concept.pdf

have patrolled the contested South China Sea as well as the Strait of Taiwan as a signal of their support for the Biden Administration's active attempt to deter further Chinese military encroachment and expansion. It's hard to imagine such steps being coordinated by the alliance absent the sense of strategic urgency created by Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

“The Biden Administration clearly indicated at the outset of the war that it would not seek direct military confrontation with Russia and would not introduce its own forces on Ukrainian soil but would consider Ukrainian requests for help in defending itself. Since the halting, early days of the war, the Biden Administration and its European allies have clearly opened the spigot to various advanced armaments for the Ukrainians that now total in the tens billions of dollars.”

The Return of Nuclear Weapons

In what many might regard as another of the “back to the future” features of the altered strategic environment is the re-emphasis on nuclear weapons and their instrumental role in grand strategy and foreign policy. While Al Qaeda, ISIS, and its affiliates have remained unimpressed and undeterred by these weapons over the last 20 years, nuclear weapons have been restored to their central role in the strategic bargaining framework between the West and Russia.

Regrettably, the war in Ukraine has seen both Russia and the United States make open references to their nuclear arsenals, with Russian President Vladimir Putin actively threatening nuclear use on several occasions. It is clear that both the United States and Russia recognize that these weapons have strategic, political, and (in Russia's case) military utility. The prospect that these weapons could be used has burst like an unwelcome thunderclap over the international system, serving as a painful reminder of their continued threat to humanity.

The war in Ukraine has seen the return of long-forgotten Cold War-era concepts associated with deterrence, escalation and escalation management, nuclear and conventional weapons integration, and extended deterrence and security guarantees. In the early 1960s, NATO adopted the doctrine of Flexible Response that recognized

the role of nuclear weapons in a “seamless web” of conventional and nuclear capabilities designed to deter Soviet aggression and, if necessary, prevail in a military confrontation. During the era, the United States deployed thousands of tactical nuclear weapons at sea and on land in defense of Europe, not to mention the French and British strategic nuclear arsenals deployed on submarines. It is clear that Russia’s invasion of Ukraine has re-opened many of these same issues surrounding the possible deployment of additional nuclear weapons to Europe. The Biden Administration and its NATO partners undoubtedly face a period of intensive political and military consultations to address the means of common defense and the role once more to be played by nuclear weapons.

The war in Ukraine has focused on the divergent approaches taken by the United States and Russia to their respective nuclear arsenals since the end of the Cold War. Perhaps the most significant development is that the nuclear arms control framework between the two states teeters on the brink of collapse. The United States consciously has chosen to de-emphasize and reduce its nuclear arsenal, today observing the New START Treaty limits of 700 deployed intercontinental ballistic missiles, 1,550 warheads deployed on strategic systems, and 800 deployed and non-deployed launchers on missiles and bombers. The United States today regards Russia in violation of both New START and the 1987 Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces (INF) treaty that banned nuclear-capable ballistic and cruise missiles with ranges between 500-5000 kilometers. In August 2022, Russia denied access to U.S. inspectors seeking to inspect the Russian nuclear arsenal as is required under the treaty and unilaterally canceled a routine follow-on meeting in November.⁹ According to the United States, Russia has fielded a new family of nuclear-capable cruise missiles known as 9M729 that exceeds the range limits of the INF treaty. Perhaps more significantly, Russia has been actively modernizing its arsenal of tactical, flexible yield nuclear weapons estimated to number 2000.¹⁰ Moreover, it has articulated a military doctrine known as “escalate to de-escalate,” in which tactical nuclear weapons are seen as a powerful instrument to control escalation in a war. Thankfully, that doctrine has not yet been tested in Ukraine.¹¹

There can be no question that nuclear weapons undergird the delicate bargaining framework created by the war – a framework being managed under the rubric of foreign policy. Both sides ultimately seek to deter the other from using these

⁹ John Hudson and Kelly Kasulis Cho, “U.S. Accuses Russia of Not Complying With Key Nuclear Arms Treaty,” *Washington Post*, February 1, 2003.

¹⁰ Detailed in David E. Sanger and William J. Broad, “Russia’s Small Nuclear Arms: A Risky Option for Putin and Ukraine Alike,” *New York Times*, 3 October 2022.

¹¹ Michael Kofman and Anya Loukianova, “Escalation Management and Nuclear Employment in Russian Military Strategy,” *War on the Rocks*, 19 September 2022. Online at <https://warontherocks.com/2022/09/escalation-management-and-nuclear-employment-in-russian-military-strategy-2/>

weapons even as they explore how these weapons can be applied for political and strategic effects. In some respects, the complex bargaining framework operates just as Thomas Schelling suggested in his seminal book *Arms and Influence*.¹² The escalation flashpoint in this potentially deadly interaction is the ever-increasing amounts of military aid in the form of lethal military equipment being funneled to Ukraine by the United States and its NATO allies.

The Biden Administration clearly indicated at the outset of the war that it would not seek direct military confrontation with Russia and would not introduce its own forces on Ukrainian soil but would consider Ukrainian requests for help in defending itself. Since the halting, early days of the war, the Biden Administration and its European allies have clearly opened the spigot to various advanced armaments for the Ukrainians that now total in the tens billions of dollars. Whereas early arguments centered on giving restricted weapons such as surface-to-air missiles such as the Stinger, the Ukrainian military is currently receiving some of the most powerful ground – and air – defense systems in Western arsenals, which are primarily credited with halting Russia's advance and pushing back its armed troops. Advanced ground systems such as American, British and German tanks will arrive over the next several months.

The Biden Administration continues to make a calculated gamble that sending Ukraine ever more advanced systems, like the Patriot PAC III missile- and air defense systems, will not prompt an escalatory Russian response. So far, Russia has not attacked or attempted to disrupt the flow of arms into Ukraine. It is a delicate situation reminiscent of earlier Cold War-era confrontations. In Vietnam, the United States confronted the wide-scale resupply of North Vietnam by both China and the Soviet Union but ultimately decided against widening the war in ways that might have interrupted or prevented their support to North Vietnam. In Afghanistan, the United States, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan funneled military supplies to the Mujaheddin that proved critical in forcing the eventual Soviet withdrawal in 1989. So far, deterrence thankfully has held, and Russia has not widened the geographic scope of the war. Nonetheless, the Biden Administration and its European allies continue to tempt fate by pushing ever more advanced weapons onto the battlefield to assist Ukraine.

Problematic Problems

Several of the most evident effects of the war in Ukraine on U.S. foreign policy have been discussed thus far: a return to more strategic geopolitics; a reassertion of U.S. supremacy as head of the Western coalition; and the reintroduction of

¹² Thomas Schelling, *Arms and Influence* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1966), Also see Schelling, *The Strategy of Conflict* (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press, 1960).

nuclear weapons as essentially political and military tools that underpin policy implementation. This analysis also suggests that the Biden Administration generally has done a creditable job in addressing these three areas and has shown diplomatic acumen in responding to the foreign policy crisis created by the war – skills that clearly were absent in the Trump Administration.

It is also the case, however, that the response to the war in Ukraine demonstrates that while the hangover from the WOT may be dissipating, some of the foreign policy bad habits established over the period remain distressingly prevalent.

At the top of the list is a pronounced national-level difficulty in properly relating the levels of war between the strategic, operational, and tactical levels. Over the 20-odd years of fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan, these levels of war became inverted. In both Iraq and Afghanistan, for example, various American presidents and military leaders referred to “counterinsurgency” as a wartime strategy confusing the term with a series of tactics. These wars saw the United States elevate military operations and tactics to the strategic level in the vain hope that clever tactics and operations would substitute for strategy and deliver the long-and desperately sought battlefield victory. This was and remained an illusion: advanced weapons, innovative tactics and operations cannot overcome the political and strategic factors that determine whether one side or the other can impose their will on their antagonist. In the post-9/11 era wars, the United States piled up impressive-looking enemy body counts but decisively lost both wars.

What does this have to do with the war in Ukraine? It suggests a second prevalent problem: clearly articulating strategic objectives. The United States has once more entered a war (albeit indirectly) where the ultimate war aims from the American perspective appear open-ended and unclear just as they did during the strategically obtuse WOT. As was the case during the WOT, the United States casts its support for Ukraine under a morally attractive shroud of “good vs. evil.” Such a characterization might be useful as rallying cry and speech sound bite but is not particularly helpful in describing American objectives in the war – a war, by the way, being fought by someone else. Under such a formulation, the impression is created that the United States commitment is indeed neither time nor objective dependent, when neither is true. Some influential commentators, for example, argue that the United States must see the Russia “defeated” in Ukraine, while Biden Administration Defense Secretary Austin Long has stated that that the U.S. wants to see the Russian military “weakened” as a result of the war.¹³

¹³ Missy Ryan and Annabelle Timsit, “U.S. Wants Russian Military ‘Weakened’ from Ukraine Invasion, Austin Says,” *Washington Post*, April 25, 2022. As an example of those arguing for a more decisive result, see Eliot A. Cohen, “Western Aid to Ukraine is Still Not Enough,” *The Atlantic*, January 17, 2023.

Clearly, defining objectives is a central foreign policy challenge that has not yet been met. To be sure, it is a delicate and fraught circumstance with multiple actors whose interests don't necessarily overlap. The reality is that American war objectives may not mesh with Ukraine's. Moreover, European interests and objectives also must be figured into the formulation, mainly if the "West" is to speak with one voice. If these partners don't share objectives, it will be difficult to agree upon when and under what circumstances the war should stop. Russia obviously gets a vote in this calculus, and, to date, shows no interest in a negotiated settlement. The political coalition of Ukraine, Europe, and the United States has heavy lifting ahead to define these issues; at the same time, all the parties seek to limit the possibility of Russian escalation that would widen the geographic scope of the war.

An essential addition to this list that was not present in the WOT is America's fractious domestic politics that undermines its ability to conduct a consensus-based foreign policy. Strangely, right-wing Republicans showed little opposition to spending money on the country's fruitless jihadi hunt across the Middle East and South Asia but are less sure they want to continue supporting Ukraine in its war with Russia. The new Speaker of the House, Rep. Kevin McCarthy (R-CA), has already signaled that the Biden Administration cannot expect automatic support for additional military assistance to Ukraine. McCarthy, whose own position as a speaker is far from solid, only reflects the reactionary sentiments of the unruly Republican House mob that appears more interested in undermining democracy at home than it does in confronting enemies of democracy abroad.

Conclusions

The argument in this piece suggests that U.S. foreign policy in the war in Ukraine must be understood in the broader context framed by America's post-Cold War era search for a set of sensible strategic priorities around which to structure grand strategy and implementing policy. Indeed, the war has provided a necessary "shock" to the proverbial foreign policy system that hopefully has allowed the U.S. to move on from the disastrous post-9/11 WOT wars. The Biden Administration has seized the moment to focus on geopolitics in Europe and Asia and has reinvigorated historic partnerships across both areas.

The Biden Administration's reactions draw upon the previously referenced interventionist foreign policy mainstream in crafting its response to the war in Ukraine. Clearly, it has used the circumstance as a vehicle to reassert American importance in support of the liberal international order. In parallel, it has reinvigorated Western multilateral political and military institutions as a means to this end. This

view of foreign policy envisions an important – even central – role for the U.S. military that has since returned to Europe. Drawing upon the Cold War era’s past, the Biden Administration has once more returned the concept of deterrence to the U.S. strategic lexicon, ultimately backstopped by its strategic nuclear arsenal.

Whether the United States will continue in its position as the primary Western power – and glue for other allied nations in confronting Russia and China – remains to be seen. For the time being, there can be no question that the Biden Administration has successfully reconstructed Cold-War era relationships and the NATO alliance in confronting Russian aggression. Translating that same approach towards China is a more difficult, long-term project, the success of which will depend on drawing together a much more fractured collection of states that lack a cohesive threat perception to bind them together in collective action.

Lingering out there with the most tremendous potential for disruption to American foreign policy is the disgruntled right wing of domestic politics that prevents a unified home front with which to project unity and strength abroad.

THE ROLE OF DEMOCRACY DISCOURSE IN THE EMERGING “NEW COLD WAR”

In the first three decades after China initiated reform and opening-up policies in 1978, its relations with the United States (U.S.) improved steadily. However, in the post-2007/2008 global financial crisis period, both countries' attitudes toward each other began to change. Particularly since the Trump administration, as the U.S. started to define China as its main competitor; their bilateral relations deteriorated further. As a result, scholars, diplomats, and politicians worldwide began to talk about the emergence of a new Cold War between China and the U.S., encompassing economic, ideological, military, and political aspects. The ideological aspect of this emerging “new Cold War” revolves around the discourse of democracy.

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With the end of the Cold War, the international system transformed into unipolarity and the United States (U.S.) emerged as the unrivaled superpower. Several authors, Francis Fukuyama being in the first place, viewed the victory of capitalism against socialism as the “end of history”¹ and claimed that liberal democracy emerged as the unrivaled political system. Since the mid-1990s, however, another group of authors argued that this assertion was not true and that China, a rising power, would challenge the U.S.-centered system.² Although this view was supported by the U.S. foreign policy and security elite, the U.S. capital’s strong relations with China led U.S. administrations throughout the 1990s and 2000s to view China as a partner rather than a rival. As a result, the Clinton and Bush administrations looked for opportunities to engage China in the U.S.-led international system.³ However, things started to change after the global financial crisis of 2007-2008. While the crisis wounded the belief in western capitalism’s capacity to create wealth, the Chinese model seemed to be working successfully in the post-crisis period. As a result, China’s confidence in its system increased, and it started to follow assertive economic and foreign policies.⁴ The U.S. responded to this change in China’s behavior by first increasing its presence in the Asia Pacific and strengthening its ties with its allies and partners under the Obama administration,⁵ then by launching an aggressive economic and foreign policy, including the start of a trade war during the Trump administration⁶ and finally by combining previous two administrations’ efforts and initiating a policy of countering China’s rise in economic, ideological, military and political fields under the Biden administration. As a result of these moves, scholars, diplomats, and politicians worldwide began to talk about the emergence of a new Cold War between the U.S. and China.

Biden Administration’s China Policy and the Idea of a New Cold War

Under Joe Biden’s leadership, to counter China and Russia, the U.S. began attempts to form an “alliance of democracies”. Before being elected President of the United States, Biden stated in a Foreign Affairs article in January 2020 that the United States should demonstrate to the world that it is ready to govern the international order as a fearless defender of democratic values, freedom of the press, the right to vote,

¹ Francis Fukuyama, “The End of History,” *The National History*, No. 16 (Summer 1989): p. 3-18.

² Samuel P. Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations,” *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 3 (Summer 1993): p. 22-49; Richard Bernstein and Rosa H. Monroe, *The Coming Conflict with China* (New York: Knopf, 1997).

³ Ho-fung Hung, *Clash of Empires* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2022): p. 11-24.

⁴ Nien-chung Chang Liao, “Winds of Change: Assessing China’s Assertive Turn in Foreign Policy,” *Journal of Asian and African Studies*, Vol. 53 No. 6 (2018): p. 880-895.

⁵ Kenneth G. Lieberthal, “The American Pivot to Asia,” *Brookings*, 21 December 2011. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-american-pivot-to-asia/>

⁶ Sanja Arežina, “U.S.-China Relations Under the Trump Administration,” *China Quarterly of International Strategic Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 3 (2019): p. 289-315.

and liberal democratic values.⁷ In his election speech on 7 November 2020, Biden said, “America is a beacon for the globe”.⁸ He also stated that if the international leadership, which was abandoned during the Donald Trump era, is not assumed by the U.S. again, it will either be taken over by a rival power like China or chaos will prevail in the world.⁹

“Behind Biden’s words lies the idea that a new Cold War has begun between the U.S. and China.”

Under Biden’s presidency, the U.S. intends to regain and maintain its leadership in the international system, especially against China. Before he was inaugurated as the U.S. President, Biden told, “The best Chinese strategy... is one which gets every one of our - or at least what used to be our - allies on the same page”.¹⁰ He believes the U.S. should establish a united front against China with its partners and allies and stand up to China’s “harmful” acts. Because if the U.S. is joined by its allies and partners, the arrangements to be made on many matters ranging from the environment to trade and from technology to transparency will preserve liberal democratic interests and values - in other words, the interests of the U.S. - rather than China’s interests.¹¹

Behind Biden’s words lies the idea that a new Cold War has begun between the U.S. and China. Even though both Biden¹² himself and Secretary of State Antony Blinken¹³ stated that the U.S. does not seek a new Cold War, the “new Cold War” has become a frequently used concept in the U.S.-based mainstream International

⁷ Joe Biden, “Why America Must Lead Again”, *Foreign Affairs*, 23 January 2020. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2020-01-23/why-america-must-lead-again>

⁸ Alex War, “Joe Biden in Victory Speech: Let This Grim Era of Demonization in America Begin to End,” *Vox*, 7 November 2020. <https://www.vox.com/2020/11/7/21554701/joe-biden-acceptance-speech-2020-election>

⁹ Biden, 2020.

¹⁰ Thomas Friedman, “Biden Made Sure ‘Trump Is Not Going to Be President for Four More Years,’” *The New York Times*, 2 December 2020. <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/12/02/opinion/biden-interview-mcconnell-china-iran.html>

¹¹ Biden, 2020.

¹² “President Biden: ‘We are not seeking a new Cold War or a world divided’”, *BBC*, 21 September 2021. <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-us-canada-58644091>

¹³ Antony J. Blinken, “The Administration’s Approach to the People’s Republic of China”, U.S. Department of State, 26 May 2022. <https://www.state.gov/the-administrations-approach-to-the-peoples-republic-of-china/>

Relations literature.¹⁴ According to Robert Kaplan, who claims that a new Cold War has already started between the U.S. and China, there are definite and fundamental differences between these two powers, and these differences cannot be eliminated completely. For him, like the old one, the new Cold War has military, economic and ideological pillars, and in all three areas, as its number one opponent, China challenges the U.S.'s right to leadership.¹⁵

Kaplan claims that in the military realm, China wants to fend the U.S. Navy off from the Western Pacific. To Chinese rulers, the Western Pacific is as important to their country as the Caribbean is to the U.S.. On the other hand, U.S. administrations have always viewed the U.S. as a Pacific power. This is as true today as it was during Japan's - forced - opening in 1853.¹⁶ Elliott Abrams states that, in order to meet China's military challenge, the U.S. needs to increase its military spending and produce more conventional military hardware as well as nuclear weapons.¹⁷ According to Kaplan, China challenges the supremacy of the U.S. in the economic field as well and there is bipartisan support to meet this challenge. By agreeing that China "steals intellectual property, acquires sensitive technology through company buyouts, fuses governmental and private sectors so that their enterprises have an unfair edge... and so on," Democrats and Republicans, for instance, find themselves on the same side in the ongoing trade war.¹⁸ Based on a similar position, the U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission's 2022 Annual Report to Congress suggests the U.S. government abandon the previously attempted but failed approach of trying to engage China in the international economic system and instead develop a new strategy to build resilience against the distorting effects of state capitalist practices of China.¹⁹

Another area where this rivalry takes place is ideology. Contrary to the post-World War II era, during which the world was divided into capitalist and socialist blocs, today it is hard to talk about a sharp ideological divide taking place between two

¹⁴ I.e. Odd Arne Westad, "Has a New Cold War Really Begun?", *Foreign Affairs*, 27 March 2018. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2018-03-27/has-new-cold-war-really-begun>; Hal Brands and John Lewis Gaddis, "The New Cold War," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 100, No. 6 (November/December 2021). <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/united-states/2021-10-19/new-cold-war>; Michael T. Klare, "Welcome to the New Cold War," *The Nation*, 14 January 2022. <https://www.thenation.com/article/world/china-cold-war/>; Ian Bremmer, "The New Cold War Could Soon Heat Up," *Foreign Affairs*, 5 May 2022. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/russia-fsu/2022-05-05/new-cold-war-could-soon-heat>

¹⁵ Robert D. Kaplan, "A New Cold War Has Begun," *Foreign Policy*, 7 January 2019. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2019/01/07/a-new-cold-war-has-begun/>

¹⁶ Kaplan, 7 January 2019.

¹⁷ Elliott Abrams, "The New Cold War," *National Review*, 3 March 2022. <https://www.nationalreview.com/magazine/2022/03/21/the-new-cold-war/#slide-1>

¹⁸ Kaplan, 7 January 2019.

¹⁹ U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, "2022 Report to Congress," November 2022. <https://www.uscc.gov/annual-report/2022-annual-report-congress>

distinct groups of countries. Even though China is still governed by a communist party, since the 1980s, the same party initiated reforms to transform the country's socialist economic structure into a capitalist structure.²⁰ In other words, today's China is no longer a socialist country but represents a variety in the spectrum of capitalism. For this reason, the supporters of the new Cold War, both scholars and politicians, are trying to establish the discourse of an ideological struggle taking place between China and the U.S. based on a dichotomy between democracy and authoritarianism instead of an antagonism between capitalism and socialism. This way, the U.S. is described as the leader of the democratic world against “Chinese authoritarianism” as it did lead the “free world” against “Soviet dictatorship” during the Cold War. Kaplan claims that the ideological divide between China and the U.S. is immense as the divide between the U.S. and the Soviet Union.²¹ In short, the ideological aspect of the emerging “new Cold War” between the U.S. and China revolves around the discourse of democracy.

“According to Chinese leaders, the U.S. democracy is both unique to that country and far from perfect. It is therefore unacceptable for the U.S. to impose its model on other countries through wars or other means.”

The U.S.'s Summit for Democracy

The U.S. leadership also supports the idea that there is an essential philosophical gap between the two countries and aims to benefit from this difference. In this context, as promised by Biden in his Foreign Affairs article,²² the U.S. held the first Summit for Democracy, which is planned to be held twice,²³ on 10 December 2021. The agenda of the summit, which was held online due to the Covid-19 outbreak, was announced as “democratic renewal and to tackle the greatest threats faced by democracies today through collective action”.²⁴ With this agenda, the summit gathered around three

²⁰ David Harvey, *A Brief History of Neoliberalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005): p. 120-151; Martin Hart-Landsberg, Paul Burkett, *China and Socialism: Market Reforms and Class Struggle* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 2005).

²¹ Kaplan, 7 January 2019.

²² Biden, 2020.

²³ The Biden administration is planning to hold the second summit, Summit for Democracy 2023, on 29-30 March 2023. This time the U.S. will co-host the summit with the governments of Costa Rica, the Netherlands, Republic of Korea, and Republic of Zambia. “Summit for Democracy 2023,” U.S. Department of State. <https://www.state.gov/summit-for-democracy-2023/>

²⁴ “Summit for Democracy,” U.S. Department of State. <https://www.state.gov/summit-for-democracy/>

themes: (i) strengthening democracy and defending against authoritarianism, (ii) addressing fighting corruption and (iii) promoting respect for human rights. During the summit, more than 275 participants - members of governments, civil society and the private sector - made more than 750 commitments to meet the three key themes of the summit.²⁵

While government officials, civil society representatives, business people and journalists from 110 countries, where multi-party elections are held, were invited to the summit that aims to defend and strengthen democracies, China and Russia, which the Biden administration defines as “Autocrats... working overtime to undermine democracy and export a model of governance marked by repression at home and coercion abroad”,²⁶ were not invited.²⁷ For this reason, many evaluated the summit’s aim as bringing the “democracies” of the world together against the authoritarian governing models of China and Russia, which the U.S. also defines as its competitors.

China and Russia expressed their dissatisfaction with the summit in an article titled “Respecting People’s Democratic Rights”, which was authored jointly by then-the ambassador of China to the U.S. Qin Gang and the ambassador of Russia to the U.S. Anatoly Antonov. According to the ambassadors, by holding such a summit, the U.S. grants itself the power to define the concept of democracy and decide which countries are considered democratic and which are not. Ambassadors claimed that such a move, which reflects the Cold War logic of the U.S., has the potential to create a split in the world and result in an ideological confrontation. For these reasons, China and Russia firmly opposed this move and positioned themselves on the side of the multilateral international order in the face of the U.S.’s exclusionary politics²⁸

While the U.S. was aiming for a democratic alliance against China and Russia, it faced severe criticism because of the invited countries to the summit.²⁹ For example, the leaders of countries with questionable democratic qualities such as the Philippines, Nigeria and Pakistan³⁰ were invited. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and then

²⁵ “Summit for Democracy 2021,” U.S. Department of State. <https://www.state.gov/summit-for-democracy-2021/>
 “Summit for Democracy Summary of Proceedings,” The White House, 23 December 2021. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/12/23/summit-for-democracy-summary-of-proceedings/>

²⁶ The White House, “National Security Strategy,” 12 October 2022. <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Biden-Harris-Administrations-National-Security-Strategy-10.2022.pdf>, p. 3.

²⁷ “The Summit for Democracy,” U.S. Department of State, <https://www.state.gov/summit-for-democracy/>

²⁸ Anatoly Antonov and Qin Gang, “Russian and Chinese Ambassadors: Respecting People’s Democratic Rights,” *The National Interest*, 26 November 2021. <https://nationalinterest.org/feature/russian-and-chinese-ambassadors-respecting-people%E2%80%99s-democratic-rights-197165>

²⁹ Debasish Roy Chowdhury, “Joe Biden’s Democracy Summit Is the Height of Hypocrisy,” *Time*, 10 December 2021. <https://time.com/6127359/biden-summit-for-democracy/>

³⁰ Pakistan refused to attend the summit, stating that in the past the world had suffered too much from the Cold War. Aamir Latif, “Pakistan Declines US Democracy Summit Invitation,” *AA*, 8 December 2021. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/pakistan-declines-us-democracy-summit-invitation/2442311>

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, who are criticized for undermining democracy in their respective countries,³¹ can also be added to this list. Moreover, while 30 percent of the 110 invited countries are considered semi-free by the U.S.-based Freedom House, Angola, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Iraq are not even regarded as free.³² In a nutshell, many people thought the Summit for Democracy 2021 was a significant contradiction since it included non-democratic participants.

China's Response: The Chinese Democracy

The Biden administration's view of China as the U.S.'s biggest competitor is a result of the country's development success over the past 40 years. Since reforming its socialist economic structure in December 1978, China has transformed itself into a state-capitalist economy. In due course, the country lifted nearly 800 million of its population out of poverty.³³ However, unlike the expectations of many Western scholars and staff of the previous U.S. administrations, this economic transformation did not lead to a political transition to democracy. In short, the Chinese case represents a challenge to modernization theory. It turns out to be a disappointment to the ones who were expecting a democratic transition in the country.³⁴

Although China is not governed by democracy in the western sense, the concept of democracy is being taken seriously and debated by Chinese rulers and intellectuals. Indeed, China has a long history of discussing democracy. Primarily since the 1990s, these discussions have been held by Chinese intellectuals with different political perspectives such as liberalism, critical socialism and Confucianism.³⁵

Like Chinese intellectuals, the Communist Party of China (CPC) is also aware of the importance of the concept of democracy. All congress reports since the 17th Party Congress³⁶ in 2007 involve a section on “socialist democracy” and what the country should do to develop institutions to advance it. According to the CPC, democracy,

³¹ Ashutosh Varshney, “How India's Ruling Party Erodes Democracy?”, *Journal of Democracy*, Vol. 33, No. 4 (October 2022): p. 104-118; “Brazil: Bolsonaro Threatens Democratic Rule,” *Human Rights Watch*, 15 September 2022. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2021/09/15/brazil-bolsonaro-threatens-democratic-rule>

³² “Global Freedom Status,” Freedom House, 2022. <https://freedomhouse.org/explore-the-map?type=fiw&year=2022>

³³ The World Bank, “Lifting 800 Million People Out of Poverty – New Report Looks at Lessons from China's Experience,” 1 April 2022. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2022/04/01/lifting-800-million-people-out-of-poverty-new-report-looks-at-lessons-from-china-s-experience>

³⁴ Cao Fangjun, “Modernization Theory and China's Road to Modernization,” *Chinese Studies in History*, Vol. 43, No. 1, (2009), 7-16; Dan Blumenthal, “Why Isn't China Democratizing? Because It's Not Really Capitalist,” American Enterprise Institute, 26 April 2011. <https://www.aei.org/articles/why-isnt-china-democratizing-because-its-not-really-capitalist/>; John J. Chin, “The Longest March: Why China's Democratization is Not Imminent,” *Journal of Chinese Political Science*, Vol. 23, No. 1, (2018): p. 63-82.

³⁵ Emre Demir, “1990'lardan Günümüze Çin'de Meşruiyet ve Demokrasi Tartışmaları”, *Mülkiye Dergisi*, Vol. 45, No. 4 (2021): p. 848-877.

³⁶ “Hold High the Great Banner of Socialism with Chinese Characteristics and Strive for New Victories in Building a Moderately Prosperous Society in all Respects, Full text of Hu Jintao's report at 17th Party Congress,” USC US-China Institute, 15 October 2007. <https://china.usc.edu/hu-jintao-17th-party-congress-report-2007>

which is “a manifestation of the political advancement”³⁷ and “a common value of humanity”³⁸ cannot be understood only as it is defined by the West, especially by the U.S. In other words, democracy has more than one definition and is no one’s monopoly. Democracy, a concrete phenomenon that is constantly evolving, is shaped and differentiated according to the history, culture and traditions of countries. Therefore, while the U.S.-specific democracy model governs the U.S., China is governed by a democracy model specific to China.

Moreover, the CPC claims, unlike the U.S. model, the Chinese democracy model works well for the Chinese people. According to Chinese leaders, the U.S. democracy is both unique to that country and far from perfect. It is therefore unacceptable for the U.S. to impose its model on other countries through wars or other means. If no country imposes its governing model on other countries, the world will become a place where diversity is respected, and different societies live in harmony.³⁹

To explain its democracy model, on 4 December 2021, shortly before the U.S.’s Summit for Democracy, the Chinese state published a white paper entitled “China: Democracy That Works”. According to this report, although there are no direct elections in China, the demands of the people are reflected in the decision-making processes through a process of constant consultation of rulers with the Chinese people.⁴⁰ Wang Shaoguang, one of China’s leading intellectuals, explains this process with the Mao era concept of mass line. According to Wang, the criterion for Chinese-style democracy is the system’s capacity to meet the objective needs of the people and to incorporate people’s opinions into decision-making processes. Only in this way can a system of government be called a substantive democracy. This is why, he claims, representational democracy is superior to western representative democracy based on competitive elections.⁴¹ The report also puts forward that China is governed by “whole-process people’s democracy [which] integrates process-oriented democracy with results-oriented democracy, procedural democracy with substantive democracy, direct democracy with indirect democracy, and people’s democracy with the will of the state. It is a model of socialist democracy that covers all aspects of the democratic process

³⁷ “The State of Democracy in the United States,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, 5 December 2021. https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/zxxx_662805/202112/t20211205_10462535.html

³⁸ “Full Text: China: Democracy That Works,” *China Daily*, 4 December 2021. <https://global.chinadaily.com.cn/a/202112/04/WS61ab0795a310cdd39bc7957e.html>

³⁹ “The State of Democracy in the United States,” 5 December 2021; “Full Text: China: Democracy That Works,” 4 December 2021.

⁴⁰ “Full Text: China: Democracy That Works,” 4 December 2021.

⁴¹ Wang Shaoguang, “Representative and Representational Democracy,” *Reading the China Dream*, <https://www.readingthechinadream.com/wang-shaoguang-representative-and-representational-democracy.html>

and all sectors of society.”⁴² In short, for the Chinese government, whole-process people’s democracy is “a true democracy that works”.⁴³

According to the Chinese state, the way to assess whether a country’s political system is democratic or not is to observe whether the change of leadership in that country takes place in an orderly and lawful manner. Democratic governance furthermore includes multidimensional processes such as the relationship of citizens with the state and society, the management of economic and cultural activities in accordance with the law, the ability of the people to easily convey their demands to the state, the effective participation of all social segments in the country’s politics, the rational execution of national decision-making processes, and the participation of highly skilled people in all fields to the country’s governance system. Moreover, for a country to be considered democratic, for the CPC, the actual owner of the country should be the people themselves, not the oligarchs who control an overwhelming part of the economy.⁴⁴ It is clear that many points in China’s definition of democracy directly target the “weaknesses” of or “problems” in the U.S. democracy. In other words, China positions its own democracy model in opposition to the U.S. model.

It should be noted that in its efforts to propagate its own version of democracy, China’s primary target audience is the Chinese people. Therefore, the primary purpose of the CPC’s “Chinese democracy” discourse is not to spread its model to other countries but to legitimize/strengthen the “whole-process people’s democracy” in the eyes of the Chinese people. On the other hand, the discourse of Chinese democracy also has the goal of countering the ideological challenge of the U.S.’s new Cold War rhetoric.

Concluding Remarks

With Biden in the White House, the idea of democracy has been elevated to a strategic level in the competition between the United States and China. The struggle to define the concept of democracy was also experienced during the Cold War years. The Nazi rule in Germany in the 1930s and the years of chaos that followed resulted in the establishment of a “democracy front” against the “fascist bloc”. The democratic bloc won the Second World War; however, its members defined the concept of democracy differently. While the U.S. and the UK defined democracy in the liberal bourgeois sense, the Soviet Union considered it in terms of people’s democracy. These two competing conceptualizations were adopted by the countries of capitalist and socialist blocs, respectively. Today’s struggle for defining democracy between the U.S. and China, although taking place in a very different context, again carries

⁴² “Full Text: China: Democracy That Works,” 4 December 2021.

⁴³ “Full Text: China: Democracy That Works,” 4 December 2021.

⁴⁴ “Full Text: China: Democracy That Works,” 4 December 2021.

the potential of creating a dangerous ideological divide among states. Let's hope the new Cold War rhetoric will not turn into a self-fulfilling prophecy and create a world divided along ideological lines.

WEST VS. NON-WEST: A NEW COLD WAR?

There is a noticeable and growing evolution of the global geopolitical balance of power and influence in the 21st century's system of international relations. The current hegemon, the unipolar United States, and the political system of Western liberalism that supports it, is under great strain and is in a state of relative decline. The challenger is a non-Western-centric multipolar order, which consists of a wide variety of countries spanning the globe, including what is referred to as the Global South. This 'crisis' of the Western order has prompted a tangible and informational response from the U.S. and its system, to defend their privileged hegemony and to deter the rise of alternative systems of power and influence in international relations.

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Periodically, global geopolitical power and influence transform and evolve in international relations. Currently, the world is experiencing such a shift in the 21st century. This is seen in the physical realm of people, places, and events. But it is also very much seen in the information realm, where people, places, and events in geopolitics are interpreted and represented. While the United States' unipolar hegemony is waning, the Western-centric order, driven by liberal democracy and anchored on Euro-Atlantic institutions, is fighting to maintain its global dominance. The challenger is a multi-varied system of Non-Western-centric powers attempting to establish a multipolar world order, creating their systems of power and influence to support a more pragmatic and interest-oriented approach to international relations.

Information as Representation in International Relations

There are three interrelated and interacting realms of existence in the human environment: physical, information, and cognitive realms. It is the physical realm where people, places, and events exist as they are in an objective form as they occur. The information realm is where those people, places, and events are interpreted or represented by people and institutions. Hence, varying degrees of subjectivity creep in. The cognitive realm is the third and final space, where individuals process the direct and indirect experience of the outside world, and relate it to their own experiences and beliefs to shape their worldview.¹ The development and distribution of modern information communication technologies have enabled a more all-encompassing use of communicating information to influence and persuade global audiences by engineering their perception of people, places, and events.

Regarding geopolitical strategy, information power can play an active and even perhaps decisive role as the fifth dimension of strategy (the other dimensions include: land, water, air, and space).² At a time when the global geopolitical order is shifting, when numerous players are jockeying for position in preparation for either survival or growth, knowledge and information are used by policymakers and practitioners as an impact and persuasion multiplier on the informational battlefield. Information operations are supportive of the foreign and security policy of individual countries and collective blocs.

Branding and reputation management are increasingly important and prominent for countries in the 21st century. To engage in the obstructive marketing of their 'other'

¹ David S. Alberts, John J. Garstka, Richard E. Hayes & David A. Signori, *Understanding Information Age Warfare* (Washington DC: CCRP Publication Series, 2001).

² David J. Lonsdale, *Information Power: Strategy, Geopolitics, and the Fifth Dimension*, (The Journal of Strategic Studies, 1999), 22(2-3): 137-157.

through the deployment of orthodoxy of knowledge (creating consensus on the definition of persons, places, or events), these informational tools may be utilized to accomplish more than only identify, signal, and communicate about oneself within the system of international relations.³

“As the 21st century began, it was a triumphant era in the wake of the Cold War when the U.S.-led West emerged as the hegemonic unipolar global order after the Soviet and Eastern Bloc collapse, which was marked by slogans and catchphrases as “the end of history.” ”

Cold War as a Conceptual Framework

The relevance of this branding and reputation management paper is that they help establish and maintain cognitive shortcuts and associations.⁴ This useful informational mechanism can be used to shape audience perceptions and opinions, and therefore reactions, within the context of international relations. There needs to be a very carefully considered and constructed use of language and rhetoric to prime and mobilize those international audiences’ imaginations, hearts, and minds to support or oppose concrete actors and policies. One of the means of achieving the above is by creating and applying concepts. Concepts are not only an essential part of the academic community but also the policymaker community.

One of the concepts or ideas utilized in an operational sense and understanding is the concept of crisis, which implies extraordinary circumstances that, in turn, require special measures to mitigate the effects of the named source of risk. This is a way and means to try to justify and legitimize circumventing the established ‘rules of the game’ by an actor in a manner that benefits them and disadvantages their opponent or intended target.⁵ A ‘crisis’ is a necessary process of engineering public consent through managing perceptions and the resulting opinions. An important aspect to understand is that every physical (tangible) crisis also has an accompanying crisis of information (intangible). The intangible component of the crisis is composed

³ For an explanation of orthodoxy of knowledge and obstructive foreign policy please see <https://eng.globalaffairs.ru/articles/us-orthodoxy-of-knowledge/>

⁴ Stephen Brown, *Brands and Branding*, (London: Sage, 2016).

⁵ Greg Simons, *Crisis in 21st Century Political Warfare*, Russia in Global Affairs, <https://eng.globalaffairs.ru/articles/crisis-in-21st-century-political-warfare/>, 27 August 2019 (accessed 24 January 2023).

of various informational flows surrounding the physical crisis that identify and describe the crisis, but also convey meaning and signify its level of risk and effect. An actor that can dominate and/or influence those flows of information that surround a physical crisis is in a position of information dominance that results in being able to impose additional restraints and constraints on their opponent, which includes operational choices and decisions.

As the 21st century began, it was a triumphant era in the wake of the Cold War when the U.S.-led West emerged as the hegemonic unipolar global order after the Soviet and Eastern Bloc collapse, which was marked by slogans and catchphrases as “the end of history.” With this overconfidence, considering there was no equivalent power of the bipolar world order as a check and balance on each other, imbalance in international relations occurred, and from this, U.S. foreign and security policy over stretched. Concepts in international relations began early in the 21st century with such branded events and processes as the Colour Revolutions, the Global War On Terrorism, and the Arab Spring. This concerned the messianic-like mission of the West to spread an image of itself through its political ideology and geopolitics globally (the end of history). The period of uncontested unipolarity was high in terms of its negative effects and the costs of endless wars⁶ imposed on people, economies, and political and geopolitical systems.

Although the concept was initially slow to take hold in the imagination of scholars and others, in the wake of the 2008 Georgian-Russian War and especially after the events following Euromaidan in Ukraine in 2014, the New Cold War has gradually gained more significant intellectual currency. The concept of the New Cold War relies upon brand associations with the original bipolar-era Cold War as a means of reputation management (in terms of cognitively shaping a sense of commonly perceived legitimacy and urgency) in shaping the notion of a crisis and the need to rally and unite against a commonly understood threat. Furthermore, the invocation of the risks and dangers of a New Cold War signals the intention of the U.S.-led West to actively contest⁷ its relative decline from those powers in the international system that position themselves as challenging Western-centric hegemony.

The concept of the New Cold War is ideologically convenient for the intended

⁶ For example, see Brown University’s ‘Costs of War’ project website for a thorough analysis of the different costs and effects at <https://watson.brown.edu/costsofwar/>.

⁷ There are numerous works that engage with the theme of the New Cold War and seek the rally audiences to contest the relative decline of the West: <https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/JIPA/Display/Article/3111118/a-new-cold-war-for-the-developing-world-understanding-and-responding-to-the-bel/>; <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/06/27/new-cold-war-nato-summit-united-states-russia-ukraine-china/>; <https://www.cfr.org/blog/new-cold-war-0/>; <https://ecfr.eu/article/the-three-challenges-for-the-west-in-the-new-cold-war/>. These are a mere narrow selection, to give the reader an overview of the ideological and geopolitical aspects of the New Cold War.

geopolitical task of contesting the relative decline of the Western order. It is not without its problems, though, owing to its nature as a subjective informational representation (one may even say, a projection) of the realities of the physical realm in contemporary geopolitics. Even though the brand name New Cold War suggests equivalence with the old Cold War, there are definite and significant differences⁸ that make these events objectively very different from each other. For example, the old Cold War was a bipolar global order of two relatively equal-strength military superpowers with a definite clash of their competing ideological preferences. Whereas the New Cold War features a multipolar order consisting of a wide variety of capabilities and capacities among small, medium, and large powers, the Western order tends to follow a more ideologically-informed agenda as opposed to the more pragmatic and national one-interest-based approach of the non-Western order.

“The system of U.S. vassal and client states remains pliant at the elite political level for now, even though their interests and security are being eroded by U.S. demands to support Ukraine in the war. Attempts to force neutral or non-aligned states from the Non-Western world, such as India and Türkiye, have been largely unsuccessful owing to the pragmatic pursuit of their interests and security.”

Transition of the Global Political and Geopolitical Landscape

The political and geopolitical landscape is in transition, seemingly evolving away from a Western liberal United States-led unipolar global order towards a more conservative (politically and culturally) Non-Western multipolar international order.⁹ The transformation is creating a lot of cause for concern and conjecture in policymakers, practitioners, and academic circles. This, in turn, creates an informational demand for prognoses and forecasting¹⁰ of the different possible

⁸ Please see the following links for various discussions on the differences between the old Cold War and the New Cold War: <https://thediplomat.com/2022/05/the-difference-between-americas-2-cold-wars/>; <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/08/business/a-new-cold-war-would-differ-from-the-old.html>; <https://www.aei.org/op-eds/a-tale-of-two-cold-wars/>.

⁹ Alexander Cooley and Daniel Nexon, *Exit From Hegemony: The Unravelling of the American Global Order*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020).

¹⁰ For example, see the CSIS forecasts of different potential futures here: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/four-scenarios-geopolitical-order-2025-2030-what-will-great-power-competition-look>.

geopolitical constellations in the future. In the relatively declining Western order, the political system of Western liberalism is tied to and mutually supports U.S. geopolitical hegemony. The system of U.S. geopolitical hegemony and the hegemony of Western liberalism are mutually supportive and dependent on keeping the system of the Western order in place.¹¹ There is a clear and definite crisis of U.S. geopolitical hegemony and Western liberalism's legitimacy. The challenge to these is both internal as well as external, where the sources of internal decay may actually be more influential than the relative decline of the West.

Zbigniew Brzezinski, writing in an era of unchallenged American unipolar dominance, detailed the geostrategic imperatives of the U.S. to develop and retain its hegemony, drawing on the historical experience of the rise and fall of empires and civilizations. Three geostrategic imperatives were identified as being crucial to establish and maintain successfully: to keep vassal states dependent and pliant, to keep tributary states protected and pliant, to prevent competing orders from being established.¹² To preserve power and influence over other actors, whether from Western or Non-Western regions, the geostrategic imperative remains the same, and that is the maintenance of U.S. global hegemony that is preferably absolute. Although, the strategy of creating relative hegemony is also an option within the context of diminishing resources that affects their capability and capacity to challenge an increasing number of challengers.

The New Cold War in the Physical and Informational Domains

There is a distinct continuity in the West's ideological catchphrases and slogans that were used in the Cold War, which are now continuing to be used in the New Cold War. These revolve around specific sets of core norms and values, which are rhetorically being signaled as forming their 'benevolent' intention towards the internal and external worlds of the West. Some examples include vaguely defined and commonly used terms and concepts: democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights, and freedom of speech and expression. They are assumed and held as being ethically and morally superior to alternative and competing civilizational models. Still, those top policymakers and practitioners in the West are often completely out of touch with the life goals and priorities outside of their immediate political and ideological space. Hence the recent comments of the head of the European Union's External Action Service, Josep Borrell, when he referred to Europe as a garden, implying the rest of the world was a jungle in a diametrically opposed representation of civilization

¹¹ For example, see the following article that claims the Western system is not in decline, while mentioning the relationship between Western liberalism and US hegemony: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/united-states/why-american-power-endures-us-led-order-isnt-in-decline-g-john-ikenberry>.

¹² Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and its Geostrategic Imperatives*, (New York: Basic Books, 1997).

and barbarianism. This was certainly not a one-off occasion, when Borrell later implored to a meeting with Latin American representatives, like the Conquistadores we must build a new world, a profoundly insensitive and out-of-touch interpretation of the legacy of Spanish colonialism in the region.¹³ Thus the informational domain interpretations and representations of the West being communicated to domestic and foreign audiences are apparent in the New Cold War: the West is a superior civilizational model, which needs to be preserved and emulated. However, this is coming at a time of an increasingly strained international relations system where competition and conflict are on the increase.

Significant parts of the world living beyond the so-called international community or rules-based order live a somewhat different physical and informational reality. The Western hegemony was not built upon benevolence, kind values, and norms. Still, a rather brutal and repressive system of colonialism in the Non-Western world, and this is not something that is forgotten in the present day.¹⁴ There are two separate and yet interrelated parts to the Western decline and the rise of the Non-West within the context of the New Cold War concept. One aspect is the clash of cultures (cultural warfare) that has grown from the leftist-liberal base, including the messianic and intolerant features of cancel culture and wokeism. This is destroying the various value and normative aspects that enabled centuries of Western hegemony, it is also an anathema to the more socially and culturally conservative countries of Central and Eastern Europe that were incorporated into the Western order after the Soviet collapse. Furthermore, the ideologically tenets of wokeism and cancel culture are repugnant to large swathes of the Non-Western world, making the Western model even less attractive. In short, it is killing Western civilization¹⁵ by undermining its sources and institutions of power and influence that served its hegemony for so long.

The other aspect of conflict in the New Cold War concept is the geopolitical competition and conflict that is being increasingly waged more aggressively, between the Western and Non-Western orders. The U.S.-led West largely waged it by vicarious warfare, which is often an indirect and covert means of warfare on the cheap against an opponent/target country that is neither transparent nor accountable. Vicarious warfare is a short-term tactic with long-term negative strategic consequences.¹⁶ A

¹³ See his speech (in Spanish) here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eSfTuedXusE>.

¹⁴ For example, read the article in the following link for a perspective on how the Non-Western world views the historical legacy of the Western world and how this affects their perspectives on contemporary events and trends in international relations: <https://www.institutmontaigne.org/en/analysis/emerging-world-order-post-western-and-pre-plural>.

¹⁵ For an overview of the arguments why, please see: <https://www.cis.org.au/commentary/opinion/cancel-culture-is-destroying-our-society/> and <http://turkishpolicy.com/article/1079/role-of-social-media-in-amplifying-neo-liberal-cancel-culture>.

¹⁶ Thomas Waldman, *Vicarious Warfare: American Strategy and the Illusion of War on the Cheap*, (Bristol: Bristol University Press, 2021).

fundamental decision point in geopolitics occurs, when a hegemon is in a state of relative decline and other powers are growing at its expense. The critical question and point arise when the declining hegemon either manages its decline or contests that decline. In the period 2019-2020, this decision was made by the U.S. The U.S. decision-makers, practitioners, and policymakers (President Biden and RAND, for example) have undertaken the path of contesting its decline, based upon the principles outlined in Brzezinski's geostrategic imperatives.¹⁷ Currently, the operational focus and effort are on the information and cognitive realm, even though deadly events are playing out in the physical realm as the Russia-Ukraine War. The reason for this focus is a constraint and restraint of a relatively declining hegemon's operational capability and capacity. It is also motivated by the fact that there is a tendency for military operations to support information operations at the current geopolitical stage as a means of projecting a force multiplier effect – to make them look militarily stronger than they actually are as a means to intimidate and deter foe and to ensure compliance from vassal and client states.

The defense of Western hegemony has been in the making, at times subtly through the use of rebranding, for some time. One such subtle cue came when the so-called International Community (consisting of NATO, EU, Australia, New Zealand, Japan and South Korea) rebranded itself as being an order based upon the principles of international law to a 'rules-based' order.¹⁸ Information Operations¹⁹ have been at the forefront of the hegemonic defense and obstructive foreign policy against Non-Western actors. This was seen just before the start of the Russia-Ukraine War (and continues intensely) and in attempts to create a representative equivalence in a projected war between Taiwan and China, using many similar narratives and frames intended to engineer public consent.²⁰ These tactics are designed as cost-inducing measures²¹ against what are perceived as being the leading actors of the rising Non-Western multipolar order.

There have also been significant events occurring in the physical realm that were and are seen in events such as the trade war launched by the U.S. against China under President Trump and the current Russia-Ukraine War. However, the expected and demanded support for the U.S. proxy Ukraine has garnered very little support

¹⁷ Greg Simons, *Brzezinski's Geostrategic Imperatives in a Transforming Global Order*, (Geostrategic Pulse, December 2022), no. 287: 25-27.

¹⁸ For an analysis of this change and the effects, please see: <https://gpil.jura.uni-bonn.de/2019/01/rules-based-order-v-international-law/>.

¹⁹ To see a definition and explanation of Information Operations refer to: https://www.doctrine.af.mil/Portals/61/documents/AFDP_3-13/3-13-AFDP-INFO-OPS.pdf.

²⁰ Greg Simons, 'Inevitable' and 'Imminent' Invasions: The Logic Behind Western Media War Stories, (*Journal of International Analytics*, 2022) 13, no. 2: 43–58.

²¹ For an example of US thinking on imposing cost inducing measures, see the 2019 RAND report here: https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB10014.html.

beyond the West and its rules-based order, which is seen in United Nations voting patterns²² on matters pertaining to Ukraine and the war. This lack of ability of the U.S. and the West to rally and build coalitions against Russia has made them appear weak, ineffectual, and out of touch with the sentiment and interests of the Non-Western world. The system of U.S. vassal and client states remains pliant at the elite political level for now, even though their interests and security are being eroded by U.S. demands to support Ukraine in the war. Attempts to force neutral or non-aligned states from the Non-Western world, such as India and Türkiye, have been largely unsuccessful owing to the pragmatic pursuit of their interests and security. Creating the proxy war, using Ukraine as its proxy (as another example of vicarious warfare) was a risky move. It may, in fact have the effect of accelerating the Western order's decline rather than saving it.

Concluding Remarks

The New Cold War began as a geopolitical representation of international relations in the beginning of the 21st century. This was intended as a clear signal to the world the identity and intentions of the U.S. and its system of vassal and client states that constitute the Western order. A motivation for invoking the New Cold War concept was done from a position of weakness and desperation of the relatively declining state of U.S. global hegemony. By engineering the perception of a crisis of the West and U.S. hegemony, it was hoped to prime and mobilize global audiences in support of its preservation and against the relatively strengthening Non-Western order. Disequilibrium in the international system creates ripples of chaos, disorder and recklessness.

U.S. and Western ability to effectively understand and manage this disequilibrium has been influenced by the radical ideology of wokeism and cancel culture that has enforced groupthink along with the fundamental pillars that support and uphold the system of U.S.-led Western hegemony. This has been compounded by rash and ill-advised foreign and security policies in the uncontested unipolar era. Attempts to shore up the cracks in Western hegemony have failed miserably, such as the U.S. rout from Afghanistan in 2021, the failed trade war with China, and the unpredictability of the war in Ukraine. Words must be backed and supported by actions, otherwise, there is no credibility. The conceptual construct of the New Cold War is now a reality, but rather than saving Western hegemony, it may accelerate its demise.

²² See for example: <https://time.com/6222005/un-vote-russia-ukraine-allies/> and <https://www.stimson.org/2022/red-cell-2-is-the-west-losing-the-global-south/>.

THE IMPACT OF THE UKRAINIAN-RUSSIAN WAR ON RWANDA

The current Ukrainian-Russian war has far greater-reaching effects than what is typically reported in much of the international news media. The war has significantly impacted African development, which was already harmed during the global Covid-19 pandemic. With the pandemic seemingly over, African nations such as Rwanda hoped for increased economic development. However, the current war in Ukraine sparked increased fuel and food prices throughout the continent, which has impacted expected growth rates. This article reviews the war's impact on the central African nation of Rwanda. It illustrates Rwandan anger about the economic implications of the war and the frustration from the nation's inability to stop its effects.

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*Keywords: African Politics, Global South,
Russian Invasion of Ukraine, Rwanda, Rwandan Foreign Policy.*



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Russia's invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022¹ signaled too much of the world how past Cold War norms, thought to have ended, are still very much alive. Russia's war against Ukraine has grown from a regional and historical dispute over Ukraine's relations with Russia into a global conflict. Russia and Ukraine's allies, specifically the United States, are enlisting allies to support their strategic goal for the conflict. Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov visited the African nations of Egypt, Ethiopia, Uganda, and the Republic of Congo² with his counterpart, United States Secretary of State Antony Blinken visiting South Africa, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Rwanda to rally support.³ While these overtures to African nations might seem like repetitions of previous Cold War divisions in Africa, there is little for the continent to gain compared to past foreign policies of playing the superpowers against each other. Fundamentally, the recent conflict in Ukraine has become an unwelcome global event impacting African development just as it began recovering from the impacts of Covid-19.⁴

When Francis Fukuyama wrote his now infamous assessment of post-Cold War politics, *The End of History and the Last Man*,⁵ during a period from the 1990s and up until the September 2001 World Trade Center attacks when many believed that the future would be significantly more peaceful. The book's central argument was how the 'West,' better explained as democracy and relatively free-market-oriented economic policies guided by the United States and its Western European allies, had won the argument against communist dictatorship and centralized economic planning. Horrific wars would become a historical example of failed international cooperation and past governance and economic development mistakes. As with many critiques of this thesis,⁶ it carefully ignored or did not predict horrific events worldwide. For Africa, that included multiple conflicts, with the bloody First (1996-

¹ Anton Troianovski and Neil MacFarquhar, "Putin Announces Start to 'Military Operation' Against Ukraine," *The New York Times*, 23 February 2022. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/23/world/europe/ukraine-russia-invasion.html>

² Mohammed Yusuf, "Lavrov Visit to Africa Seen as Effort to Counter Western Narratives," *Voice of America*, 25 July 2022. <https://www.voanews.com/a/russian-visit-to-africa-seen-as-chance-to-counteract-western-narrative/6672953.html>

³ Landry Signé, "US Secretary of State Blinken to visit Africa as tension with China and Russia intensifies," *Brookings*, 5, August 2022. <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/africa-in-focus/2022/08/05/us-secretary-of-state-blinken-to-visit-africa-as-tension-with-china-and-russia-intensifies/>

⁴ Covid-19 pandemic greatly impacted Rwandan development by reducing foreign visitors. Rwanda's economic strategy, Vision 2050, relies on continued robust growth from the tourist industry. The near universal shutdown of global tourism caused many businesses in the service industry to shut down with many only recovering by early 2023.

⁵ Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (New York: Free Press, 1992).

⁶ Azar Gat, "The Return of Authoritarian Great Powers," *Foreign Affairs* (July/August 2007). <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2007-07-01/return-authoritarian-great-powers>; Megan Gibson, "Francis Fukuyama: We could be facing the end of 'the end of history'," *New Statesman*, 30 March 2022. <https://www.newstatesman.com/encounter/2022/03/francis-fukuyama-on-the-end-of-the-end-of-history>; Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International* (London: Routledge, 1994); Robert Kagan, "Michael Burleigh, Return of the Dog Pack: The Return of History and the End of Dreams," *Literary Review* (May 2008). https://web.archive.org/web/20111002021637/https://literaryreview.co.uk/burleigh_05_08.html

1997) and Second (1998-2003) Congo Wars, which were outcomes of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsis, commonly known as the Rwandan Genocide.⁷ These events were seen as the norm within the Global South, often explained through ‘New Wars theory,’⁸ and blips within the large democratizing and economic liberations of much of the world’s economies. Most important for the United States, its primary enemy during the Cold War, the Soviet Union, was no longer a threat. The country collapsed into several independent nations, leading to Constructivism’s rise within International Relations theory.⁹ The recent Russian invasion of Ukraine and its global impacts illustrate how the old rivalries are still very much a reality, with other nations such as China, India, Iran, and Türkiye playing an essential role in the conflict and global relations.

“The conflict has produced little for Africa beyond its adverse effect of increased energy prices and food shortages.”

The Economic Consequences of the Ukrainian-Russian War for Rwanda

The conflict has produced little for Africa beyond its adverse effect of increased energy prices and food shortages. Since returning to Rwanda in December 2022 until March 2023 to conduct fieldwork for a separate project,¹⁰ Rwandans complained about rising inflation for food and petrol prices. All of which they blame the current conflict in Ukraine for producing. At the primary market in Rwanda’s capital city of Kigali, Kimironko Market, food sellers complained about how the conflict has led to higher energy prices which trickle down to higher food prices and smaller profit margins. One commented:

[President Vladimir] Putin went to war with Ukraine. Why he did it has no[thing] to do with us [Rwandans], but we are paying part of the costs. If Ukraine becomes Russia again or Ukraine wins, others will celebrate. But the damage is done to us. Food costs more, travel costs more, [and] everything costs more.¹¹

⁷ Gerard Prunier, *Africa’s World War: Congo, the Rwandan Genocide, and the Making of a Continental Catastrophe* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009).

⁸ Mary Kaldor, “In defence of new wars,” *Stability: International journal of security and development*, Vol. 2, No. 1 (2013): p. 1-16.

⁹ Ted Hopf, “The promise of constructivism in international relations theory,” *International security*, Vol. 23, No. 1 (1998): p. 171-200.

¹⁰ UK Research and Innovation, “Military Strategies During the Genocide Against the Tutsis in Rwanda,” UK Research and Innovation, <https://gtr.ukri.org/projects?ref=AH%2FW001217%2F1>

¹¹ Unnamed Rwandan merchant, interviewed by the Author, December 2022.

While riding with a motorcycle taxi driver at a traffic light near a petrol station, he pointed towards the tower containing regular petrol and diesel prices. Before the conflict, petrol was roughly around Rwf 1000¹² per liter. However, now the price has increased to Rwf 1580.¹³ For many Rwandans, this price increase caused a severe financial burden that continues. The driver pointed at the petrol prices, “thank you, Russia, thank you, Ukraine.”¹⁴

These quotes illustrate some of the frustration felt by Rwandans. Most telling is the separation between those directly involved in the conflict and those in the periphery. While Rwanda is not dependent on Ukraine for food resources, like many other African nations,¹⁵ it nevertheless is experiencing the cost of food issues thanks to the conflict. Rwanda is a landlocked nation which leads to imports costing, on average, an estimated forty percent.¹⁶ The significant additional charges stem from trucks traveling from the seaports of Mombasa and Der-es-Salaam to Kigali, around 1500 kilometers away. Despite the country’s relatively good internal road network, the topographical nature of Rwanda, nicknamed the country of a thousand hills, leads to higher transportation costs as trucks need to circumvent multiple hills throughout the country. Thus, the increase in the price of petrol and diesel leads to more substantial transportation costs.

While the costs of fuel and food impact nearly all Rwandans, the rising costs also affect other industries. One entrepreneur owning a household shop commented about how the recent conflict has affected her business. It, along with the continued Covid lockdown in China, led to increased difficulties in shipping her goods from China to Rwanda. Additionally, her clients are now more hesitant to spend as growing food leads to more significant financial concerns and considerations.¹⁷ The increase in Rwanda’s middle class is seen by its government as necessary to promote its macroeconomic plans within Vision 2050. Akin to the previous Vision 2020, this economic plan is intended to transform Rwanda into a middle-income economy. The intention for economic growth is not only for national development but is part of a more comprehensive policy to prevent another genocide by increasing economic interdependency between Rwandans.¹⁸ There are other fears that the large amount of attention Ukrainian receives from Rwanda’s donors, specifically the United States

¹² As of writing this piece on 11 January 2023, Rwf1000 equated to roughly US\$0.93.

¹³ As of writing this piece on 11 January 2023, Rwf1580 equated to roughly US\$1.48.

¹⁴ Unnamed Rwandan motorcycle taxi driver, interviewed by the Author, January 2022.

¹⁵ James Tasamba, “Wheat prices in Africa up 60% due to Russia-Ukraine war: AfDB,” *Anadolu Agency*, 27 April 2022. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/wheat-prices-in-africa-up-60-due-to-russia-ukraine-war-afdb/2573858>

¹⁶ Jonathan Beloff, *Foreign Policy in Post-Genocide Rwanda: Elite Perceptions of Global Engagement*, (Oxon: Routledge, 2021): p. 211.

¹⁷ Unnamed Rwandan merchant, interviewed by the Author, January 2023.

¹⁸ Beloff, “Foreign Policy,” p. 181-203.

and the European Union, might lead to a reduction of foreign assistance in terms of grants, loans, and direct aid. Despite some organizations discussing their concerns,¹⁹ there is little to indicate this outcome.

“There are of course no guarantees that democratization will occur; nor is the process of democratization necessarily peaceful. Increasingly ruthless oppression, spasms of violence, expulsions, and even civil strife are all possible.”

It might seem improbable to relate the current Ukrainian-Russian conflict to a possible conflict within Rwanda. However, economic crises caused by global events have led to civil unrest, as seen during the late 1980s and early 1990s after the collapse of tea and coffee prices. Jared Diamond suggests that the global price decline for these commodities led to economic instability within Rwanda, eventually resulting in the 1994 genocide.²⁰ However, his argument minimizes the multiple reasons that led to the genocide. Other factors include ethnic divisions, vast corruption of the Habyarimana regime, and a rise of a small Hutu extremist elite, the *akazu* or ‘small house’, trying to resurrect its political and economic power by securitizing Rwanda’s Tutsi population.²¹ Nevertheless, as seen during the foreign aid withdrawal in 2012-2013 after international accusations of Rwandan support of the Congolese rebel group, the Movement 23 March (M23),²² economic hardships produced by outside forces led to nervousness by Rwandan government officials of possible future economic and social problems.

Rwandan Foreign Policy

Under President Paul Kagame, the Rwandan government has spoken little about the Ukrainian-Russian conflict as they are inflamed in their international crisis with renewed allegations of involvement with the M23.²³ As with many other African

¹⁹ Unnamed Rwandan civil society leader, interviewed by the Author, January 2023.

²⁰ Jared Diamond, *Collapse: How Societies Choose to Fail or Succeed*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2005).

²¹ Andrew Wallis, “Rwanda’s Forgotten Years: Reconsidering the Role and Crimes of Akazu 1973–1993,” *Journal of International Peacekeeping* Vol. 22, No. 1-4 (2020): p. 40-59.

²² Dominique E. Uwizeyimana, “International Donors’ obliviousness to human rights violations and lack of democracy in their disbursement of aid: a case of post-genocide Rwanda,” *Journal of Asian and African Studies* Vol. 1, No. 1 (2014): p. 1-17.

²³ News Wire, “European Union urges Rwanda to stop supporting M23 rebels in DR Congo,” *France24*, 31 December 2022. <https://www.france24.com/en/africa/20221231-european-union-urges-rwanda-to-stop-supporting-m23-rebels-in-dr-congo>

nations, Rwanda called for the conflict to be resolved. During the 2 March 2022 United Nations vote to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Minister Counsellor in Permanent Mission of Rwanda to the UN, Robert Kayinamuna commented:

Rwanda voted in favor of this resolution to firmly support that the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of any country must be respected.²⁴

While it is not unusual for this type of response by the Rwandan government, there have been times when the nation has had a more vocal or critical role in global events. An example is during the 2014 Israeli-Hamas war, Operation Protective Edge. During this little more than one month length conflict, Rwanda spoke in defense of Israel. Importantly, Rwanda held a non-permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council. Former Foreign Minister Louise Mushikiwabo traveled to Israel to witness Hamas' missiles launched from the Gaza Strip. While not everyone within the Rwandan government supported Israel's right to defend itself, most came out in support. This primarily resulted from the Rwandan shared identity of both nations experiencing a security threat from actors wishing the destruction of their nations as well as the hope for increased economic, military, and political collaboration between the two states.²⁵ Thus, Rwanda buckled international norms against Israel to promote its state interests.²⁶ The current conflict in Ukraine does not pose the same opportunity for Rwanda.

Rwandan foreign policy promotes state interests with the intersubjective themes of abandonment, *agaciro* and promoting Rwandan human security. Abandonment of Rwanda is not confined to just the early days of the genocide when the international community withdrew their citizens and attention from the massacres. Instead, it consists of multiple periods of abandonment, such as during its refugee crisis, which many of the government's inner circle, including President Kagame himself, experienced; the crises in neighbor Zaire before the First Congo War and the 2012-2013 foreign aid withdraws to name a few.²⁷ *Agaciro*, a Kinyarwanda word meaning 'dignity' and 'self-sufficient,' is often used within economic terms.²⁸ However, it can be found within how Rwandan government officials wish for the nation to become independent from foreign aid reliance and be forced into foreign policy decisions that do not benefit the nation.²⁹ Lastly, Rwandan human security follows a Constructivist

²⁴ Alice Kagina, "Rwanda speaks out on Ukraine conflict," *New Times Rwanda*, 3 March 2022. <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/article/194012/News/rwanda-speaks-out-on-ukraine-conflict>

²⁵ Jonathan R. Beloff, "Rwanda, Israel, and operation protective edge," *Israel Journal of Foreign Affairs* Vol. 10, No. 1 (2016): p. 103-113.

²⁶ Beloff, "Foreign Policy," p. 255.

²⁷ Beloff, "Foreign Policy," p. 21-23.

²⁸ Beloff, "Foreign Policy," p. 23-26

²⁹ Beloff, "Foreign Policy," p. 26-30.

description³⁰ to include the protection of all who identify as Rwandan rather than Hutu, Tutsis or Twa. The Rwandan government and its military, the Rwandan Defence Force (RDF), will actively promote security for the nation and those who identify as Rwandan. An example is how Rwandans studying and residing in Egypt were airlifted back to Rwanda during the 2011 Arab Spring.³¹ For Rwandan foreign policy, these intersubjective themes influence how the nation perceives and engages with the international community. However, there is little opportunity for Rwanda, let alone most African nations, to express its agency and promote its interests in combating the negative impacts of the Ukraine-Russian war.

What can Rwanda Do?

Beyond speaking their frustrations about the negative impacts of the distant war on their everyday lives, most Rwandans acknowledge the lack of options that they are their country can do. Nothing within Rwandan foreign or economic policy can adequately curb the adverse effects on them and much of the world. The National Bank of Rwanda and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Cooperation (MINECOFIN) have attempted policies to control prices, fight inflation and continue supporting economic growth. Few effective policies can combat the rising energy prices that will help most Rwandans.³² As Milton Friedman warned, price controls typically do not intend to support those most affected by inflation.³³ Over the past decade, Rwandan foreign policy has focused mainly on economic and commercial diplomacy to increase foreign investment for development.³⁴ However, global economic slowdowns significantly impact the rate of investment and number of tourists, which the Rwandan government had hoped would rebound after Covid-19.

Beyond the economic consequences, Rwanda, like much of Africa, cannot influence Russia, Ukraine, or their allies. Nevertheless, some Rwandans wish for their government to play some type of role in ending the conflict. One Rwandan commented on how Rwanda should offer its soldiers as peacekeepers to end the conflict by instituting some buffer between Ukraine and Russia.³⁵ While this is a noble concept, it has little practicality. Rwanda is a prominent global actor in peacekeeping, receiving international praise for its military and police effectiveness

³⁰ Edward Newman, "Human security and constructivism," *International studies perspectives* Vol. 2, No. 3 (2001): p. 239-251.

³¹ Paul Kayiramura, "Return of Rwandan students to Egypt is good news," *New Times Rwanda*, 21 March 2011. <https://www.newtimes.co.rw/article/52504/Opinions/return-of-rwandan-students-to-egypt-is-good-news>

³² Kamlesh Bhuckory, "Rwanda Central Bank Expects Interest Rate Increases to Help Control Inflation," Bloomberg, 12 September 2022. <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-09-12/rwanda-sees-rate-increases-helping-tame-runaway-inflation>

³³ Milton Friedman, "Nobel lecture: inflation and unemployment," *Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 85, No. 3 (1977): p. 451-472.

³⁴ Beloff, "Foreign Policy," p. 181-203.

³⁵ Unnamed Rwandan, interviewed by the Author, January 2022.

in conflict zones.³⁶ However, the numbers would be too insignificant to provide a buffer for the conflict seriously. Additionally, the conflict has grown beyond a dispute between Russia and Ukraine. The conflict has become an international incident, with Ukraine receiving support from those Russia perceives as threats to the nation's survival, which is closely aligned with Neoclassical Realists' description of state security. Despite these pleas, most Rwandans acknowledge the situation they, Africa, and much of the world are in with a simple shrug of the shoulders and a hope that the conflict ends soon for things to begin returning to a sense of 'normal.' Few realize that the destruction in Ukraine, particularly the agricultural production of grain exported to Africa, as well as Russia's military and economic deterioration, likely means Africa will continue to experience the consequences of the conflict.

Conclusion

During my nearly three-month stay in Rwanda, I was continually asked about the future of the Ukraine-Russian war. While some were genuinely interested in the future of the conflict, most were more concerned about its impacts on their everyday lives. The conflict thousands of kilometers away caused and continues to impact Rwanda's economic development. Higher petrol and food prices fuel a domino effect that has hit all aspects of Rwandan life. The most frustrating part for Rwandans is how little they and their country can do. Rwanda's history illustrates how foreign events can significantly impact their everyday lives. When the prices of coffee and tea dropped in the late 1980s, the Rwandan economy went into a spiral which, as Diamond suggests, was a cause of the 1994 genocide. Additionally, the *agaciro* belief urges Rwandans to tackle pressing societal issues. However, the current crisis is not so easily navigable, with most realizing the limitations placed on them and their government.

This is not a unique feeling for Rwanda, as much of the Global South is hampered by the current conflict in Ukraine. Unfortunately, even if peace reigned tomorrow, the economic implications would continue for the short term. This impact is not alone, as Covid also harmed many African countries. For Rwanda, the tourist and service industry has been significantly affected by the global pandemic. While tourism is beginning to increase again, the increased prices of transport have hindered its possible return. Beyond the economic consequences of the current tourist sector, the continuation of the war means the continued impacts on petrol prices resulted in financial repercussions felt by most Rwandans, Africans, and much of the world. The international community needs to address these concerns even if Africa does not play a significant part in the seemingly renewed Cold War between Russia and the West.

³⁶ Danielle Beswick, "Peacekeeping, regime security and 'African Solutions to African Problems': Exploring Motivations for Rwanda's Involvement in Darfur," *Third World Quarterly* Vol. 31, No. 5 (2010): p. 739-754.

WILL TÜRKİYE FIND HERSELF A PLACE IN THE NEW WORLD ORDER?

Türkiye has been a challenging actor in the regional and global politics since the early 2010s, which relies on its imperial past and soft power. This paper argues that Türkiye has embraced a conventional foreign policy principle, pursuing the balance of power, to adapt to the new multipolar world in the contemporary period, which can be defined as “the new nineteenth century.” The country can only exploit its power and resilience to the utmost extent after realizing its limitations to accomplish its regional and international foreign policy goals. Then, it might emerge as a dependable crisis mediator and a significant player in world politics.

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*Keywords: Balance of Power, Multipolarity,
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Amid the Cyprus crisis in 1964, U.S. President Johnson's notorious letter to the Turkish Premier İsmet İnönü escalated the tensions between Ankara and Washington. İnönü responded to the American warning against a Turkish invasion of the island in a way still resonating in today's Turkish foreign policy spheres: "A new kind of world then come into being on a new pattern, and in this new world Türkiye will find herself a new place."¹ İnönü's address has become a maxim and is frequently cited in many academic and non-scholar works. However, a new kind of world did not come into being until the early 1990s, the Turkish military did not land in Cyprus until 1974, and Türkiye remained a loyal NATO-U.S. ally until today. Nevertheless, the current global crises remind Ankara that another kind of world and alliance system is at the door.

The recent discussions on the nature of competition between the United States and China, generally referenced as "the New Cold War," have evolved into worrisome debates on whether the globe is heading toward World War III since the Russian Invasion of Ukraine in 2022. While these analogies provide us with a conceptual framework to understand the times we live in and analyze the actors we look for, it is also crucial to remember the particularities of our epoch. Having said that, it is evident we entered a period of diplomatic and political confrontation, gradually turning into a military one. As the unipolar or the U.S.-led liberal order has come to an end with the rise of new global and regional powers, I argue that the current multipolar order created the conditions for a new nineteenth century. As John J. Mearsheimer predicted more than three decades ago, this new multipolar order has already made us "miss the Cold War."² The question here is whether Türkiye, another contender adopting a foreign policy relying on imperial legacy as the predecessor of an impactful nineteenth-century empire, could find herself a place in the new world order and what that place would be.

The New Nineteenth Century

The Ukrainian crisis has been treated as a symptom of the new world order. However, it was not a starting point that started a new period but a result of the new "multipolar world." The roots of this system can be traced back to the dissolution of the Soviet Union, which coincided with the transformation of Communist China. While the end of history was declared in the Western hemisphere during the liberal moment in the 1990s, several regional powers emerged slowly thanks to the global economic atmosphere. Departing from the grandeur of their past, once "humiliated" Russia, Türkiye, Iran, China, India, and many others, started to contest the status

¹ "Turkey Ready to Quit Alliance," *New York Times*, 17 April 1964, 12.

² John J. Mearsheimer, "Why We Will Soon Miss the Cold War," *The Atlantic Monthly*, Vol. 266, No. 2 (August 1990): p. 35-50.

quo and the international rules “imposed” on them by the 2000s.³ Benefiting from globalization, these powers accumulated sufficient financial, military, diplomatic, or human resources to challenge the U.S.-led order.

“While the end of history was declared in the Western hemisphere during the liberal moment in the 1990s, several regional powers emerged slowly thanks to the global economic atmosphere.”

In the aftermath of the 2007-2008 global financial crisis, Russia has become the earliest to oppose the West directly. Russian President Vladimir Putin declared in Munich on 10 February 2007, that “the unipolar world that had been proposed after the Cold War did not take place either.” Instead, he proposed: “There is no reason to doubt that the economic potential of the new centers of global economic growth will inevitably be converted into political influence and will strengthen multipolarity.”⁴ The international community did not realize the gradual change in the global balance of power. Nevertheless, the symptoms were everywhere: the mid-2010s migrant crisis, Brexit, the rise of what is called “populist movements,” mismanagement of the Covid crisis, and finally, the withdrawal of U.S. and allied troops from Afghanistan in 2021.

From the second half of the last decade, the conflict spread all over the world. Africa, South Europe, Central, and West Asia became the epicenters of global power competition as China heavily invested in these regions, while Russia formed substantial relationships with the regional states. Even within the Western bloc, there seemed a moment of fracture as the interests of Germany or other Mediterranean countries aligned with those of Russia or China. The Ukrainian war, however, erased some of these points of divergence within the alliance. Still, few countries, such as Hungary and Türkiye, remain neutral and act independently according to the new multipolar world order recently deemed “irreversible” by Putin.⁵

The war opened another phase in the current global situation. As “the New Cold War” is progressively turning into a large-scale and multi-actor military conflict,

³ The French Political Scientist Bertrand Badie is the first to have coined the term “the age of humiliated [powers]” in his “pathological” analysis of international relations: *Les temps des humiliés* (Paris, 2014).

⁴ Vladimir Putin, “Speech and the Following Discussion at the Munich Conference on Security Policy,” (President of Russia, 10 February 2007). <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24034>

⁵ Elena Teslova, “Putin says formation of multipolar world ‘irreversible’,” Anadolu Agency, 30 June 2022. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/world/putin-says-formation-of-multipolar-world-irreversible/2627320>

the rivals of the U.S.-led order, China being the most prominent and powerful contender, have started to accept the Russian thesis of multilateralism.⁶ Despite all the war efforts, Ukraine, European Union, and the United States could not succeed in bringing together “an international community” to condemn Russia and rally around Washington. Nevertheless, this does not mean that the world has been divided into two, as in the days of the *original* Cold War.

Alternatively, there is a system of ephemeral alliances bonding different actors, which are usually rivals in their regions: Iran and Israel, Türkiye and Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and India, and Brazil and Mexico have aligned in differing degrees with Russia and extensively China, for the first time in modern history. These regional powers’ common goal is to change the status quo and challenge the lines drawn during and immediately after the Cold War. While the time limit for this alignment cannot be predicted, inevitably, it would not last as long as the traditional West/East alliances of the last century. First, these actors are rivals or explicit enemies with contrasting interests in their shared regions. Secondly, they would not want any other challenger, such as China, to exploit the asymmetrical relations founded during the struggle against the old hegemon. The new nineteenth century thus will be a period of pursuit for the regional and global balance of power, a subject that Turkish diplomacy has a vast knowledge of.

The Resilience of Turkish Foreign Policy

“The long nineteenth century” taught Türkiye one lesson: balance of power. Seeking a way to prevent the empire’s dismemberment or to survive, the Ottomans realized that they needed to form temporary alliances with the great powers, who had conflicting interests in the East. Soon after Napoléon’s unsuccessful attempt to conquer Ottoman Egypt, the Sublime Port sought help from Britain and Russia. Years later, it asked for military assistance from Russia to counter the Franco-British alliance. Finally, the Ottoman decision-makers fought with London and Paris one of the large-scale wars of the century, the Crimean War, against Russia. International developments rendered this pragmatic policy useless, as the Empire dissolved after World War I. The founders of the young Turkish republic adopted this lesson once again to survive and reemerge as a regional power. The Kemalist government first allied with the Bolsheviks and later established good relations with the former occupying powers, Britain and France.

Although Türkiye officially became a NATO member in 1952, this pragmatic and

⁶ Danil Bochkov, “Russia and China are aligning their visions for a multipolar world, and eyeing new supporters,” South China Morning Post, 2 November 2022. <https://www.scmp.com/comment/opinion/article/3197901/russia-and-china-are-aligning-their-visions-multipolar-world-and-eyeing-new-supporters>

rational policy continued even during the height of the Cold War. Facing the Western opposition to the Turkish thesis on the Cypriot problem in the 1960s and the 1970s, Ankara did not abstain from collaborating with Moscow in many economic fields.⁷ While not engaging with any major power at the moment of Western triumph in the 1990s and early 2000s, Türkiye still refused to comply with the United States demands to impose sanctions on Iran or to authorize the deployment of American troops on Turkish territory during the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's two-decade-long rule did not change much in this approach. Despite the first ten years of his premiership being marked by partnerships with Washington and European capitals, much has changed in the second half of his leadership. The most evident reason for this change was the more controlling turn on the social and political life as an aftermath of Gezi Park Protests in 2013.

“Although Türkiye officially became a NATO member in 1952, this pragmatic and rational policy continued even during the height of the Cold War.”

Nevertheless, this explanation still needs to be more complex and adequate. Firstly, it assumes that the then-prime minister or the incumbent president has been the only decision-maker in Turkish foreign policy. A growing Turkish military-industrial complex, internationally renowned for its unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV), the domestic political actors, the Islamic and secular bourgeoisie, and finally, the public opinion play non-neglected roles in determining foreign policy principles and actions. Moreover, this dynamic multi-actor structure causes foreign policy changes, such as Turkish involvement in the Syrian Civil War, relations with the Gulf countries, or rapprochement with Turkic states.

The second and most crucial factor is Türkiye's pursuit of “a new place” within the changing world order since the early 2010s. Erdoğan's Türkiye has already been a contender in regional politics and a challenger of the status quo. The famous slogan of the Turkish president is “the World is bigger than five” (in Turkish, “*Dünya beşten büyüktür*”), the five referencing the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).⁸ He frequently uses this sentence to

⁷ John Sakkas and Nataliya Zhukova, “The Soviet Union, Turkey and the Cyprus Problem, 1967-1974,” *Les cahiers Irice*, Vol. 10, No. 10 (2013): p. 123-35.

⁸ According to available data, Erdoğan seemed to coin the sentence for the first time in 2013: Berdal Alan, “The World Is Bigger than Five”: A Salutary Manifesto of Turkey's New International Outlook,” *Insight Turkey*, Vol. 21, No. 4 (2019): p. 71.

denounce the ineffectiveness and failures of the UNSC in the face of global crises from Palestine to Ukraine. The Turkish interference in the Libyan and Syrian Civil Wars in the neo-Ottomanist direction, or direct Turkish support to Azerbaijan in the Second Karabakh War (2020) with more nationalist motivations, further illustrating Ankara's desire to play a more active role in the region.

As another *humilié*, like Russia and China, Türkiye found it reasonable, pragmatic, and beneficial to refuse to participate in Western sanctions against Russia since the invasion of Ukraine despite all the explicit warnings and threats coming from Washington and Brussels. However, Ankara did not stop supporting Kiev through financial and military means. This dual policy can only be explained by the resilience of the Turkish foreign policy. The interesting turn to reestablish relations with Armenia, Israel, Egypt, and Gulf countries is a sign of the dimensions of this resilience. Another striking example is the toxic relationship between the Turkish state and NATO. While fulfilling its military duty as it has the second largest army in NATO, Türkiye has not accepted Finland and Sweden's bid for the same reasons. Only after realizing its power and resilience limits can Türkiye use them to execute its regional and worldwide foreign policy aims.

Middle State

Türkiye's pursuit of a new place in the multipolar world led to new alliances or stronger partnerships with other regional and global powers. Russia and the United Kingdom, respectively, greatly impact Turkish foreign policy and perception of international affairs. The former is an excellent example to demonstrate the resilience of Turkish diplomacy. A historical nemesis, Russia became an economic partner after the fall of the Soviet Union. The two countries were on the brink of armed conflict when the Turkish air force shot down a Russian military aircraft in 2015. However, since the coup d'état attempt in 2016, both parties have enjoyed high-level cooperation and collaboration in many fields.

The relations between Ankara and London exhibit how Türkiye's pursuit of a balance of power impact its foreign policy. Türkiye has benefited from its geopolitical importance and cultural ties with neighboring peoples since the nineteenth century. It is neither Eastern nor Western, but still both. It has direct access to the Mediterranean, Black Sea, and Caspian. Therefore, London perceives it as the guardian of future continental defense structures, which could extend from Poland to Azerbaijan and the exit door of the new Silk Road. Moreover, the improving relations with Turkic states in Central Asia and South Caucasus offer Ankara and its partners, London in this case, leverage in any issue concerning China and Russia. A Brexited-Britain,

which seeks to bypass Europe, needs Türkiye, and the relations between the two have significantly developed since the coup attempt.

Connecting worlds to worlds and playing with rivals and enemies, Türkiye maintains its regional power as the Middle State, or Central State despite the financial and domestic political crises for a long time. Following the footsteps of the Ottoman and republican diplomats, Turkish foreign policy actors seize the moment to adapt to the multipolar world.

Relying on its imperial legacy, Türkiye has been a contender in regional politics since the early 2010s. However, it also adopted a traditional foreign policy principle to adapt to the new multipolar world in the contemporary period, which can be called the new nineteenth century: seeking the balance of power. Türkiye can only fully use its strength and resilience after acknowledging their limits to achieve its regional and global foreign policy objectives. Then, it can arise as a reliable mediator in the current crises and an influential actor in international politics.

FROM EAST TO NORTH: NEW FRONTIERS FOR THE EU-NATO ARCTIC DEFENCE

After a geopolitical phase of peace and international cooperation, the Arctic is witnessing renewed military tensions, particularly between Russia, NATO, and European Union (EU) member countries. The multilateral governance that has so far governed the fate of the Arctic is being challenged by the confrontation between Russia and the West. In addition, climate warming opens up new trade routes. It provides access to immense deposits of raw materials, accelerating competition among actors partly by including external players such as China. To assess the future trajectory of European defense governance on the northern flank, it is necessary to view the Arctic and Baltic as a single region in light of common critical factors.

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During the Cold War, the Arctic was one of the crucial hubs of confrontation between the two blocs and was, therefore the scene of heavy militarization. The Arctic security agenda was thus declined in initially strictly military terms, and political, economic, and cultural interests were subordinated to the interests of the great powers.¹ After the collapse of the Soviet Union, however, there was a gradual shift from military to environmental and economic issues in Arctic politics, with a loss of the region's centrality in geopolitical terms. Beginning in the mid-1990s, therefore, a process of international cooperation was initiated to demilitarize the Arctic by instead promoting scientific research, respect for indigenous peoples' rights, and environmental protection. The Arctic region was thus gradually established as a peaceful zone with satisfactory international cooperation.

Nowadays, however, the increasing return of competition between powers, aggravated by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, has had a significant impact on the security environment of the High North. In this context, the Arctic represents a crucial junction for European security in light of the importance of the North Atlantic Sea Line of Communication (SLOC), which is vital for ensuring European defense.² The Arctic can now be defined as a region of strategic competition, partly due to its failure to consolidate as a security community held together by common and shared values.³

This process turns out to be inextricably linked with Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which has shifted the center of gravity of political and academic interest to the eastern flank of NATO and the European Union (EU), at the expense of other hot theaters crucial to European security and defense governance. However, the now open conflict between Russia and the West is likely to open a high front of tension in the northernmost portion of the European continent, from the Baltic Sea to the Arctic lands. This scenario involves the leading international organizations dedicated to European defense, namely the EU and NATO, and Russia and China. Persistent climate change, which on the one hand poses a severe threat to not only local environmental security but also offers important opportunities in terms of trade and energy that can further accelerate competition between major powers, further complicates the scenario and heightens military tensions.

¹ Teemu Palosaari and Nina Tynkkynen, "Chapter 5: Arctic Securitization and Climate Change," in *Handbook of the Politics of the Arctic* (Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2015).

² Harri Mikkola, "The Geostrategic Arctic: Hard Security in the High North," FIIA Briefing Paper, 259 (April 2019): p. 8. <https://www.fiaa.fi/en/publication/the-geostrategic-arctic>

³ Heather Exner-Pirot, "Between Militarization and Disarmament: Challenges for Arctic Security in the Twenty-First Century," in: L. Heininen and H. Exner-Pirot (eds), *Climate Change and Arctic Security* (Cham: Palgrave Pivot, 2020).

The Security Shifts in the Arctic Region

The shift to the east of the security and defense center of gravity also affects European governance in this area in the northernmost portion that includes the Arctic but not only. Indeed, the Arctic region has peculiar characteristics that make it a crucial junction of the future European security and defense architecture. This is in light, first and foremost, of the co-presence of countries belonging to both NATO and the EU, as well as the substantial Russian presence. Moscow has been engaged in heavy military and commercial investment in the region for years now. Second, the strong impact of climate change is having far more significant effects in the Arctic than in the rest of the planet, producing consequences for local populations and generating significant new business opportunities.

“Already since the 2014 crisis following the occupation of Crimea and Donbas, however, there has been a process of slowing down the multilateral dialogue, in parallel with an increasing militarization of the region.”

These have for years now been attracting the interests of even an external player such as China, which is increasingly committed to carving out an Arctic role for itself while accelerating competition among regional powers. In this sense, the deterioration of relations between Moscow and the West is likely to produce, in the near future, an acceleration of Arctic tensions, fostered precisely by the elements just mentioned. Until recently, coexistence between Western powers and Russia in the region had been considered sufficiently peaceful and moderately cooperative.⁴

For quite some time, the Arctic region had been home to several EU and NATO members, which, along with Russia, gave rise to increasingly institutionalized multilateral governance aimed not only at ensuring peaceful coexistence but also at promoting forms of cooperation in the scientific and security spheres.⁵ The institutionalization of relations through the Arctic Council has helped normalize the region by making it a theater of cooperation, especially in the scientific sphere.

⁴ Ilya Kramnik, “The Cold War in the Cold Region: A Return,” in: A. Likhacheva (eds), *Arctic Fever* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022): p. 31. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-9616-9_2

⁵ Eremina Gadal Lagutina, “European Arctic Policy,” in: E. V. Pak, A. I. Krivtsov, N. S. Zagrebelnaya (eds), *The Handbook of the Arctic* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2022). https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-16-9250-5_5-1

Already since the 2014 crisis following the occupation of Crimea and Donbas, however, there has been a process of slowing down the multilateral dialogue, in parallel with an increasing militarization of the region. Russia's gradual estrangement from the West and its multilateral organizations has prompted some of the most relevant actors in the region to increase their defense budgets, as in the case of Sweden, Canada, and the US. In the same time frame, there has been an increase in Russian military investments in the region, justified by the Kremlin as defensive investments, although accompanied by clear offensive and disruptive maneuvers against, for example, Norway and Finland.⁶ Moscow has implemented a series of hybrid measures for these countries, ranging from airspace incursions to cyber activities to energy retaliation.⁷ Even well before the Russian invasion on 24 February 2022, therefore, the Arctic scenario was already showing signs of increasing tension, which was also the result of the co-presence of rival actors with each other, bearers of competing interests. However, tensions have been rising slowly but steadily over the past few months due to skirmishes and provocations from Moscow, as evidenced by the recent alarm raised by Norwegian security forces about the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons in Arctic waters, an episode that, if confirmed, would represent a first since the end of the Cold War.⁸ Moscow's activism has inevitably produced a greater involvement of NATO in the Arctic context, which as early as 2020 in the "NATO 2030 report" document expressed among its final recommendations a call to increase in:

“situational awareness across the High North and the Arctic’ as well as for the creation of a proper Arctic strategy [...] and should develop a strategy that takes into account broader deterrence and defense plans.”⁹

While greater NATO activism in the Arctic was viewed with extreme caution before the final outbreak of the Ukrainian conflict out of fear of Moscow's possible reaction, the current scenario seems to be inevitably pushing toward greater involvement of the Atlantic Alliance, especially following Sweden's and Finland's applications for membership.¹⁰ Therefore, if NATO's engagement in the Arctic security and defense policy framework seems inescapable, it is essential to identify appropriate policy

⁶ Katarzyna Zysk, “Myth 8: Russia's Military Build-Up in the Arctic is Defensive,” Chatham House, 14 July 2022. <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2022/07/myths-and-misconceptions-around-russian-military-intent/myth-8-russias-military-build>

⁷ Mikkola (2019): p. 8.

⁸ Wilhelmine Preussen, “Norway Warns of Growing Importance of Russian Nuclear Deterrence in Arctic,” Politico.eu, 14 February 2023. <https://www.politico.eu/article/russia-nuclear-ships-norway-ukraine-war/>

⁹ NATO, “NATO 2030: United for a New Era,” Analysis and Recommendations of the reflection group appointed by the NATO Secretary General (Brussels, 25 November 2020). Available at https://www.nato.int/nato_static_fl2014/assets/pdf/2020/12/pdf/201201-Reflection-Group-Final-Report-Uni.pdf

¹⁰ Depledge Boulegue, “New Military Security Architecture Needed in the Arctic”, Chatham House, 4 May 2021. <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2021/05/new-military-security-architecture-needed-arctic>

recommendations in good time.¹¹ These, in fact, would be aimed at directing its actions as effectively as possible considering the Alliance's limited knowledge of a region once considered "low tension".¹² This process comes in the wake of a gradual strengthening of the Atlantic Alliance's presence in the region, partly as a result of intense political pressure from Norway over the years. While not explicitly mentioning the Arctic, NATO's Brussels Summit in 2018 signaled the relevance of the High North through the strengthening of the maritime presence in the region through measures to protect sea lanes of communication, amphibious operations, and measures to counter submarine warfare.¹³

“Greenland has been the primary target of China's activity thus far; in 2018, China began discussions with Greenland to build one of the world's largest uranium and rare earth mines, which would be added to the zinc already extracted and would be part of a complex of five projects dealing largely with mining of iron ore, ore, rare earth metals, uranium, and oil.”

The Nexus Between Climate Change, Security, and Commercial Exploitation

Affecting the Arctic security and defense scenario is not only the contiguity of rival actors and their military activities, but a plurality of factors linked together reciprocally. This is due to the coexistence of natural, military, and economic factors and geography. Indeed, the gradual melting of ice opens up new trade routes and provides access to immense deposits of raw materials, accelerating competition between powers and increasing friction between them. The effects of climate change in the Arctic region have so far produced environmental disruptions at a much higher rate than in the rest of the Planet.¹⁴

The progressive melting of the polar ice caps produces serious consequences, first, for local populations' food, water, and physical security. Second, it opens new horizons for commercial and economic exploitation. Indeed, thanks to the disappearance of

¹¹ Maddy Bennet, "NATO's Role in Securing a Changing Arctic," The Henry M. Jackson School of International Studies, 6 May 2020. <https://jsis.washington.edu/news/natos-role-in-securing-a-changing-arctic/>

¹² Marc Lanteigne, "The Changing Shape of Arctic Security," *NATO Review*, No. 28 (28 June 2019). <https://www.nato.int/docu/review/articles/2019/06/28/the-changing-shape-of-arctic-security/index.html>

¹³ Mikkola (2019): p. 6.

¹⁴ Hall & Webber, "Maritime Security in the North Atlantic," in R-L. Boşilcă, S. Ferreira, & B. J. Ryan (Eds.) (Routledge Handbook of Maritime Security, 2022).

glaciers, it is easier to access the immense deposits of raw materials that were once inaccessible to humans. Some estimates predict that between 2030 and 2050 Arctic summers will be ice-free at the surface, making the waters more easily navigable and making existing natural gas and oil deposits attractive to major powers.¹⁵ In addition, the disappearance of the fields also allows for the opening of invaluable new maritime trade routes, such as the Northwest Passage (NWP) and the Northern Sea Route (NSR).¹⁶ In fact, according to data from the U.S. Geological Survey, the Arctic region would contain an estimated \$20 trillion in wealth, the result of 40 percent of global hydrocarbon reserves, and 30 percent of all global resources. It would also be one of the global areas of greatest economic growth, with GDP growing at an average rate of around 10-11 percent per year over the past few years.¹⁷ The Arctic represents an essential building block for Russian expansionist aims, especially in the wake of economic sanctions imposed by the West. Control of the NSR, in particular, is crucial to guarantee Moscow an outlet to China and India that will allow it to continue exporting oil from Russia's Arctic fields, which alone is worth 10 percent of the national GDP.¹⁸

Chinese Activism in the Arctic Policies

The enormous resources in the region and the possibility of access to new and unexplored sea lanes contribute to attracting the sights of external players around the Arctic, making the regional security scenario more intricate. China is among the players most interested in carving out a role in Arctic politics. Although it does not appear to be an Arctic country, Beijing has long expressed a willingness to participate in regional developments actively and the race for allocated raw materials.¹⁹ Beijing was granted observer status in the Arctic Council in 2013, gradually increasing its activism in the region, particularly in the areas of science, economics and governance.²⁰ In this sense, suspending the Arctic Council's work following the Russian invasion of Ukraine poses substantial problems regarding the region's security. Indeed, it weakens Russia economically, which had so far supported heavy infrastructure investments in the region by focusing precisely on raw material deposits and new trade routes, investments that so far have not yet

¹⁵ Alexander Drivas, "The Polar Silk Road and the U.S. Strategy in the Arctic Ocean," *RIEAS*, 19 February 2023. <https://www.rieas.gr/researchareas/editorial/4770-the-polar-silk-road-and-the-u-s-strategy-in-the-arctic-ocean>

¹⁶ Frederic Lasserre, "The Future of the Arctic Route for Maritime Trade: A Geopolitical Revolution?", ISPI, 20 October 2021. <https://www.ispionline.it/en/publication/future-arctic-route-maritime-trade-geopolitical-revolution-32054>

¹⁷ Marzio Mian, "Why the Arctic Matters," ISPI, 27 June 2018. <https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/why-arctic-matters-20882>

¹⁸ Cosimo Palleschi, "Nuove rotte, materie prime, terre rare: perché l'Artico è al centro delle strategie di Usa, Russia e Cina," *Forbes*, 13 February 2023. <https://forbes.it/2023/02/13/artico-centro-geopolitica-usa-russia-cina/>

¹⁹ Liselotte Odgaard, "Russia's Arctic Designs and NATO," *Survival*, Vol. 64, No. 4 (2022): p. 89-104.

²⁰ Yitong Chen, "China's Arctic Policy and Engagement: Review and Prospects," *Asia Policy*, Vol. 30, No. 1 (2023).

yielded considerable profits. This risks bringing Russia ever closer to the Chinese orbit. In fact, Beijing is also directly affected by the halt to multilateral confrontation in the region, pushing it more and more to take an interest in the Arctic as a kind of “near-arctic country.”²¹

Since at least 2018, when a report from the Arctic Council confirmed this definition, Beijing’s policies have been seen as an attempt to establish a full-fledged “Polar Silk Road” to support and complement Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects, causing friction with Moscow over fears of an encroachment on Moscow’s sphere of influence.²² In the same year, China published a white paper to articulate its Arctic Policy, aimed at justifying the country’s self-definition as a “near-Arctic State” partly based on climate change, which Beijing said would cause a direct impact on Chinese interests in strategic economic sectors such as agriculture, fisheries and forests.²³ Such a definition would signal China’s elastic conception of borders, tending to be shaped based on the economic interests at stake. In addition, the interest in the Arctic would not only be about the possibility of appropriating the massive raw materials, but also about the control of the NSR, which provides China with a journey that is about 40 percent shorter than the traditional routes between Asia and Europe.²⁴

Beijing stated in the white paper that it would adhere to scrupulous compliance with the conventions and international law accrued under current Arctic governance to achieve these goals.²⁵ Greenland has been the primary target of China’s activity thus far; in 2018, China began discussions with Greenland to build one of the world’s largest uranium and rare earth mines, which would be added to the zinc already extracted and would be part of a complex of five projects dealing largely with mining of iron ore, ore, rare earth metals, uranium, and oil. The significance of Greenland, formally dependent on Denmark in foreign and defense policy but substantially subsidized by Copenhagen, to the EU as its main and only Arctic access should also be mentioned. In addition, there are U.S. and NATO military interests through the Thule Military Base. Iceland is also a key piece in China’s hegemonic expansion in the Arctic, having been the first country to sign a Free Trade Agreement with Beijing in 2013 partly to cope with the harsh economic consequences of the financial crisis gripping the island.

²¹ Maud Descamps, “The Ice Silk Road: is China a “near-Arctic State”?”, Institute for Security and Development Policy, February 2019. <https://isdsp.eu/publication/the-ice-silk-road-is-china-a-near-arctic-state/#:~:text=Factually%20speaking%2C%20China%20is%20not,its%20attention%20toward%20the%20region>

²² Boulegue, “The Militarization of Russian Polar Politics,” Chatham House, 6 June 2022. <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2022/06/militarization-russian-polar-politics>

²³ Kobzeva Mariia, “China’s Arctic Policy: Present and Future,” *The Polar Journal*, Vol. 9, Issue 1 (2019): p. 94-112.

²⁴ Ferreira-Pereira, Duarte, Santos, “Why Is China Going Polar? Understanding Engagement and Implications for the Arctic and Antarctica,” in: P. A. B. Duarte, F.J.B.S. Leandro, E.M. Galán (eds), *The Palgrave Handbook of Globalization with Chinese Characteristics* (Singapore: Palgrave Macmillan, 2023).

²⁵ State Council Information Office of People’s Republic of China, “China’s Arctic Policy,” 2018. Available at: http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-01/26/c_136926498.htm

Towards the Future: An Enlarged Arctic Region

Regarding the possible evolutions of Arctic security and defense governance, and its effects on the European security architecture, it is necessary to broaden the geographical space considered by going beyond just the Arctic coastal states. Indeed, the decision of Finland and Sweden to abandon their historic policy of neutrality to formally apply for membership in the Atlantic Alliance, although the process is still ongoing and not without obstacles,²⁶ is bound to produce lasting effects over time.²⁷ First among them is the welding of the Arctic region and the Baltic Sea into a single Great North with common security flashpoints. In addition, the energy dependence of a major part of Europe on Russian energy sources, with the crisis that is severely afflicting households and businesses, has made the pipelines that carry essential energy supplies across the Baltic Sea crucial in the run-up to winter. The massive presence of Atlantic Alliance member countries bordering the Baltic Sea has led some observers to call this sea basin a “NATO lake.”²⁸ Such a definition seems apt to summarize the consistent shift in the strategic center of gravity in the regional context, resulting from a deep integration of means and strategic cultures between Nordic and Baltic countries. However, it has so far puzzled some analysts.²⁹

The trajectory of the Baltic Sea seems to have shifted from what was termed a “sea of peace”³⁰ by the Soviet Union and an example of region-building, to an area of intense military, political and strategic confrontation and tension. The shift of the strategic center of gravity northward also intersects with the uncertainties and ambiguities of individual European countries’ choices. While the UK, Poland and the Baltic republics support the strengthening of the northern flank, far more skeptical seem to be France and the southern countries, which fear losing the EU centrality on defense policies and the downsizing of the Mediterranean as a strategic area. The weld between the Arctic and the Baltic Sea allows a joint observation of the challenges the two contexts pose to international security and a complete understanding of the need to broaden the geographic horizon. In this sense, Scotland plays a crucial role in the future of Arctic policies.³¹ Already long engaged in defining its own role in the

²⁶ Helmi Pillai, “Finland Should Prepare to Join NATO on Its Own,” Centre for European Reform, 16 February 2023. <https://www.cer.eu/insights/finland-should-prepare-join-nato-its-own>

²⁷ Alberque & Schreer, “Finland, Sweden and NATO Membership,” *Survival*, Vol. 64, No. 3 (2022): p. 67-72.

²⁸ Michael Jonsson & Robin Haggblom, “Cooperation can make the NATO lake a reality,” War on the Rocks, 29 August 2022. <https://warontherocks.com/2022/08/cooperation-can-make-the-nato-lake-a-reality/>

²⁹ Julian Pawlak, “No, Don’t Call the Baltic a NATO Lake,” RUSI, 5 September 2022. <https://www.rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/no-dont-call-baltic-nato-lake>

³⁰ Klaus Wittmann, “NATO and Security in The Baltic Sea Region,” BSR Policy Briefing Series (July 2022): https://www.centrumbalticum.org/files/5320/BSR_Policy_Briefing_7_2022.pdf

³¹ Depledge, Dodds & Kennedy-Pipe, “The UK’s Arctic Defence Strategy: Negotiating the Slippery Geopolitics of the UK and the Arctic,” RUSI, 25 April 2019. <https://www.rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/rusi-journal/uks-arctic-defence-strategy-negotiating-slippery-geopolitics-uk-and-arctic>

region, including in opposition to London and instrumentally concerning the cause of independence, Edinburgh is relevant because of its geographical proximity to the Arctic, its close relationship with most Arctic countries, and because it is home to British nuclear weapons, which are decisive in the NATO framework.³² Including Scotland as well in the Arctic security governance framework, therefore, allows for an even greater appreciation of the close interconnectedness that characterizes the region and the need for a broad framing that combines not only the European Arctic but also the Baltic and the North Atlantic region.

Finally, the suspension of multilateral forms of cooperation, such as the Arctic Council, makes peaceful coexistence in the region more difficult. This makes it all the more necessary to jointly observe the contiguous contexts just mentioned, coming to understand the northern part of the European continent as a kind of macro-region. It is no coincidence that we have been witnessing for some time now a dynamization of forms of cooperation in the military field in response to Moscow's assertiveness, as in the case of NORDEFCO (Nordic Defense Cooperation) encompassing Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Sweden and Norway, which is increasingly active in the dialogue with the U.S. and in the process of possible enlargement.³³ This is stated in the official document as the following:

*“the aim and purpose of NORDEFCO is to strengthen the participating nations’ national defense, explore common synergies and facilitate efficient common solutions.”*³⁴

The substantial presence of NORDEFCO and the deployment of forces occurring in both the Arctic region and the Baltic Sea confirms the need to view the region as unique in terms of local security threats but with apparent international spillovers intended to affect the European defense architecture as well.³⁵ In this sense, NORDEFCO could prove to be a successful model in terms of defense cooperation, the results of which are the result of cooperation between countries with similar strategic cultures and a flexible structure, although under present circumstances, there is a limit to how far defense cooperation can go considering different security doctrines. But extending regional defense cooperation to include other Allied

³² Depledge & Østhagen, “Scotland: A Touchstone for Security in the High North?”, *The RUSI Journal*, Vol. 166, No. 6-7 (2022): p. 46-62.

³³ Minna Ålander and Michael Paul, “Moscow Threatens The Balance In The High North: In Light Of Russia’s War in Ukraine, Finland and Sweden are Moving Closer to NATO”, *SWP Comment*, No. 24 (2022), Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik (SWP), Berlin. <https://www.econstor.eu/bitstream/10419/256747/1/2022C24.pdf>

³⁴ “Memorandum of Understanding between the Governments of Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden on Nordic Defence Cooperation,” signed in Helsinki on 4 November 2009. Available at: <https://www.nordefco.org/Files/nordefco-mou.pdf>

³⁵ Ann-Sofie Dahl, “NORDEFCO and NATO: ‘Smart Defence’ in the North?”, *NATO Defense College* (2014). <http://www.jstor.org/stable/resrep10416>.

countries (including a broader group such as Poland, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom) could bring added value to NATO and boost cooperation between Western actors in the Arctic policies.

CONCERNS FOR FOOD SECURITY IN THE MEDITERRANEAN AND TÜRKİYE

When Russia's invasion of Ukraine resumed after a hiatus of many months, it prompted the European Union and 17 other countries to cut off relations with Russia and Belarus. Most of the goods and food that people in the West use now come from foreign plantations and factories. The length of the war will significantly affect the extent to which it disrupts global food supplies and the intensity of the resulting food crisis. A symptom of this movement, and a warning against over-reliance on Russian energy supplies, is the European Political Community. While the article's focus is on the potential impact of the war between Russia and Ukraine on food supplies throughout the world, it also serves to remind readers that there is more to a crisis than a shortage of Russian oil and gas.

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*Keywords: Food Security, Grain Import,
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Introduction

A study shows that the ‘business-as-usual’ scenario would entail by 2050 an increase in world population by more than 50 percent, a doubling of food requirements, and a continuing inequality in the sharing of resources.¹ This estimation was made prior to a food price crisis in 2008, recent climate change adjustments, and the current bottleneck in the affordable and reliable food supply. Food security is a pressing issue due to the fragility of the food supply structure at both the local and global levels, but an acute scarcity of food to access.

Despite being vulnerable to a political crisis and moving in the opposite direction of sustainable development goals, food security is understudied as a pressing issue due to “abundant” assumed food access. Food insecurity was introduced to legal frameworks in the 1970s, yet acute food insecurity associated with climate change by reducing emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases urged governments to take climate change seriously in the last decades.²

Food security is a global issue that is inextricably linked to commercial agriculture and international trade, as one-third of all accessed food is thrown away in households. Civil war, rapid population growth, and increased internationalization of global food markets have all had an impact on many countries’ food security.³ Mittal argues that rising cereal prices result from Western biofuel policies, which blame developing countries for the food price crisis.⁴

Four core values define food security: sufficiency of food for an active, healthy life; access to food and the entitlement to produce, purchase, or exchange food; security in the sense of balancing vulnerability, risk, and insurance; time and the variability in experiencing chronic, transitory, and cyclical food insecurity.⁵ According to UNDP, food import dependency is another current aspect of this definition that indicates the ratio of a country’s food imports relative to the food available in a country for internal distribution.⁶

After several months, Russia’s invasion of Ukraine resumes, prompting the European

¹ Anne Fremaux, *After the Anthropocene Green Republicanism in a Post-Capitalist World* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019): p. 243.

² Tim Lang and Michael Heasman, *Food Wars* (London: Earthscan, 2004): p. 231.

³ Stephen J. Scanlan, “Food Security and Comparative Sociology,” *International Journal of Sociology*, Vol 33, No. 3 (2003): p. 101.

⁴ Anuradha Mittal, *The 2008 Food Price Crisis: Rethinking Food Security Policies* (United Nations Conference on Trade and Development G-24 Discussion Paper Series, No. 56, 2009): p.5.

⁵ Lang and Heasman (2004): p. 92.

⁶ United Nations Development Programme, *New Dimensions of Human Security* (UNDP Human Development Report, 1994): p. 26-27.

Union, along with 17 non-EU states, to isolate Russia and Belarus from European politics and international organizations. Western countries now import most of the goods and food they consume from foreign plantations and factories.⁷ The scale of the war's impact on the global food supply, and the severity of the subsequent food crisis, will largely depend on the duration of the conflict itself.^{8,9} The European Political Community is an example of this process and a reminder of the risks of relying on Russian exports and the political ramifications of Russia's isolation.

“Food security is a global issue that is inextricably linked to commercial agriculture and international trade, as one-third of all accessed food is thrown away in households.”

Nevertheless, this article aims to remind readers that there is more to a crisis than a lack of Russian oil and gas and how the Russia-Ukraine conflict may affect the global food supply.

Global agricultural trade is a component of food security that, in comparison to the energy crisis, receives little attention today. Food security is a common thread connecting all 17 SDGs, from Goal 2 on “zero hunger” to agricultural security, to ensure food supply due to the interconnected economic, social, and environmental dimensions of food systems.

This paper investigates existing food security theories and sketches current dynamics as they interact with contemporary issues.

The Background of Food Security

With its definition of food security as the “objective” of ensuring that all people have physical and economic access to adequate safe, and nutritious food that always fits their dietary needs and food choices for an active and healthy life, the FAO was the first to establish the notion of food security in the international legal system in the 1970s.¹⁰ Food insecurity is directly or indirectly responsible for more than half

⁷ Scanlan (2003): p. 222.

⁸ European Parliament Research Service, *Russia's War on Ukraine: Impact on Global Food Security and EU Response* (2022): p. 3.

⁹ Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, *The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World* 2022.

¹⁰ Food and Agriculture Organization, *Food Security and Nutrition For All* (2023).

of all child deaths in the developing world.¹¹

The emphasis is on access as one of three components—food availability, access, and utilization—which refers to structural disruptions on the way to consumers, as well as globalization and inequality politics.¹² One of several discrimination theories on food insecurity is human-induced scarcity because of militarization and war affecting vulnerable populations.

Theoretically, food insecurity is associated with structural barriers and denials of access for various reasons, as well as allocation, rather than actual scarcity of food. Furthermore, importing grains and other food products does not guarantee food insecurity; rather, it indicates that the importer has access to food, which may be mitigated by affordable, consistent access. For example, food weaponization occurs in conflicts where hunger and deprivation last longer than the armed conflict phase, highlighting the vulnerable link between military agencies and the allocation of state resources for human well-being in the face of disruption of food security, political instability, or repression.¹³

Food import dependency is another supply measure: the ratio of a country's food imports to the food available for internal distribution.¹⁴ Although the term “dependence” implies otherwise, food imports demonstrate that a country can afford and obtain food on the international market. Thus, when considering availability measures, it makes no difference whether food is produced domestically or imported as long as it is available, accessible, and usable for survival.¹⁵ Agricultural imports, on the other hand, have an impact on domestic agriculture and food supply, resulting in dependency and implicit food security concerns¹⁶ as opposed to the material environment that provides food security as a human right and a sustainable development goal.

The Mediterranean Food Security Landscape

The top grain exporters are Russia and Ukraine, which account for 35 percent of total maize, wheat, and barley exports. The European Union learned from the 2008 global food price crisis, and while it is wary of another crisis that could exacerbate

¹¹ UNICEF, *The State of the World's Children 1998* (1998): p.6.

¹² Food and Agriculture Organization, *World Food Summit Report* (1996).

¹³ Miles Wolpin, “Comparative Perspectives on Militarization, Repression, and Social Welfare,” *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 20, (1983): p.141.

¹⁴ United Nations Development Programme (1994): p. 26.

¹⁵ Jenkins et al. J. Craig, and Stephen I. Scanlan, “Food Security in Less Developed Countries, 1970-1990,” *American Sociological Review* Vol. 66 (2001): pp. 718-44.

¹⁶ Observatory of Economic Complexity OEC, Exports and Imports, Wheat, (2020).

it, food supply is a concern for the union, even though no food access crisis is imminent. Despite droughts in grain-producing countries and rising oil prices being the initial causes, increases in oil prices also augmented the costs of fertilizers, food transportation, and industrial agriculture. Thus, economic sanctions were imposed on Russia that did not specifically target the agricultural sector.

“The Russian invasion of Ukraine has increased food insecurity concerns across much of the Mediterranean and the Middle East.”

Türkiye is part of the FAO’s Central Asia region and faces the same challenges as the other countries in the region, including price increases of up to 45 percent and shortages of food, energy, fertilizer, and inputs such as seeds. This raises the prospect of reduced crop production, and some countries have lost significant export markets as a result.¹⁷

Governments have responded by providing incentives to increase the production of important staple crops to reduce imports, as well as by attempting to shorten supply chains and find new trading partners.¹⁸ The Open Balkan Agreement was referred to as a crucial tool in leveling access to grain, as was the Black Sea Initiative. In some countries, productivity has increased, which is a positive outcome.¹⁹

Industrial agriculture, with its disruption of ecosystems, threatens access to healthy, nutritious food and cultivable land across the Mediterranean region.²⁰ The Russian invasion of Ukraine has increased food insecurity concerns across much of the Mediterranean and the Middle East.²¹ Jordan, Yemen, Israel, and Lebanon are most at risk, as they rely heavily on imports of commodities, with significant shares from Russia and Ukraine.²² A global increase in food and agri-food input prices (fertilizers and energy) were already at record levels prior to the war.²³ Many commodities, including energy used for food supply, rely on natural gas, particularly for fertilizers,

¹⁷ Food and Agriculture Organization, *Regional Consultation Examines Food Security and Agricultural Production Risks*, 2023.

¹⁸ Food and Agriculture Organization, 2023.

¹⁹ Food and Agriculture Organization, 2023.

²⁰ Andrea di Bernardo, *Climate Change and Food Insecurity: Unleashing the Promise and Potential of Agroecology in the Mediterranean*, IAI Commentaries Vol. 22 No. 58 (2022): p. 2.

²¹ Andrea di Bernardo (2022).

²² European Parliament Research Service, (2022): p. 2.

²³ European Parliament Research Service, (2022).

resulting in a basket of imports for multiple components of the food supply.

The financial crisis of 2008 sparked debates about food sovereignty and the search for alternatives to the commercial food supply, particularly in densely populated areas.

However, the focus was on a micro level, which boils down to individual food access, which is indifferent to several structural problems on a global scale and could only be addressed in tandem with climate change requirements. The importance of decentralization and the emphasis is given to developing a solid ecostate to orchestrate and elaborate needs structural changes at the local and global levels.²⁴

According to OEC data, the top cereal exporters in 2020 were the United States (\$20.2 billion), Russia (\$11.5 billion), and Ukraine (\$10.5 billion). Wheat exports in 2020 were led by Russia (\$10.1 billion), Canada (\$7.13 billion), the United States (\$7.04 billion), France (\$4.76 billion), and Ukraine (\$4.61 billion).

The grain export volume of European countries has been observed to be reduced. Given the distance between North America and the Mediterranean region, which is short of wheat production, Ukraine and Russia will continue to be major suppliers for the region in the 2020s, which is short of wheat production. Egypt (\$5.2 billion) and Türkiye (\$2.44 billion) were the top wheat importers in 2020 in the region.²⁵

A war, combined with price increases, threatens all vulnerabilities, particularly in the Middle East and North Africa. To avoid double risks, the EU and Türkiye are working together on a food security initiative that will allow the grain and other food exports from Ukrainian ports to be safely transported through the Turkish Straits.

The Joint Coordination Center, which brought together officials from Russia, Türkiye, Ukraine, and the United Nations, was established in July 2022.

The Russian Mission to the EU has declared that the initiative violates the agreed-upon destinations for the safe passage of grains for European countries and the United Kingdom.²⁶

Conclusion

Food security hinges on many factors, from farm to fork. Food trade, corporate

²⁴ A. Fremaux (2019): p.13.

²⁵ Observatory of Economic Complexity, Exports and Imports, *Cereals*, 2020.

²⁶ Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the European Union, *On the Black Sea Initiative for the Export of Ukrainian Food*, 2022.

control of food supply, food poverty, supply insecurity, unprecedented environmental damage from food production, and the role and purpose of technology are all factors that have environmental, economic, social, and political ramifications.²⁷

As Russia is a major player in grain exports and agricultural substances, it remains critical to food supply amidst a tense political environment that insulates it. Russia and Ukraine supply more than half of North African and Middle Eastern cereal imports. In contrast, Eastern African countries import 72 percent of their cereals from Russia and 18 percent from Ukraine²⁸, and possible armed conflict is a hazard in the way of national food supply, especially in the countries surrounding the Mediterranean.

Türkiye is a significant trade partner for both the EU and Russia. Following the resumption of the war in Ukraine, security concerns about the disruption of imported materials urged importing countries in particular. Against this backdrop, the Black Sea Grain Initiative, co-hosted by the EU and Türkiye, demonstrates the importance of multilateral solutions.

²⁷ Lang and Heasman (2004): p.5.

²⁸ Bernardo (2022): p. 3.

EXPLORING THE RUSSIAN PERSPECTIVE ON THE WAR IN UKRAINE: DEMOGRAPHY'S POWER AND UKRAINE'S UNIQUENESS

Western officials and media have portrayed Russia as a rogue state that seeks to undermine the fundamental foundations of the Western lifestyle, which are based on democratic and liberal principles, especially more since the invasion of the remaining Ukrainian territories began on 24 February 2022. According to this perspective, Russia allegedly launched its strike to prevent Ukraine from joining the club of liberal nations. This move would have been a clear message to any other post-Soviet countries, further strengthening Russian control over them. It would be unfair to completely dismiss this argument, yet, justifying the simplification of the procedure and the continuation of conflict on these reasons goes much beyond presenting the facts. A thorough examination of the many issues involved is necessary to comprehend the Russian motivations for the ongoing war. This calls for an in-depth analysis of the Crimean Question, focusing on how Russia uses demographics in its foreign strategy. In addition, within the broader context of The Russian World (Russkiy Mir) Vision, it is crucial to understand the relevance of Russia's unique perspective on Ukraine. The objective of this study is to provide an analytical framework concentrating on these apparently most visible factors for Russia's willingness to raise tensions in Eastern Europe further and invade the remaining territory under the sovereignty of Ukraine.

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Keywords: Crimean Question, Post-Soviet Eastern Europe, Russian Foreign Policy, Russian Invasion of Ukraine, Russkiy Mir (The Russian World) Vision.



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Many people saw Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which began in 2014 with the illegal annexation of the Crimean Peninsula and escalated into violent conflicts beginning on 24 February 2022, as a daring and risky attempt by the so-called "Non-Western" world to challenge the U.S.-led liberal international order, which had enjoyed a unipolar nature since the end of Cold War. Different aspects of this invasion and what it meant for the changing international order have been discussed by various authors, some of whom also contributed their valuable comments and perspectives to this special issue of TPQ. In distinction, my goal in writing this article is to offer a more comprehensive understanding of the possible reasons behind the unfortunate aggressive move Russia opted to take.

Since the invasion of the remaining Ukrainian territories began on 24 February 2022, three days after Russian President Vladimir Putin's critical address on 21 February 2022, Western officials and prominent members of its media have painted Russia as a rogue state that seeks to undermine the fundamental foundations of Western lifestyle established on democratic and liberal principles. According to them, Russia attacked for one simple reason: to send a clear message to any other post-Soviet countries by stopping Ukraine from joining the liberal forces. While it would be wrong to reject this claim entirely, simplifying the process and continuing conflict on these grounds goes far beyond portraying the facts. Understanding the Russian motivations for the ongoing war requires a comprehensive analysis of the numerous factors that are involved. This necessitates a thorough assessment of the Crimean Issue, emphasizing the use of demography as an instrument of Russian foreign policy. Moreover, it is essential to grasp the significance of Russia's distinctive perception of Ukraine within the expansive scope of The Russian World (*Russkiy Mir*) Vision. The purpose of this paper is to give an analytical framework focusing on these arguably most apparent causes for Russia's determination to increase tensions in Eastern Europe further and invade the remaining territory under the control of the Ukrainian government. Before I begin, I want to stress that Ukraine, like any other sovereign nation, has the right to choose its own path, and that Russia's visible aggression since 2014 is completely unacceptable. Yet, without taking the simple route of entirely labeling Russia as a rogue state, this article seeks to analyze the potential foundations of the aggressive foreign policy Moscow has been pursuing.

Bringing Demography to the Battleground: "Crimean Question"

Understanding the role Crimea has played in this process is crucial since, as is well known, the current conflict has its foundations in Russia's internationally unapproved annexation of the Crimean Peninsula in 2014. After the ouster of former Ukrainian president Viktor Yanukovich on 22 February 2014, pro-Russian rallies

began the following day in Kyiv, directed at the new Ukrainian administration. Also, about this time, Russian President Vladimir Putin told the heads of Russia's security services, "We must start working on restoring Crimea to Russia," regarding the instability that emerged in the region concerning changing dynamics in Ukraine.¹ Putin and many others at the top of Russia's policymaking establishment (Kremlin, to simplify) have long held the position that the peninsula of Crimea should be considered an inalienable part of the Russian Federation, and they never considered the peninsula's transfer to be anything other than an undeserved gift. This viewpoint originates with historical accounts asserting Russia's links to the peninsula go back to the time of Catherine the Great, who is often credited with annexing modern-day Crimea and the southern part of Ukraine from the Ottoman Empire. In 1954, Crimea was given to Ukraine by Nikita Khrushchev, the Soviet leader, and a half-Ukrainian himself.² Constructing a historical narrative to justify Kremlin's actions further, Putin declared his stance on the Crimean Question as following:

"... both before and after the Great Patriotic War, Stalin incorporated in the USSR and transferred to Ukraine some lands that previously belonged to Poland, Romania, and Hungary. In the process, he gave Poland part of what was traditionally German land as compensation, and in 1954, Khrushchev took Crimea away from Russia for some reason and also gave it to Ukraine. In effect, this is how the territory of modern Ukraine was formed".³

"It is important to remember that the Crimean Question was never brought to the table between 1954 and 1991 since the Ukrainian SSR and Russian SFSR were both inseparable components of the Soviet Union."

It is important to remember that the Crimean Question was never brought to the table between 1954 and 1991 since the Ukrainian SSR and Russian SFSR were both inseparable components of the Soviet Union. Nonetheless, the inhabitants of Crimea had to bear the brunt of the misery brought on by Soviet policies directed

¹ Agence France-Presse, "Vladimir Putin Describes Secret Meeting When Russia Decided to Seize Crimea," *The Guardian*, 9 March 2015. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2015/mar/09/vladimir-putin-describes-secret-meeting-when-russia-decided-to-seize-crimea>

² BBC, "Ukraine Crisis: Does Russia Have a Case?" 5 March 2014. <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-26415508>

³ Kremlin, "Address by the President of the Russian Federation," 21 February 2022. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67828>

at the territory, with the plight of the indigenous Crimean Tatars reaching its apex after their mass and forced expulsion from the peninsula to various parts of the vast regions of the Soviet dominion on the claims that they had collaborated with invading Nazi Germany forces during World War II. Between 18 and 20 May of 1944, tens of thousands of Crimean Tatars were expelled from their ancestral lands in livestock trains.⁴ Estimates for this number range widely, from 30,000 to 120,000.⁵

The dynamics of Crimea and Soviet politics as a whole were profoundly affected by this obvious act of ethnic cleansing. A total of over 8,000 Crimean Tatars lost their lives during the deportation itself, and many more died in the years that followed because of the severe conditions they endured in exile.⁶ Displaced Crimean Tatars left behind 80,000 homes and 360,000 acres of land. The surviving Crimean Tatar population was thereafter subjected to a brutal “de-tatarization” operation. Although new Soviet leader Nikita Khrushchev in 1956 strongly criticized Stalin’s actions, particularly the deportation of numerous ethnic groups, he did not reverse the edict prohibiting the return of the Crimean Tatars.⁷

These difficult periods are nothing new in the history of mankind; we may either resist them or go on to learn from them and improve our understanding of the world as it now stands. For academic purposes, I will strive to adopt a perspective that concentrates on the latter alternative, even though I fully acknowledge the agony and suffering of the Crimean Tatar community. Significant changes in the peninsula’s demographics between “the two Russian annexations” of the territory in 1783 and 2014 have profound ramifications for our ability to comprehend Russian and Ukrainian approaches to the Crimean Issue and the continuing war. The crucial shifts are laid out in detail in the following table:

⁴ Brian Glyn Williams, “The Crimean Tatar Exile in Central Asia: A Case Study in Group Destruction and Survival,” *Central Asian Survey*, Vol. 17, No. 2 (1998): p. 285-317. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02634939808401038>

⁵ J. Otto Pohl, “The Deportation of Crimean Tatars,” Paper Presented at 5th Annual World Convention of the Association for the Study of Nationalities: “Identity and the State: Nationalism and Sovereignty in a Changing World,” 13-15 April 2000, Columbia University, New York.

⁶ Human Rights Watch, “‘Punished Peoples’ of the Soviet Union: The Continuing Legacy of Stalin’s Deportations,” New York City, (1991). <https://www.hrw.org/reports/pdfs/u/ussr/ussr.919/ussr919full.pdf>, p. 34.

⁷ Brian Glyn Williams, (1998).

Table 1. Demographic Distribution of the Crimean Peninsula Over Years (in Percentage)⁸

Group	Census Data											
	<u>1785</u>	<u>1795</u>	<u>1816</u>	<u>1850</u>	<u>1897</u>	<u>1926</u>	<u>1939</u>	<u>1959</u>	<u>1979</u>	<u>1989</u>	<u>2001</u>	<u>2014</u>
Russians	2.2%	4.3%	4.8%	6.6%	33.1%	42.2%	49.6%	71.4%	66.9%	67.0%	60.4%	67.9%
Ukrainians ⁹	N/A	1.3%	3.6%	7%	11.84%	10.6%	13.7%	22.3%	25.1%	25.8%	24%	15.7%
Crimean Tatars	84.1%	87.6%	85.9%	77.8%	35.55%	25.1%	19.4%	N/A	0.2%	1.6%	10.8%	12.6%
Belarussians	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.38%	0.5%	0.6%	1.8%	2.1%	2.1%	1.5%	1%
Armenians	N/A	0.6%	1.3%	1%	1.52%	1.5%	1.1%	N/A	N/A	0.1%	0.4%	0.5%
Jews	N/A	2.3%	2.3%	2.2%	4.42%	6.4%	5.8%	2.2%	N/A	0.7%	0.2%	0.1%
Others	13.7%	3.9%	2.1%	5.4%	13.19%	13.7%	9.8%	2.3%	5.7%	2.7%	2.7%	2.2%

Several significant inferences can be drawn from this data, albeit it is crucial to note that the 2014 Census was done under Russian control after the illegitimate invasion of Crimea; therefore, its accuracy is highly questionable. Yet, the large number of Ethnic Russians is evident, especially following the tragic forced deportation of

⁸ For the data estimates on 1785, 1795, 1816 and 1850 Censuses, see Kelly Ann O'Neill, *Claiming Crimea: A History of Catherine the Great's Southern Empire* (New Haven, 2017): p. 30; 1897 Data excludes figures for Berdyansky, Dneprovsky and Melitopolsky *Uezds* (regions as I prefer to translate), see Demoscope.Ru, "The First General Census of the Russian Empire in 1897 – Taurida Governorate," http://www.demoscope.ru/weekly/ssp/rus_lan_97_uezd_eng.php?reg=1420, Original Source: Первая Всеобщая перепись населения Российской Империи 1897 г. Таблица XIII. Распределение населения по родному языку. Т.Т.1-50. С.-Петербург: 1903–1905 (The First General Census of the Russian Empire of 1897. Table XIII. Breakdown of population by mother tongue. Volumes 1-50. Saint-Petersburg: 1903-1905), Same Source for 1926, 1959, 1979, and 1989 Censuses; For 2001, see Regions of Ukraine / Autonomous Republic of Crimea" 2001 Ukrainian Census, http://2001.ukrcensus.gov.ua/eng/regions/reg_crym/; 2014 Census Data is Debatable for Accuracy as the event took place in illegally occupied peninsula under Russian supervision, Итоги переписи населения в крымском федеральном округе [Results of the population census in the Crimean Federal District] (PDF). Moscow: Federal State Statistics Service of Russia. (2015): p. 108.

⁹ It was common for figures to describe Ukrainians as "Little Russians" (*malorossiivto*) until 1917. For the use of this concept and the significance it has with respect to Ukrainian identity-building see Zenon Eugene Kohut, "The Development of a Little Russian Identity and Ukrainian Nation Building," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, Vol. 10, No. ¾ (1986): p. 559-576.

Crimean Tatars under Joseph Stalin's iron grip. Certainly, the Soviet leadership recognized the importance of demography as a science and did not hesitate to use it as a tool for policymaking.¹⁰

It is vital to remember that a person's native language was one of the most decisive factors in determining his or her ethnicity or group membership in the eyes of the Soviet administration. Evidently, the Kremlin is not afraid to adopt a similar posture in the manner that it forms a more "intervening approach" for the regions with a higher Russian population residing there. In fact, the constitutional recognition of multiple nationalities, the application of ethnic federalism, and the use of passports to prove a person's ethnicity are all arguably central features of the multiethnic federalism-based ethnicity regime that the Soviet Union bequeathed to the Russian Federation.¹¹ This has only increased the significance of *Russkiy Mir*, or "Russian World Vision," which is perhaps one of the most remarkable weapons of Russian foreign policy, and which we need to grasp even more if we hope to understand better the Russian motivations for the current conflict and how to prevent similar circumstances develop in the future.

Why Ukraine Matters for the So-Called "Russian World (Russkiy Mir)" Vision?

To some extent, Russian officials share a so-called "traumatic imperial nostalgia" that is common among governments with an imperial past.¹² The Soviet Union was enormous, yet even under Bolshevik leadership, the former imperial territories such as Finland and Poland were no longer subject to Moscow's authority. The Bolsheviks understood that securing firm control over the production of raw resources, including Uzbek cotton and Azerbaijani oil was crucial to Russia's continuing existence and prosperity. Even Lenin, while he was explaining how the Soviet policies targeting the periphery regions under their control would differ from their Tsarist predecessor, admitted this reality, and emphasized, "We cannot do without the petroleum of Azerbaijan or cotton of Turkestan. We take these necessary products for us not as the former exploiters but rather as older brothers bearing the torch of civilization".¹³

In 1991, when the last-ditch efforts to prevent the dissolution of the USSR failed,

¹⁰ I highly recommend for those who are interested in the power of demography on the establishment of Soviet power to take a closer look at Francine Hirsch, *Empire of Nations: Ethnographic Knowledge and the Making of Soviet Union* (Cornell University Press, 2005). Moreover, for a more critical analysis on the Russia's Ethnicity and Nationhood policies, see Şener Aktürk, *Regimes of Ethnicity and Nationhood in Germany, Russia, and Turkey* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

¹¹ Sven Gunnar Simonsen, "Inheriting the Soviet Policy Toolbox: Russia's Dilemma Over Ascriptive Nationality," *Europe-Asia Studies*, Vol. 51, No. 6 (1999): p. 1069-1087.

¹² Thomas Sherlock, "Russian Politics and the Soviet Past," *Communist and Post-Communist Studies*, Vol. 49, No. 1 (March 2016): p. 45-59. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.postcomstud.2016.01.001>

¹³ Merle Fainsod, *How Russia is Ruled* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1953): p. 304.

things grew even worse for the Russian leadership. The new country was left with just Russia under their full control out of the originally fifteen union republics that had been under their control throughout the socialist era. It's no surprise that the new Russian Federation had a hard time surviving economically and politically due to the terrible effects of controlling just what was left following the breakup of the USSR. This made things much more difficult for Russia's political elite, who sought new strategies to exert control over its former peripheries when they gained independence. No one should be surprised that Russia, realizing the importance of demographics once again, has opted to use the remaining Russian population in these newly independent polities as a potent foreign policy instrument to impose its influence over them. Indeed, many have speculated that the Russian elite's formulation of the idea of *Russkiy Mir* (the Russian World) and its subsequent political execution were responses to the severe crises that befell the Russian Federation and other post-Soviet republics following the dissolution of the Soviet Union.¹⁴

“It is vital to remember that a person's native language was one of the most decisive factors in determining his or her ethnicity or group membership in the eyes of the Soviet administration. Evidently, the Kremlin is not afraid to adopt a similar posture in the manner that it forms a more “intervening approach” for the regions with a higher Russian population residing there.”

According to Wilfried Jilge, the Ukraine specialist at the DGAP, Putin's heavy invocation of the concept of *Russkiy Mir* in 2014 was not a passing expression during the Russia-Ukrainian conflict. The idea was conceived by Kremlin-friendly academics and journalists between 1995 and 2000, and Putin first used it in public political discourse in 2001. Pro-Kremlin policymakers have used the idea to legitimate their domestic and international agendas since it was first introduced. Ideological, political, identity-based, and geographical aspects were only some of the areas they used it in. After a so-called “*Russkiy Mir* Foundation” was set up, the word became widely used throughout Russia.¹⁵

¹⁴ Kirill Shevchenko and Petr Lozoviuk, “*Russkij Mir*” – Nadnacionální Integrační Projekt či Projev Postsovětského Imperialismu?” (“*Russkij Mir*” – Transnational Integration Project or Manifestation of post-Soviet Imperialism?), *Historická Sociologie*, Vol. 2 (2022): p. 121-139. Doi: [10.14712/23363525.2022.20](https://doi.org/10.14712/23363525.2022.20)

¹⁵ Wilfried Jilge, “*Russkiy Mir*: ‘Russian World’,” DGAP – German Council on Foreign Relations, 3 May 2016. <https://dgap.org/en/events/russkiy-mir-russian-world>

So, it would be extremely limited, if not entirely inaccurate, to attempt to explain this concept based on its cultural discourse. While the number of Russian speakers and individuals of Russian ancestry has been on the decline since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, the Russian Federation and its “*Russkiy Mir*” ideology has continued to find a sizable audience in the Baltic state of Latvia¹⁶ and the Central Asian state of Kazakhstan.¹⁷ In fact, it appears that Russia aimed to influence these countries by employing the Russian diaspora residing within the boundaries of these post-Soviet countries with great strategic importance from such an economic and political perspective.

Yet, we should distinguish between these other former Soviet Union peripheral regions and the examples of Ukraine and Belarus. There is widespread knowledge that these two nations have traditionally had a higher status in the Kremlin’s assessment. From the beginning, Russia has recognized these two republics as the countries of fellow Russians, by claiming to have just a few minor differences with them. Ukrainians and Belarusians were historically thought of as “Little Russians” (*malorosiistvo*) and “White Russians” (*Belaya Rus*), respectively, in contrast to the Russian population in the center of the Russian Empire, who were referred to as “Great Russians” (*Velikorossy*).

As a result of these similarities, Russian policymakers have considered Ukraine to be within their “natural sphere of influence.” They have made it abundantly clear that they will not tolerate any further attempts by Western institutions like the European Union and NATO to exert influence over this country, which they view as their “brothers at the door.”¹⁸ Russia was unable to prevent the accession of several former Warsaw Pact members, both those directly under her control, like the three Baltic nations and those it was influencing, like Poland and Hungary, due to the country’s current political instability. Yet, Ukraine and Belarus were never the same, and today Russia is back in the game, albeit in a weaker position than in her Soviet

¹⁶ The most recent figures claim that more than a quarter of Latvian population, around 25.6 percent, belongs to the Russian minority. Back in 1989 Census, the estimated number of Ethnic Russians living within the borders of Latvian SSR was constituting 34 percent of the population. For a more detailed analysis of the current situation, see Minority Rights Group International, “World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples – Latvia, Russians,” <https://minorityrights.org/minorities/russians-4/>; for an in-depth analysis of data concerning 1989 Census, see Aadne Aasland, “The Russian Population in Latvia: An Integrated Minority?” *Journal of Communist Studies and Transition Politics*, Vol. 10, No. 2 (1994): p. 233-260, with a specific attention to p. 234.

¹⁷ According to 2021 data, the Russian diaspora in Kazakhstan constitutes 15.54 percent of the population, in contrast to 36.4 percent of the population according to the figures concerning early 1993. For a more detailed analysis of these figures concerning 1993, see Neil Melvin, “Russia and the Ethno-Politics of Kazakhstan,” *The World Today*, Vol. 49, No. 11 (November 1993): p. 208-210. For 2021 data, see “Итоги Национальной переписи населения 2021 года в Республике Казахстан” [Results of the 2021 National Population Census in the Republic of Kazakhstan] (in Kazakh). Committee on Statistics of the Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan. <https://stat.gov.kz/api/getFile/?docId=ESTAT464825>

¹⁸ Holly Ellyatt, “Russia is Risking All-Out War to Prevent Ukraine from Joining NATO,” CNBC, 12 January 2022. <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/01/12/russia-is-risking-all-out-war-to-prevent-ukraine-from-joining-nato.html>

prime. Still, she will not allow these countries to be influenced by the United States or any other Western nation that aims to restrain the Russian power in them.

Some scholars, including Mearsheimer, have drawn on this contrast and argued that, from a realist stance focusing on the political explanation of the ongoing conflict, the foundations of Russian aggression lie in Western miscalculations that expanding influence to Ukraine and Belarus would not prompt such an aggressive response from the Russian Federation.¹⁹ This miscalculation is partly occurred due to the considerations that Russia did not take a similar stance when the western institutions, including the European Union and NATO, expanded to a number of former Warsaw Pact member states in Central and Eastern European following the end of the Cold War in the 1990s and early 2000s. There is a consistent line of thought in the statements made by Russian diplomats, such as Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's comparison of Russia's invasion of Ukraine to the memorable 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis, when the Soviet Union and the United States came dangerously near to nuclear war.²⁰

Moreover, Mearsheimer contended that the miscalculations of American foreign policy were primarily responsible for the damage Putin and his war machine unleashed upon Ukraine. Most crucially, he claims to know with complete confidence that the United States and its allies are not interested in reaching a settlement or pursuing both parties to return to the negotiating table. According to him, the United States and its allies share equal blame for setting Ukraine on the road to this needless war.²¹

Before concluding, it is essential to once more noting that the strategic uniqueness of Ukraine in the eyes of the Russian Federation has apparent roots in the sociohistorical relations Russia has had with Ukraine over the ages. Moreover, this is even more evident from a cultural viewpoint, as seen in the indoctrination of Russian foreign policy via the Russian World (*Russkiy Mir*) worldview. This viewpoint, which was reinforced by Russia's politically strategic interests, prompted an unexpected reaction from Russia. Western decision-makers, knowingly or unknowingly, miscalculated this response and allowed the conflict to escalate further.

Concluding Statements and a Hopeful Appeal to the International Community

It's crucial to stress that none of these explanations can excuse the suffering endured

¹⁹ John J. Mearsheimer, "Why the Ukraine Crisis is the West's Fault: The Liberal Delusions That Provoked Putin," *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 93, No. 5 (September/October 2014): p. 77-84, 85-99.

²⁰ Al-Jazeera, "Lavrov Draws Parallels Between Ukraine War, Cuban Missile Crisis," 30 October 2022. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/10/30/lavrov-draws-parallels-between-ukraine-war-cuban-missile-crisis>

²¹ John J. Mearsheimer, "The Causes and Consequences of the Ukraine War," *Horizons: Journal of International Relations and Sustainable Development*, No. 22 (Summer 2022): p. 12-27.

by the Ukrainian people, who are seeing “the return of history” to the European stage or an assault that threatens the present international order. Therefore, it’s important not to paint international relations as a binary (black/white) issue. On the other hand, demonizing Russia will neither aid Ukraine’s survival nor the development of a more stable and peaceful Eastern European order. Rather than this easy but not-functional move, scholars and policymakers should instead promote a more constructive and compromising model that can strengthen the efficiency of international organizations like the United Nations. This can prevent such situations and an unwanted return to the disastrous conflicts we should have left behind.

Unfortunately, many lives have been lost in the conflict; nevertheless, in the case of the United Nations, it is not too late to establish a clear and efficient institutional framework. A more peaceful resolution to the current dispute and preventing future conflicts elsewhere may benefit from this. The era immediately after WWII is long gone, and we have moved on to a new era. The conclusion of the Cold War presented several great opportunities, and unfortunately, no effort was made to embrace them. Now, we should all be even more concerned and strive to succeed where our predecessors failed.

A “CIVIL ASSOCIATION” BETWEEN THE EUROPEAN UNION AND RUSSIA

Contradicting political worldviews of the EU and Russia contribute to their conflictual relations much more than the attention currently given to this facet of the relations. Each of their solidarist worldviews creates an ideological wall severing their communication that is essential for possible peaceful solutions. However, shifting toward a pluralist worldview inspired by conceptual tools of the English School and Michael Oakeshott’s theory of civil association could be an alternative to the current situation of conflict. Building on this theoretical framework, we also attempt to explain the significance of Türkiye’s mediation efforts along the way and present a constructive criticism of today’s norms-based international law.

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The political worldviews of actors are essential to understanding the international conflicts we experience today. These worldviews of states draw the foundations of the map of confrontation between them.¹ Political ideologies are not simply abstract ideas that stay in the back of the mind, but they are the foundational mindset that gives actors the perspective of perceiving friends and enemies, and of changing or influencing the world around them with specific goals and ambitions. These various mindsets adopted by different actors define how they act in the international sphere and make friends and enemies.

This was particularly visible throughout the 20th century, especially in the onset, process, and aftermath of World War II, stretching up until the end of the Cold War.² Today, such confrontations founded on contradictory worldviews are becoming more visible today, making us ask whether the Cold War years are coming back, with one reservation that now we have not only two poles but many of them. Turning to our case here, the European Union (EU) and Russia, each claiming to defend a particular political worldview that advocates them to act in a certain direction to change the international political landscape, obviously have such an ideological confrontation.

Solidarism

This ideological struggle stems largely from divergent ideals and principles that each side has adopted to promote in international politics to achieve goals that are in line with their own self-interest. This conflictual setting between the EU and Russia could be understood well through the theoretical framework of solidarism.³ The recent dramatic changes in the nature of international law, international institutional landscape, and roles of states have very quickly developed into types of solidarist worldviews adopted by some states.⁴ By their nature, solidarist worldviews provide the states with the understanding that there are such global “humanitarian” norms and values beyond the sovereign authorities, which require their actions that go “beyond the sovereignty” of their fellow states, i.e. interventions. Although built upon beautifully theorized humanitarian concerns, the consequences of such worldviews have been disputable for either party, such as in the Kosovan and Georgian cases.

Arguably the most problematic consequences of solidarist worldviews have been self-claimed superiority of either party’s own values and exclusivity in their

¹ Mark L. Haas and Henry R. Nau, “Political Worldviews in International Relations: The Importance of Ideologies and Foreign Policy Traditions,” in P. J. Katzenstein (ed.), *Uncertainty and Its Discontents Worldviews in World Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2022): p. 73–96.

² Haas and Nau (2022).

³ Andrew Hurrell, *On Global Order: Power, Values, and the Constitution of International Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007): p. 57–94.

⁴ Hurrell (2007): p. 57–94.

understanding and implementation. One can further argue that such humanitarian concerns may only be serving to fulfill the national interests of states in a hopefully less conflictual way. Obviously, the solidarist worldviews of both the EU and Russia could not produce less conflictual precedencies for a peaceful future of their relations as we continue to experience during the recent Russian-Ukrainian conflict.

“The rhetoric coming back and forth between the two sides doesn't function as a political forum to present each other, come to know each other's positions, and arrive at mutually beneficial solutions, but as a body of technics to portray one's actions as legitimate as much as possible and the other's as illegitimate; constant argumentation back and forth without any substantial understanding.”

In EU-Russia relations, there is a need to go beyond the rhetorical construction of symbols of solidarism that is shaped by their conflicting political worldviews. The EU has its liberal solidarist worldview which makes it aim at expanding its normative influence throughout the *Common Neighbourhood* by promoting adoption of liberal democratic values in the countries that Russia has been historically viewing as its sphere of influence.⁵ Especially the potential or actual solidification of these norms and values in those countries in the form of Colour Revolutions that replace those Russophile leaders with the EU-oriented ones, is viewed by Russia as absolute strategic losses.

In response to this, Russia has seen the lack of its normative power as a strategic deficiency and tried to build up its own normative worldview with its particular narrative and implications, no need to doubt, contradicting the Western one. It has tried to portray Western values and norms as dangerous for society and humanity, as opposed to what it wishes to represent as a spiritual and moral stance against Western hegemony and decadency.⁶ Despite lacking serious grounds and principles, this portrayal may arguably be seen as somewhat adopted by some countries of the

⁵ European External Action Service (EEAS), *Shared Vision, Common Action: A Stronger Europe – A Global Strategy for the European Union's Foreign And Security Policy* (June 2016): p. 3–11.

⁶ Jardar Østbø, “Securitizing ‘spiritual-moral values’ in Russia,” *Post-Soviet Affairs*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (November 2016), pp. 200–16; Elena A. Stepanova, “‘Everything good against everything bad’: traditional values in the search for new Russian national idea,” *Zeitschrift für Religion, Gesellschaft und Politik* [Journal for Religion, Society and Politics] (June 2022).

developing world pretty much as a consequence of hostility toward the Western domination of the past. Leaving alone that this confrontation can ever be a solution, only solidifies the conflict. These simplified dichotomous ideals, accompanying rhetorical representation, and legitimation efforts further cause “the dialogue of the deaf” to cumulate toward no foreseeable improvement.⁷

The rhetoric coming back and forth between the two sides doesn’t function as a political forum to present each other, come to know each other’s positions, and arrive at mutually beneficial solutions, but as a body of technics to portray one’s actions as legitimate as much as possible and the other’s as illegitimate; constant argumentation back and forth without any substantial understanding. They are making claims of their underlying worldviews as universally true and applicable, and that the opponent’s worldview is falsehood and even dangerous. Eventually, these purposive solidarist worldviews don’t seem to have a successful and peaceful end if continued so.

Pluralism

Given this rather pessimistic view of current affairs, some theoretical alternatives to it are often discussed in the literature. Continuing with the conceptualization in the English School, some types of pluralism are suggested to be a way out of this confrontation of worldviews, instead of solidarism.⁸ Pluralism provides a framework where no single political worldview can legitimately provide globally applicable truths. This suggests that within the contingent plurality of nations and cultures, there’s no single set of norms and values to solve all our problems. Instead, we should recognize the importance of protecting this diversity of values by treating it as if it were fundamental to our own existence. This understanding tries to solve the problem of any given political worldview to claim global applicability and exclusivity to the truth. It also tries to lower the prejudice barrier of condemning the opponent based on self-imposed norms and hopefully provide a healthier basis for communication between the parties.

Civil Associations

Michael Oakeshott’s ideal type of “civil association” in political philosophy

⁷ Judy Dempsey, “The dialogue of the deaf between the West and Russia”, *Carnegie Europe*, 7 February 2015, accessed on 9 February 2023, <https://carnegieeurope.eu/strategieurope/59003>

⁸ Chris Brown, *International Society, Global Polity: An Introduction to International Political Theory* (California: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2015): p. 1–17; Ronnie Hjorth, “Civil association across borders: Law, morality and responsibility in the post-Brexit Era,” *Journal of International Political Theory*, Vol. 14, No. 3 (January 2018): p. 299–313; Sungmoon Kim, “Abating contingency: Michael Oakeshott’s political pluralism,” *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, Vol. 42, No. 3 (March 2016): p. 267–88; John Williams, “Territorial Borders, Toleration and the English School,” *Review of International Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 4 (October 2002), pp. 737–58.

provides us with a very useful tool to conceptualize a pluralist worldview.⁹ The civil association is a political setting between individuals whose basic purpose is to uphold the civil condition among them, and which does not have any idealistic purpose to accomplish, other than sustaining itself.¹⁰

“If the hostile disagreements between the parties prevent them from forming sincere communication channels, then third parties’ delivery of these political forums would be very beneficial. Seemingly, Türkiye’s mediation efforts are quite valuable in this respect, as a country that has well-rooted and indispensable relations both with the EU and Russia.”

Ronnie Hjorth argues that conceptually the idea of civil association is also applicable on the international level, which in turn would work for upholding the civil condition among nations.¹¹ That civil condition involves the conditions of practices among the nations to be just, peaceful, secure, and based on coexistence. So, it mainly concerns the conditions of relationships between the states, and not much more than that. It excludes purposive associations which postulate coming together to achieve certain goals and ambitions in the future, let alone them being salvific to humanity.¹² However, we should also note that the concept of civil association is used as an ideal type, a tool for analysis, and not as a real phenomenon to be achieved as a goal.¹³ The main point is to be aware of such a possible understanding of international relations between states so that we are not stuck with disappointing purposive associations, which are called “enterprise associations” by Oakeshott.

Neither elimination of enterprise associations from the political landscape is something desirable. In this respect, Sungmoon Kim argues, for instance, that enterprise associations need to be voluntary, not imposed by a single, what we may call, “world government” or by other members of the international society,

⁹ Elizabeth C. Corey, *Michael Oakeshott: On Religion, Aesthetics and Politics* (Missouri: University of Missouri Press, 2006): p. 175–88.

¹⁰ Corey (2006): p. 175–88.

¹¹ Hjorth (2018).

¹² Corey (2006): p. 175–88.

¹³ Corey (2006): p. 175–88.

notably the superpowers.¹⁴ So, still, there's a lot of space for purposive associations in global politics based on state consent, and the civil association among the states is there to protect the civil condition among nations also by protecting the plurality of voluntary enterprise associations as in civil society.

Overall, the concept of civil association points out an understanding of international relations where there is no set of universally applicable salvific rules and norms which can help us achieve our universal goals. Civil association of nations is there to preserve the procedural needs for peaceful relations between the plurality of nations with various political norms and ambitions to promote. In this manner, the moral responsibility of the actors in international relations would be not more than to uphold the procedural rules pertaining to preserving the civil condition.¹⁵

Conceptualizing Toleration

Following from accepting the plurality of nations, and their diverse ways of life as the reality of international relations and providing an alternative pluralist view to the current state of affairs, we also need to understand why this plurality is something crucial. As John Williams presents it,¹⁶ embracing Hannah Arendt's philosophy to understand plurality and its virtue would be more than useful. He first demonstrates the downside of current understandings of plurality in which it is seen as something unfortunate, nevertheless, to be respected for practical purposes. He rather points out to the Arendtian understanding that the plurality of nations is something intrinsically valuable because it is the fundamental way in which we can understand our human condition.¹⁷

In this approach, the plurality of human beings, hence of the nations, is a result of diversifying nature of the human condition that is intrinsic and makes us human beings in the first place. Ignoring this plurality and imposing uniformity over human beings from the outside is non-human and detrimental to our nature. Therefore, to understand each other, and moreover ourselves, we need to understand this plurality; and understanding this plurality is possible through no other than coming together in a political forum, speaking to each other, and listening to each other. Given the understanding that plurality is actually intrinsically valuable and central to the health of international politics, what remains to be the best approach is to communicate with each other, rather than speaking to establish one's normative judgments over others and try to legitimize the unilateral actions which disturb the civil condition among each other.

¹⁴ Kim (2016).

¹⁵ Hjorth (2018).

¹⁶ Williams (2002).

¹⁷ Williams (2002).

Glory and Hostility

As a matter of fact, our presentation of an alternative theoretical framework doesn't suggest a revolutionary change to solve the problems, as some analysts may think. The central topic that requires attention is, as we have already seen, the acknowledgment of the plurality of nations and the intrinsic value in it. Notwithstanding this, the hostile disagreements between the EU and Russia present a major challenge along the way. Here, we argue that this hostility is, in fact, not a consequence of scarce resources nor the anarchy of international politics as many would suggest. Still, it is nations' demand for esteem and honor.¹⁸

Arash Abizadeh argues that deriving from Thomas Hobbes, the main causes of conflict are not the scarce resources to be exploited nor the anarchical system of international relations, but an irrational passion, that is glory.¹⁹ In this view, this passion involves the actor's demand for acceptance from others and also respect for her worldview. So, another actor's challenge to the validity of her worldview is deemed a serious blow to her glory and honor, which can easily turn into *casus belli*. As we have discussed, since the central problem in the disagreement between the EU and Russia concerns either party's exclusive claim to the universality of their worldviews, the source of conflict and disagreement between the two can also be explained in terms of their mutual disrespect for each other's worldviews by not acknowledging them. Without acknowledgment of the plurality of their worldviews, it is impossible to expect healthy communication between them.

Although a pluralist framework of relations between the EU and Russia is not impossible, it requires resetting actors' presumptions and mindset so that we may expect changes in the actions. As we have discussed, ideological worldviews are precursors to speech and action. Therefore, such a reset involves acknowledgment of the other party's worldview and the associated intrinsic value of diversity within it, which in turn demands them to renounce the exclusivity and universality of their worldviews. The basic moral responsibility of actors would be the commitment to preserve the civil condition between them for the sake of their peaceful coexistence and the preservation of their plurality for its intrinsic value. There would be no need for shared aims to attain to bring them together beyond these procedural commitments and acknowledgments, as in the civil associations of Oakeshott, as such purposeful acts would always require disputable explanations upon which they may not agree.

¹⁸ Arash Abizadeh, "Hobbes on the causes of war: A disagreement theory," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 105, No. 2 (May 2011): p. 298–315.

¹⁹ Abizadeh (2011).

Mediation for Communication

Our theoretical investigations until that point make us suggest two main practical implications regarding relations between the EU and Russia, and hopefully a peaceful future for them. These implications directly follow from the reality that relations between the EU and Russia are separated by an ideological wall that prevents understanding and communication that might be the only way to a peaceful solution. First of all, as we have pointed out, political forums and sincere communication channels, where each party listens to each other and speaks to each other in a two-way way, are required for this.

If the hostile disagreements between the parties prevent them from forming sincere communication channels, then third parties' delivery of these political forums would be very beneficial. Seemingly, Türkiye's mediation efforts are quite valuable in this respect, as a country that has well-rooted and indispensable relations both with the EU and Russia. For a disagreement as severe as this one, it is essential that the parties remain in constant contact with one another; if Türkiye is able to convey the perspectives and expectations of both sides to the other, there is hope that the chasm between their ideologies may be bridged.

Successful communication, in this case, requires that the differences in opinions and expectations of both parties are objectively heard, received with respect, and thought of well before responding. In this respect, Türkiye needs to be very careful in communicating these differences between conflicting and complex worldviews, which is not as simple and easy as it may seem. Before everything else, the mediator should understand both parties' ideological worldviews and political interests perfectly well enough so that the communication can be delivered objectively.

Normative vs. Procedural International Law

Along with this rather "softer" implication of what we have discussed, the "harder" one points to some criticism of today's condition in international law and its application.²⁰ The solidarist assumption that the "international community" and liberal norms and values are measures of what is right and what is wrong in international law is simply not received well. There hardly exists such a thing as an "international community" as we experience in those complicated conflicts. Instead, there is a plurality of views, positions, and ambitions, all of which desire to be heard and respected.

It might be a saddening conclusion, nevertheless, the normative and actual validity

²⁰ Aidan Hehir, *Hollow Norms and the Responsibility to Protect* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2019): p. 1–28, 213–23.

of liberal norms and values is not received with such enthusiasm in the developing world, especially among their people. Instead, they seem to empathize with authoritarian regimes, such as Russia and China, that wish to portray themselves as victims of the long-gone “Western domination” and saviors of other victims.

What we may suggest at this point is related to the common understanding of legality in international law. We must admit that international law is mostly based on normative expectations and purposive actions rather than clearly defined procedural rules and sanctions. However, what is understood by a civil association is not based on purposive norms and values, but on clearly defined procedural rules that are explicitly consented to by all parties, only to preserve the civil condition.

Ideological and vague views of international norms and the lack of procedural legislation cause serious struggles among states and international organizations on the way to enforce international law. Human rights and liberties, humanitarianism, self-determination, self-defense, etc., are all normative pillars of international law, but they will be exploited unless they are codified explicitly with actual implementation rules that are consented to by all the relevant governments and organizations.

As a side example, one of the purported aims of Russia’s war on Georgia was claimed to be “human rights”, as a mirror of what the Kosovan affair was like. Another example, on the other hand, the UN Charter could be seen as similar to a definite international legislation. Still, along with being too limited in coverage, it has already been violated by the United States and the United Kingdom who invaded Iraq in 2003. Such actions and violations, which are not properly sanctioned, present negative precedents for future violations, already encroaching on the credibility of current instruments of international law.

Overall, what is needed in the realm of international law is practical legislation as procedural rules and guidelines along with definite sanctions and precautions to be followed by relevant parties, that are consented to by states and organizations multilaterally, to preserve the civil condition among them, and not for any disputable normative purpose. In this regard, the consensus of the “international community” cannot be presumed, rather, individual state consent is to be sought through explicit treaties and conventions signed by them. Only with such a legislated and consented structure, the lawbreaker can be sanctioned effectively, and the free-rider problem can be alleviated.

We admit that our analytical discussions and suggestions here are much closer to theoretical than practical. Moreover, many valid criticisms can be applied to what we have suggested. However, a healthy comprehension of a problem comes before

its solution. Therefore, we hope our theoretical analyses and discussions can help improve our comprehension of the crises in front of us and lead us toward possible solutions.

WHAT EFFECTS DOES THE UKRAINIAN CONFLICT HAVE ON TIES BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES, SAUDI ARABIA, AND RUSSIA?

This article analyzes the influenced relations in the U.S.-Saudi Arabia-Russia triangle by the Ukraine war from both the U.S. and Saudi perspectives. The analysis of how Saudi Arabia responded to the Russian invasion and how the U.S. officials reacted it is followed by the main historical, and strategic developments and reasons that created recent political shifts in this triangle. One of the article's main targets is to show a line between political and economic behaviors or just the opposite, to show how politics, economy, and energy are highly interdependent. In the end, despite of these shifts, the importance of U.S.-Saudi Arabia relations is stated in terms of realpolitik.

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*Keywords: Energy Politics, Middle East, Russia,
Saudi Arabia as A Regional Power, U.S. Foreign Policy Towards Middle East.*



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With Russia's war in Ukraine, the states of the 21st century realized how the international system ultra-complicated and insecure is. At this point, policymakers need to be more cautious in determining their interests, policies, fears, and needs for the sake of survivability. As a consequence of this destructive war in Eastern Europe, the globally affected economic and energy security created new political shifts in the international system's balance of power, making them ostentatious, which already existed. Within this period, the states' attitudes indicate their positions in a newly arranged balance of geopolitical power. With this position-denoting process, Saudi Arabia not only determines its own policies, but also influences the developments in the Middle East, just like it did occasionally with its relations with the USA.

With the start of the war, Biden needed to negotiate with Muhammad bin Salman to increase oil production, which would lower the gasoline price. In the situation of sanctions on energy trade with Russia, it would help to cut the Russian expenses on war and minimize its ability in the war arena. Otherwise, increasing gasoline prices would help to save the Russian economy in case of war. In despite of this demand, Muhammad bin Salman and UAE Sheikh preferred to act in accordance with OPEC+, the group whose one of the members is Russia. In the frame of OPEC+ agreements, U.S. partners in the Middle East cut their oil production to two million barrels per day. With this policy, the oil price increased dramatically, and Russia became the main oil exporter to China and India.¹

On the other side, just two weeks after the start of the Russian invasion, according to both U.S. and Middle East officials, the Saudi Prince and UAE Sheikh declined the U.S. request for a phone call by U.S. President Biden.² In despite of this, on the same days, Saudi Prince Muhammad bin Salman received telephone calls from Russian President Putin and discussed their bilateral relations and the means to develop their relations.³

Saudi Arabia's Response to Ukraine War

To define the current attitude of Saudi Arabia towards the Russia-Ukraine war, there is a need to find out the perception in the Gulf region of this significant development. According to Abdulaziz Sager, founder, and chair of the Gulf Research Center, the

¹ Mohammad Bazzi, "Saudi Arabia has screwed over the US – and the world – yet again. Enough is enough," The Guardian, 13 October 2022. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2022/oct/13/saudi-arabia-us-oil-prices-ope>

² Nissenbaum, et al. "Saudi, Emirati Leaders Decline Calls With Biden During Ukraine Crisis," The Wall Street Journal, 8 March 2022. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/saudi-emirati-leaders-decline-calls-with-biden-during-ukraine-crisis-11646779430>

³ "Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman receives calls from Putin and Zelenskyy," The National News, 3 March 2022.

Ukraine war is perceived as a high-cost European crisis in Gulf.⁴

On one side, Arab statesmen do not believe their governments “should burn the bridges with Moscow because of this conflict”.⁵ According to Ibish, Saudi Arabia that in economic terms, is almost totally dependent on oil prices, any problem regarding oil pricing is the problem of the extremely required and ambitious development agenda of the Saudi government. So the economic relations between Russia and Saudi Arabia cannot be analyzed in the frame of the Ukraine war. The author states that Saudi Arabia acts in accordance with its interests, and Americans’ anger at Saudi Arabia for not striking Russia to help the West is irrational and damaging.⁶

“9/11 was the terrorist act that had a powerful impact on world affairs, especially the U.S.-Middle East relations as Ukraine War. After this unprecedented terrorist attack, Saudi Arabia came under pressure by both the U.S. public opinion and the U.S. official institutions.”

In addition to this, four Gulf countries, including Saudi Arabia, voted to pass a resolution denouncing the invasion and demanding the withdrawal of Russian military presence. On March 1st, support for international efforts to restore stability and maintain security in Ukraine was affirmed by Saudi Government. On March 3rd, Saudi Crown Prince Muhammad bin Salman presented Riyadh’s readiness to de-escalate the crisis in Ukraine by mediating with Russia.⁷ In other words, Saudi Arabia and other Gulf countries maintained a “balanced” (not “neutral”) position, which enables the resolution of conflict by diplomatic dimensions.

How the U.S. reacted to Saudi Arabia’s Response?

Regarding responding to Saudi’s balanced position on the Ukraine war, within the

⁴ Sager, A. “The Ukraine Crisis and the Gulf: A Saudi Perspective. An interview with Abdulaziz Al Sager,” Institut Montaigne, 18 October 2022. <https://www.institutmontaigne.org/en/analysis/ukraine-crisis-and-gulf-saudi-perspective>

⁵ Giorgio Cafiero, “Analysis: The Russia-Ukraine war and the view from Saudi Arabia,” Aljazeera, 24 October 2022. <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/10/24/analysis-russia-ukraine-war-view-from-saudi-arabia>

⁶ Hussein Ibish, “Why the US-Saudi Crisis is So Bad and So Unnecessary,” The Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington, 14 October 2022. <https://agsiw.org/why-the-u-s-saudi-crisis-is-so-bad-and-so-unnecessary/>

⁷ Dene, et al. “Middle East Responses to the Ukraine Crisis,” The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 4 March 2022. <https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/middle-east-responses-ukraine-crisis>

U.S. government Democrats are exclusively active. In the article by three authors, two of them are Democrats, the policy of Saudi Arabia is called as “unwise”, “err”, and “mistake”. They are proposing “bicameral legislation in the Senate and House ... that will immediately halt all U.S. arms sales to Saudi Arabia”.⁸ According to them, Saudi Arabia is more dependent on the U.S. in the military dimension than many realize. That’s why they propose to ban the sales of weapons, to decrease the military partnership, including the withdrawal of the U.S. troops from Saudi Arabia in the frame GOP initiative.⁹ While a Democrat Senator Bob Menendez called an immediate freeze in all aspects of cooperation between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia, Dick Durban expressed his ideas about Saudi Arabia with harsher words: “...has never been a trustworthy ally of our nation. It’s time for our foreign policy to imagine a world without their alliance.”^{10 11}

Which Developments Created a Shift in Saudi Foreign Policy?

This kind of rapprochement between Russia and Saudi Arabia is quite interesting because of their long years of rivalry. In despite of that, U.S.-Saudi relations have 80 years of partnership¹². Obviously, this shift in Saudi foreign policy is crucial for its own and the region. Although the major shift in U.S. foreign policy from the Middle East to the Far East is considered as the primary trigger of this rapprochement, it has more historical-strategic roots. In the unipolar international system led by the U.S., the Middle East was one of the most injured regions. In recent years, formulating a multipolar system is visible again, where different powers rise from different parts of the world, including the Middle East. According to Alizada, the real reason is country’s policy to open up, to enhance multilateral relations, to find new and more appropriate partners in the frame of a development plan, in other words, to find its way in a new, complicated and multipolar system.¹³

9/11 was the terrorist act that had a powerful impact on world affairs, especially the U.S.-Middle East relations as Ukraine War. After this unprecedented terrorist attack, Saudi Arabia came under pressure by both the U.S. public opinion and the U.S. official institutions. U.S. public consideration towards Saudi Arabia as a financial

⁸ Blumenthal et al. “The Best Way to Respond to Saudi Arabia’s Embrace of Putin,” Politico, 10 September 2022. <https://www.politico.com/news/magazine/2022/10/09/the-u-s-has-leverage-over-saudi-arabia-its-time-to-use-it-00061082>

⁹ Blumenthal et al. (2022).

¹⁰ “Chairman Menendez Statement on Future of United States-Saudi Relationship,” Foreign relations Committee, 10 October 2022. <https://www.foreign.senate.gov/press/dem/release/chairman-menendez-statement-on-future-of-united-states-saudi-relationship>

¹¹ Bazzi, (2022).

¹² Ibish, (2022).

¹³ Alizada, “Suudi Arabistan-Rusya İlişkileri: Rekabetten Stratejik Ortaklığa,” ANKASAM, 21 December 2017. <https://www.ankasam.org/suudi-arabistan-rusya-iliskileri-rekabetten-stratejik-ortakliga/>

sponsor of Al-Qaeda created the first cracks between partner states for long years.¹⁴ According to Koc, incoherent and unstable policies of U.S. foreign policy during Obama's presidency with the leading regional power – Saudi Arabia – deepened those cracks. These developments formulated a convenient ground for Russia – which enhanced its relations with regional powers, like Iran, and Türkiye for its interests – to be a growing, more substantial foreign power in the region.

“Another important reason for this shift in Saudi foreign policy is mistrust of the West. Understandably, the developments listed above are enough to find mistrust within Saudi governors.”

Additionally, another occurrence that deepened the current instability in the region was the Syrian war. The following cracks between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia came with U.S. uncertainty about intervening Syrian war.¹⁵ Furthermore, the murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi was met by denouncing by the U.S. and condemning Saudi Arabia because of the lack of democratic rights.

After the Iran Revolution in the 1970s, Iran started rivaling Saudi Arabia in the Middle East as a leading-regional power. These two states struggle for leadership in the region as representatives of two main Islamic sects – Shia and Sunni. In other words, U.S.-Iran relations are one of the primary triggers of U.S.-Saudi Arabia relations. The U.S. attempts to negotiate a nuclear agreement with Iran created discontent among the Saudi governors.¹⁶ From the Saudi perspective, Iran is not only a regional rival, but also a supporter of instability in the region, as the supporter of Houthies, the militant group in Yemen.¹⁷ In addition to these developments, the U.S. limited aid to Saudi Arabia to help the Yemen government, maintain peace in Yemen, and the refusal to add Houthies into the list of terrorist organizations cast a shadow on U.S.-Saudi relations.¹⁸

¹⁴ Engin Koc, “Rusya’nın Ortadoğu’da Taktiksel Hamleleri: Rusya ve Suudi Arabistan İlişkileri,” *Manas Sosyal Araştırmalar Dergisi*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (2020): p. 1960.

¹⁵ Koc (2000): p. 1962.

¹⁶ Ulrike Freitag, “The Russian invasion of Ukraine as a contestation of the liberal script? - № 12: The Saudi reaction to the Ukraine war as indicator of shifting alliances,” SCRIPTS Cluster of Excellence Contestations of the Liberal Script, 14 April 2022. https://www.scripts-berlin.eu/blog/Blog-49-Ukraine-No_12/index.html

¹⁷ Freitag, (2022).

¹⁸ Edward Helmore, “Saudi Arabia and UAE leaders ‘decline calls with Biden’ amid fears of oil price spike,” *The Guardian*, 9 March 2022. <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2022/mar/09/saudi-arabia-and-uae-leaders-decline-calls-with-biden-amid-fears-of-oil-price-spike>

Another important reason for this shift in Saudi foreign policy is mistrust of the West. Understandably, the developments listed above are enough to find mistrust within Saudi governors. Additionally, as Libman states, the border where the West sanctions start is blurry for non-Westerns. According to the author, while China is not part of an active war, it is also the target of sanctions because of pressure on the ethnic minority – Uyghurs. So, if the breach of human rights is the reason of sanctions, what about the breached women's rights in the Middle East? According to him, autocratic leaders should be aware that the West can impose severe sanctions, essentially isolating a country if a non-Western state follows a policy the West does not like.¹⁹

As Libman writes: “In the past, non-Western autocrats believed that the West would refrain from major economic sanctions against big countries. Now, non-Western autocrats know: the West will not hesitate to use its ‘nuclear options’ in economic relations to punish non-Western states.”²⁰

What Can Be the Next?

The changes in the international system are unavoidable and they are the only stable feature of world affairs for thousands of years, ironically. To give birth to these new changes, powerful and unprecedented developments, like World Wars, Revolutions, and nuclear race, are crucial. While some of them formulate a unipolar system from a bipolar one, the other can form a multipolar system from the unipolar one. It is self-evident that the multipolar system is considered as the most dangerous one. Despite this, cooperation and well-intentioned renegotiations can decrease the danger of this system.

In the context of the U.S. - Saudi Arabia - Russia relations triangle, it is highly understandable that for Riyadh, enhancing Saudi Arabia - Russia relations are transactional, just like Saudi Arabia - U.S. relations were once over. Riyadh can have different expectations from Moscow that Washington cannot provide.²¹ For instance, in terms of the first significant threat to Saudi Arabia – to struggle with Iran – the House of Saud can get fruitful results with the common goals with Russia in Syria, which would minimize the power of Iran in the Syria case. Additionally, for years Saudi Arabia's Yemen policy has been frustrated by Moscow in blocking potential new United Nations Security Council resolutions that would limit the transfer of

¹⁹ Alexander Libman, “A New Economic Cold War?” *Journal of International Relations and Sustainable Development*, No. 21 (2022): p. 153-54.

²⁰ Alexander Libman, (2022): p. 153-54.

²¹ Kirsten Fontenrose, “Punish Riyadh or play it cool? How the United States can renegotiate its relationship with Saudi Arabia,” Atlantic Council, 10 November 2022. <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/new-atlanticist/punish-riyadh-or-play-it-cool-how-the-united-states-can-renegotiate-its-relationship-with-saudi-arabia/>

arms to the Houthis in Yemen. To find common ground with Russia would help to cope with the Yemen problem in the region. Then, the second significant problem is a food shortage in the region, and Russia dominates wheat market.²²

In other words, Saudi Arabia can want to approach Russia to realize its aims – to develop and maximize its power as a leader of the Middle East. As Ibish states, the emergence of recriminations between the Saudi government and U.S. – especially Democrats – is highly damaging to 80 years long partnership. According to him, in the last 20 years, both sides have been affected by their acts and feel betrayed; however, there is a need to be aware that it is not the first cracks of Saudi-U.S. partnership. U.S. support for Israel in the 1973 Arab-Israeli war also created traces in collective memory and public opinion.²³

To sum up, as always said, countries have interests, not friends. Occasionally, there can be some breaks or recriminations between the partner states. MBS can strive for complete independence from the U.S., and the U.S. can want to put its Western values at the center of U.S. foreign policy; however, the simple truth is that the relations between the U.S. and Saudi Arabia will not soon fracture. It is a partnership rather than an alliance that none of the sides would benefit from ending their relations.

²² Fontenrose, (2022).

²³ Ibish, (2022).

NUCLEAR NON-THREAT IN THE CONTEXT OF RUSSIAN INVASION OF UKRAINE

In the contemporary nuclear era, power relations between the Nuclear Weapon States and others become more troubled due to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. The use of strategic nuclear weapons is highly concerning, but the case's reality would not allow this possibility. The power struggle dominant powers had experienced over the economic and military aspects combined with the Strategic Nuclear Weapons' ability to mass murder. Even though international norms do not allow such usage, we can easily argue that any NWS willingly goes down that road in the face of interest. The war in Ukraine taught us that higher structures that possess nuclear weapons with better economies dominate other states that lack such a power. The way international relations work, there is not enough institute that guarantees the functioning of a liberal order.

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*Keywords: IAEA, Non-Proliferation Regime, Nuclear Weapon States,
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Russia is widely recognized as one of the major nuclear powers in the world. It possesses one of the largest nuclear arsenals, with an estimated 4,300 nuclear warheads in active inventory as of 2021.¹ This nuclear arsenal includes various delivery systems, including intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs), submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBMs), and strategic bombers. Russia's nuclear arsenal is not only a tool of deterrence and defense but also serves as a symbol of its status as a global power. It has a long history of prioritizing the development and modernization of its nuclear capabilities, which has been reflected in its defense spending.

Russia's status as a regional nuclear power is primarily due to its geographic location, as it shares borders with several other countries and has historically been involved in regional conflicts. In addition, Russia has invested heavily in its nuclear arsenal to project power and deter potential adversaries. As a regional power, Russia's nuclear arsenal is also significant in its relations with neighboring countries. Its possession of nuclear weapons has been a source of concern for some of its neighbors, particularly those in Eastern Europe and the Baltics, who view Russia as a potential threat. This has led to tensions in the region, which have been exacerbated by Russia's actions in recent years, including the annexation of Crimea and its involvement in the conflict in Ukraine. While Russia's nuclear arsenal is a significant source of its military power and strategic influence, it also presents a major challenge to international security. The risk of accidental or intentional use of nuclear weapons remains a significant concern. The ongoing arms race between nuclear-armed states, including Russia, seriously threatens global stability. Overall, while Russia's nuclear arsenal is seen as a critical component of its status as a major world power, it is also a source of concern for neighboring countries and has contributed to regional tensions.

Strategic Nuclear Weapons

In the 21st century, international relations are dominated by Strategic Nuclear Weapon deterrence capacity and economic warfare. Since the cold war, SNW's become the primary deterrence and trump in NWS's hands. In the international structure, a lower and upper structure relation exists that almost entirely runs the area. The P5+1 states with legal access to Strategic Nuclear Weapons dominate the global economy and political hegemony. Non-Nuclear Weapon States have restricted access to UN Security Council. According to this assumption, NWSs are the hegemon in the world system, and as the upper structure, both economically and politically dominant determines the lower structure states, which are economically

¹ Arms Control Association, "Nuclear Weapons: Who Has What at a Glance," Arms Control Association, January 2022. <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/Nuclearweaponswhohaswhat#:~:text=The%20Federation%20of%20American%20Scientists,dismantlement%2C%20as%20of%20January%202021>

and militarily (NW) incapable of how and when to act and create an artificial political area in international relations. NNWS can only hope their military forces will be able to limit the damage an attack can do.² Under the constant threat of NWS, there can be said that there is no democratic structure in international organizations and international relations.

“When considering the existing situation in international politics, Nuclear Non-Proliferation is the only way to keep the status quo and prevent a possible SNW usage. In the face of annihilation, desperate smaller states may use SNW. The existing Nuclear Strategy is to avoid a possible nuclear conflict and keep the destruction rate at a minimum in case of usage.”

When we look at it from a realist approach, the relations between states are based on economic concerns. The conflict Ukraine heavily suffers from today emerges from two dominant capitalist powers U.S. and Russia’s conflict of interest with a particular state. The difference between the cold war and the contemporary disagreement between the U.S. and Russia is, the main conflict between the U.S. and the USSR was ideological. USSR’s socialist structure against the U.S.’s capitalist open market economy. After the collapse of the USSR, this ideologic draft disappeared, but instead, imperialist conflict rose. The U.S.-led NATO tries to expand its influence zone to the old Warsaw Pact and USSR countries. As the Washington Treaty’s founding principles suggest, “secure individual liberty, democracy, human rights and the rule of law.”³ The U.S. desires an open market economy for East European States and integrates them into the global capitalist market.

On the other hand, Russia wishes to keep its old influence zone among neighboring states and tries to create a “feeding system” for Russia. At the bottom of the disagreement, we can argue that there is economic exploitation lying. P5 countries are above the law and determine the security of the world. It is no coincidence that the Nuclear Weapon States are the most economically dominant countries in the

² Scott D. Sagan and Kenneth N. Waltz, *The Spread of Nuclear Weapons: A Debate* (New York / London: W.W. Norton Company, 2002).

³ North Atlantic Treaty Organization, “Founding Treaty”, *NATO*, retrieved https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_67656.htm#:~:text=Moreover%2C%20it%20stated%20that%20NATO,and%20the%20rule%20of%20law

world. As mentioned above, the states' upper and lower structure relation is based on this economic relation. Strategic Nuclear Weapons are the oppression instruments for those who control the international economic structure.

When considering the existing situation in international politics, Nuclear Non-Proliferation is the only way to keep the status quo and prevent a possible SNW usage. In the face of annihilation, desperate smaller states may use SNW. The existing Nuclear Strategy is to avoid a possible nuclear conflict and keep the destruction rate at a minimum in case of usage.

IAEA

The state's nuclear capacity is not limited to only Strategic Nuclear Weapons. As for nuclear energy, there is another concern that comes to mind: nuclear facility security. International Atomic Energy Agency is the core global governance structure for monitoring, aiding, and assisting the peaceful use of nuclear technology. IAEA is founded on three main pillars that are covered within the IAEA statute. Nuclear safeguards, nuclear safety and security, and the peaceful uses of nuclear technology.

In safeguards, IAEA monitors nuclear states to use their technology peacefully and not to use nuclear technology for military intentions. Under article III of the Non-Proliferation Treaty, which was signed in 1968, IAEA inspects nuclear facilities and material balancing arenas and scientist inspectors report their findings to the IAEA board of governors and send the necessary information to the United Nations.⁴ Those inspections under the model protocol of the IAEA were not detailed and compelling. After the IAEA found a violation in North Korean nuclear facilities, the protocol needed to renew. So, in 1997 Model Additional Protocol (INFCIRC/540) was approved by the IAEA board of governors. This new protocol gave IAEA more authority and space for inspections.⁵ The IAEA is authorized to expand access to information and places in the States under the Additional Protocol. The Additional Protocol intends to remedy gaps in the information submitted under a CSA (Comprehensive Safeguards Agreement). The Additional Protocol strengthens the IAEA's capacity to give considerably greater confidence in the absence of undeclared nuclear material and activities in such states by allowing the IAEA to gain a far more comprehensive picture of such states' nuclear programs, plans, nuclear material holdings, and commerce.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) actively watches developments

⁴ Elisabeth Roehrich, "The IAEA's Work", *University of Vienna*, University of Vienna Department of History, Vienna/Austria

⁵ IAEA, "Additional Protocol", retrieved <https://www.iaea.org/topics/additional-protocol>

in the country's nuclear plants and provides frequent reports on the situation.⁶ The importance of the Russian- Ukrainian war to the IEAE, is the first war that includes the safety of nuclear facilities inside the war. It can be predicted that in the future, with any chance, of another conventional war, IAEA will be more responsible for ensuring the security and safety of nuclear facilities. The number of nuclear facilities is increasing over time. That means more responsibility for the International Atomic Energy Agency. In fifty years, this international organization would become one of the most important and popular international organizations.

“When we add the U.S. and western states' support for Ukraine to the equation, we can see that there is an imperialist economic interest conflict from both sides. If Russia decides to use SNW, that would be against their interest in the region and bring more loss than gain. As a rational actor, in Ukraine's case, Russia would not waste its dominance over an easy win.”

On 24 February 2022, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) was notified by the State Nuclear Regulatory Inspectorate of Ukraine (SNRIU), in its capacity as a national competent authority under the Convention on Early Notification of a Nuclear Accident, of the imposition of martial law on Ukrainian territory and an alert at the Chornobyl nuclear power plant via its Incident and Emergency Centre (IEC) (NPP). Since receiving this information, the IAEA has activated the IEC, established regular contact with Ukrainian authorities, and has been closely monitoring the situation at nuclear facilities and activities involving radioactive sources on Ukrainian territory, focusing on the implications for nuclear safety, security, and safeguards.⁷

Concerning safeguards, the IAEA has continued to implement safeguards in Ukraine, including in-field verification operations in compliance with Ukraine's CSA and AP, as well as on the basis of the AIP for Ukraine for 2022. Based on a review of all safeguards-relevant information accessible to the IAEA to date, the IAEA has found

⁶ IAEA, “Nuclear Safety and Security in Ukraine” retrieved <https://www.iaea.org/nuclear-safety-and-security-in-ukraine>

⁷ Summary Report by the Director General, “Nuclear Safety, Security And Safeguards In Ukraine”, 24 February – 28 April 2022, IAEA retrieved <https://www.iaea.org/nuclear-safety-and-security-in-ukraine>

no evidence of the diversion of declared nuclear material or any indication that would cause a proliferation risk.

Russia's Possibility of "Going Nuclear"

Russia's attack to Ukraine might serve Russia's long-term economic and political interests. The catastrophic slowness Russia suffered though, caused the idea of Russia going nuclear. Firstly, we should consider Russia as a great power and President Putin took a calculated risk that was abstracted and sanctioned by the western market. The rapidly growing Asian market has become a lifesaver for U.S.-sanctioned countries like Iran and Russia. To avoid from those sanctions, Russia and Iran negotiated and concluded on an economic level. It can be argued that Putin sees Iran as a future NWS and closes their ties on a regional policy aspect.

Those sanctions are not only affected Russia but the European Union countries too. The escalating energy crisis between the EU and Russia is questioning the EU's dependency on eastern energy sources. The U.S. has not suffered from the EU energy crisis, and the sanctions implemented by the EU are starting to fade away day by day. Without pressuring the effects of full implementations against Russia, it can be said that the international community is not whole and cannot put pressure on a dominant country.

Secondly, this major conflict was caused by Russia's security concerns. Within the official intervention of the west in Russia's influence zone, conflict becomes inevitable. In 1993 Russia changed its non-first use of SNW doctrine. The new military doctrine stated that if there was an intervention in old USSR countries, the military would consider the first-use policy. Without provocation, no rational or cognitive actor would view the usage of SNW. It is better to remember that Nuclear Weapons are not conventional weapons, they are mass murder weapons and there is no turnback after setting off. We can calculate Russia's intentions on Ukraine and what possible outcome they expect. The economic and political long-term expectations would not allow Russia's NW usage. The aftereffect of SNWs is geographically and politically not in favor of Russia. The only purpose SNWs serve in the conflict would be no other than destruction and massively damaging Russia's legitimacy-seeking behavior.

Thirdly, Russia tries to claim legitimacy for its actions on Ukraine. President Putin's discourse "Russia's border 'doesn't end anywhere'". This statement shows how important the influence zone was for Russia and the mentality behind this attack. Russia's 1990-2000 era was turbulent and political loneliness that they thought changed the state policy to aggression. An article written by Putin clearly states

that Russia sees Ukraine as its own part and argue that the west turning Ukraine against Russia, and they will not accept it.⁸ The legitimacy-gaining effort will affect the future of how Russia gains from Ukraine and the relations between the parties. When we add the U.S. and western states' support for Ukraine to the equation, we can see that there is an imperialist economic interest conflict from both sides. If Russia decides to use SNW, that would be against their interest in the region and bring more loss than gain. As a rational actor, in Ukraine's case, Russia would not waste its dominance over an easy win. It also must be said, those assumptions are only binding for the Ukraine case. In the future, it is not certain that Russia or other NWSs will not use SNW. There is a fair possibility that going nuclear would benefit a state's interest. We cannot expect any power to act completely rational. If per se there is no guarantee for military dominant mechanisms to seize power in the moment of weakness. In this scenario, deterrence would fail, and rational deterrence would not work. We can give Nazi Germany as an example. The Third Reich was able to seize the power by democratic elections and controlled today's one of the most systematic and politically rich cultures. This proves that it cannot be expected that a state always acts purely rational. Even they can rationalize the usage of SNW, and that can cause a disaster.

Lessons From the Conflict and Non-Proliferation Regime

It is difficult to predict with certainty whether Ukraine having nuclear weapons would prevent a Russian invasion. On the one hand, possessing nuclear weapons could potentially act as a deterrent and make Russia think twice before invading Ukraine. The prospect of a nuclear conflict would be hazardous and could have catastrophic consequences, so it may give Russia pause before taking such aggressive action. On the other hand, Ukraine's possession of nuclear weapons could also escalate the situation and lead to an even more dangerous and destabilizing situation. It could trigger an arms race between the two countries and increase the likelihood of a catastrophic miscalculation or accidental use.

Additionally, if Ukraine were to pursue nuclear weapons, it could have severe implications for international security and the global non-proliferation regime. The acquisition of nuclear weapons by a new state, especially one in a region with existing security tensions, could have serious implications for regional and global stability. Overall, while possessing nuclear weapons could potentially act as a deterrent, it is not a guaranteed solution and could have serious negative consequences. The most effective way to prevent a Russian invasion of Ukraine is through diplomatic efforts, including dialogue, negotiation, and international pressure.

⁸ V.V. Putin, "On the Historical Unity Of Russians And Ukrainians", *Boris Yeltsin Presidential Library*, 12 July 2021, <https://www.prlib.ru/en/article-vladimir-putin-historical-unity-russians-and-ukrainians>

As one outcome of this conflict, international actors faced a 21st-century nuclear threat. Differing from the cold war, MAD (Mutually Assorted Destruction) was not part of the conflict, and the nuclear threat that came from Russia was a wake-up call for professionals. After the occupation of Crimea, at given time, western powers failed to prevent the invasion coming from Russia. Using SNW as deterrence was a card at the hands of Russia against western powers and a further pressure tool against Ukraine. NNWS desires nuclear weapons for their resistance against NWS, but existing of SNW could cause escalate a nuclear war at any level. Some undesired countries like North Korea or Iran as an NWS could break western pressure on them. On the other hand, a non-rational actor can cause misuse. The war proved one more time how non-proliferation and disarmament important for international-level peace and how the system needs certain adjustments to eliminate the Strategic Nuclear Weapon paradox.

TESTIMONIALS

“The neighborhood of Turkey is where important parts of our new future are now being shaped! And, TPQ brings the perspectives that are essential for shaping the right policies for this new future.”

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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 background is a clean, solid white color.

We at Transatlantic Policy Quarterly want to express our deepest deepest sympathy to the people of Turkey and the surrounding region following the tragic 7.8 and 7.6 magnitude earthquakes that struck Kahramanmaraş and had devastating effects on the nine neighboring provinces.

TPQ expresses condolences to the families who have lost loved ones and wishes everyone affected by this tragic catastrophe a fast recovery.

Transatlantic Policy Quarterly (TPQ) is an independent, non-profit journal fostering open and constructive policy debates on global issues since 2002.

We believe there are many compelling ideas, contrasting arguments, and analytical observations out there that need to be heard for a better understanding of the world. In our increasingly polarized intellectual environment, this range of perspectives is too often not accessible to those who are interested in gaining an enhanced understanding of the dynamics that shape the world - from policymakers to business leaders to civil society activists around the globe. We make this dialogue happen by engaging our global audience through a diverse array of informed analyses and opinions on topical questions shaping geopolitics, economic development, energy security, governance, and human rights and freedoms.



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