

Monograph Series 32

The Emerging Post-Ukraine World Order

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Introduction

Since Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, the two countries have been locked in a brutal, protracted war that has continued four years. Despite being vastly inferior in terms of military capacity, economic strength, and overall national power, Ukraine has held out against Russia's aggression with remarkable tenacity. This resilience has been sustained not only by the enduring will of the Ukrainian people but also by substantial military, intelligence, economic, and diplomatic support from the United States and its allies in the West.

What began as a regional conflict over territory and sovereignty has since evolved into a central theater in a broader global confrontation. The Russia-Ukraine war now stands as a proxy conflict between the U.S.-led West and Russia, where the latter has increasingly enjoyed favorable neutrality and often been supported, either materially or politically, by countries of the Global South. This shift reflects deeper structural transformations in world politics and signals the accelerating decline of U. S. hegemony—a process long underway but dramatically exacerbated by the war in Ukraine.

Notably, the war has exposed the limitations of the West's military-industrial capacities. Years of globalization and offshoring have hollowed out the defense production bases of the United States and its European allies, leaving them unable to supply Ukraine with sufficient arms and materiel for a prolonged high-intensity conflict. In contrast, Russia has managed to sustain its war effort through a combination of autarkic industrial mobilization and “military Keynesianism”—that is, an economy stimulated by wartime production and massive public spending. Contrary to Western expectations, Russia has not collapsed under sanctions; instead, it has weathered the economic storm with surprising resilience, partly due to continued trade relations with major non-Western countries, including

China, India, and others across the Global South.

While Russia is politically and economically isolated from the U.S.-led West, the West itself is increasingly isolated from much of the Global South. Many of these states have declined to align with Western sanctions, choosing instead to maintain trade and diplomatic relations with Russia. Some have even embraced a posture of friendly neutrality or tacit support for Russia's stance against perceived Western imperialism. This geopolitical realignment reveals a deep fracture in the post-Cold War consensus and the liberal international order.

Consequently, the relative decline of the United States and the collective West has accelerated. The rise of the Global South – both as a geopolitical force and as a political concept – has taken center stage in world politics. The Russia-Ukraine war thus represents a catalyst for structural change in the global balance of power. A multipolar world is emerging, and the liberal international order long championed by Washington is faltering under the weight of its contradictions.

This monograph offers a comprehensive analysis of the Russia-Ukraine war in the broader context of world politics. It argues that this conflict, far from being an isolated or accidental event, is a product of long-term geopolitical trends and structural transformations in the global order. It seeks to answer a pressing question: why and how is the Russia-Ukraine war accelerating the transition to a post-hegemonic world order?

To answer this, the study is organized into seventeen chapters, designed to draw a multi-layered picture of the global dynamics in play.

Chapter One: A preliminary analysis of the evolving world order after hegemony—A Copernican Revolution

The opening chapter sets the stage by examining the systemic decline of U.S. hegemony and the concomitant rise of a multipolar global order. It

explores the reemergence of balance-of-power politics and the return of classical realism in the twenty-first century. By situating the war in Ukraine within this larger transition, the chapter provides the analytical framework for the rest of the volume.

Chapter Two: Handling the Ukraine crisis—a geopolitical perspective

This chapter delves into the complex geopolitical, historical, and ethnic roots of the Ukraine conflict. It situates Ukraine's strategic position between East and West and explores how its contested identity and regional fault lines have made it a focal point of the post-Cold War order's unraveling.

Chapter Three: Ukraine as Biden's sacrificed pawn—a mismanagement under the declining U.S. hegemony

Focusing on the formative role of U.S. policy toward Ukraine, particularly under the Obama Administration and then-Vice President Joseph Biden, this chapter critiques Washington's repeated political interference in Ukrainian domestic affairs. It argues that mismanagement under conditions of declining hegemony has exacerbated instability and contributed to the outbreak of war.

Chapter Four: Unmasking war propaganda against Russian aggression—an investigative approach

War is fought not only on battlefields but also in the realm of ideas. This chapter critically examines the propaganda and counter-propaganda disseminated by both the West and Russia. It aims to foster a more sober and clear-eyed analysis among policymakers and the informed public alike.

Chapter Five: The Russia-Ukraine warfare as the final stage of U.S.-Russia proxy war in Donbas (2014-2022)

The armed conflict in Donbas is analyzed as a quintessential proxy war. While rooted in ethnic and regional grievances, it has been instrumentalized by the United States and Russia in their broader contest

for global influence. Understanding Donbas is key to grasping the hybrid nature of modern warfare and its geopolitical stakes.

Chapter Six: Hindered—a frozen conflict in Ukraine

This chapter investigates the prospects—and missed opportunities—for a frozen conflict. It explores how certain actors, including NATO, deliberately foreclosed the possibility of peace during the 2023 NATO Summit, in favor of prolonging the war for strategic reasons.

Chapter Seven: The complete end of China’s “Reform and Open-Door Policy” as a protracted NEP: a warning against optimism

Breaking from the immediate focus on the Ukraine conflict, this chapter examines China’s strategic posture from a long-term historical perspective. It interprets the “Reform and Opening” period not merely as a turn to capitalism but as a tactical retreat—a form of post-revolutionary New Economic Policy aimed at eventual war preparedness. The implications for U.S.-China rivalry are profound.

Chapter Eight: The war in Ukraine as an inevitable manifestation of globalism vs. nationalism

This chapter explores the ideological dimensions of U.S. foreign policy toward Ukraine, particularly the influence of neoconservative and globalist elites—many of whom trace their roots to the Ashkenazi Jewish intellectual tradition. It offers a rare integration of strategic analysis and the history of political thought, shedding light on why American globalism has clashed so violently with Russian nationalism.

Chapter Nine: Why truce talks now? –The significance of the Trump revolution

Turning to American domestic politics, this chapter traces the rise and fall of Anglo-American globalists and the growing power of anti-globalist movements. It argues that Donald Trump’s populist movement represents a “Third War of Independence”—an attempt to reclaim national

sovereignty from transnational elites and reverse the course of American decline.

Chapter Ten: Tariffs as weapons in Trump's partisan strife –political and economic logics in a new era of American nationalism

Donald Trump's 2025 tariff strategy is less about trade and more about political realignment. Tariffs function as tools of economic nationalism, targeting globalist institutions, the Federal Reserve, and foreign allies. Rather than prioritizing growth, Trump uses tariffs to project sovereignty and mobilize anti-elite sentiment. Critics warn of inflation and trade disruption, but for Trump, the economic cost is secondary to reshaping the U.S. political economy. Tariffs are reframed as instruments of nationalist renewal, not traditional economic policy.

Chapter Eleven: Trumps 'gangster diplomacy'—the political economy of U.S.-Japan tariffs under a hegemonic security regime

This chapter examines the 2025 U.S.-Japan tariff deal, in which Japan accepted a 15% tariff under Trump's coercive, opaque "gangster diplomacy." It argues the agreement reflects Japan's structural subordination within the U.S.-Japan security alliance, rooted in the 1954 Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement. Trump's tariffs serve both domestic anti-globalist politics and alliance discipline, targeting Japan as a key liberal internationalist stronghold. Japan's constrained autonomy stems from its security dependency, raising the strategic challenge of transitioning toward greater independence in an emerging multipolar order.

Chapter Twelve: The Israel-Iran confrontation—a calculated struggle toward a Cold Peace

This chapter argues that Israel's June 2025 strikes on Iran marked a strategic move to enforce deterrence rather than provoke all-out war. Iran's restrained response, weakened proxies, and lack of strong backing from Russia or China, combined with pragmatic Gulf Arab alignments,

have helped contain the conflict. Amid U.S. retrenchment and a shifting global order, both sides appear to be edging toward a fragile “Cold Peace” – a tense, deterrence-driven standoff rooted in mutual caution and the logic of strategic self-preservation.

Chapter Thirteen: US bombing of Iran and the transition to a new international legal order

This chapter analyzes the 2025 U.S. precision bombing of Iran’s nuclear facilities as a pivotal event signaling the erosion of the post-WWII international legal order, with a highlight on the tension between the prohibition on the use of force and the expanding interpretation of self-defense. The analysis argues that the failure of collective security and the unilateral use of force by great powers reflect a shift toward a multipolar balance-of-power system.

Chapter Fourteen: The evolving new Yalta Regime–Trump and Putin align against the European globalists

The Anchorage summit between Donald Trump and Vladimir Putin marked a turning point in the Ukraine war and global order. By hosting Putin and remaining silent on Russia’s framing, Trump tacitly legitimized Moscow’s position while sidelining Europe. The talks suggested competing visions of a “security guarantee” for Ukraine, broader bargains over multipolar order, and the eclipse of value-based foreign policy in favor of raw power politics. Echoing Yalta, the summit signaled a new era of transactional great-power diplomacy.

Chapter Fifteen: Jewish intelligence power as a critical intervening factor in hegemonic transference

This chapter argues that Jewish intelligence power has been a decisive but overlooked factor in hegemonic transference from Britain to the United States and now toward a U.S.-Israel axis. It traces how Jewish financial-intelligence networks fused with British statecraft, later embedded in Anglo-American globalism, and now increasingly align with

Judeo-American nationalism under Trump. The study highlights the shift from Jewish internationalism to Jewish nationalism, showing how these dynamics shape U.S. hegemonic decline and the emerging multipolar order.

Chapter Sixteen: A self-explication of Chapter 15—reconsidering epistemic power in hegemonic transition

This chapter aims to review Chapter 15 within the broader landscape of the scholarship of international relations theory on hegemony, power transition, and epistemic structures. The goal is to assess both its intellectual merits and its limitations as a model for rethinking how non-material, transnational factors shape hegemonic transformation.

Chapter Seventeen: Policy prescriptions for Europe and Japan

In the final chapter, Japan and the European Union have long prospered under U.S. hegemony but now face a vastly different global environment. The chapter argues for a turn toward realism, strategic autonomy, and a rethinking of their commitment to a liberal international order that no longer reflects the global balance of power.

In sum, this monograph challenges conventional narratives about the Russia-Ukraine war and offers an alternative framework rooted in geopolitical realism. It argues that the conflict is not an aberration, but rather a symptom of a deeper systemic transition: the end of U.S. hegemony and the birth of a new world order. By tracing this transformation across multiple dimensions – strategic, ideological, economic, and historical – the study seeks to equip readers with the analytical tools needed to navigate an increasingly fragmented and uncertain international landscape.

This is a study not only about war and diplomacy but about the end of an era – and the uncertain beginnings of another.

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Chapter 1

A preliminary analysis of the evolving world order after hegemony: a Copernican Revolution

With global international relations in great flux for the last decade, the emerging world order is finally taking nebulous yet substantive shape through the ongoing U.S.-Russia truce talks on the War in Ukraine and through the related international diplomacy. Modern international history shows that a marked shift in international distribution of power often causes a hegemonic war or a great war, resetting a world order according to which countries win or lose such a war or according to their relative military superiority and inferiority at the time of truce talks. This applies well to the current U.S.-Russia global confrontation that includes the protracted warfare in Ukraine, while politically dividing the rest of the world between the two, now in favor of Russia.

This chapter will discuss major important features of the evolving world order and their central implications to world politics.

1. The features of the truce talks

On February 18, 2025, U.S. and Russian negotiation teams had the initial formal truce talks in Riyadh, the capital of Saudi Arabia. The U.S. team included Secretary of State Marco Rubio, National Security Adviser Micheal Waltz, and Special Envoy to the Middle East, Steven Witkoff. The Russian counterparts consisted of Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Foreign Policy Adviser to the President, Yuri Ushakov. This begs a series of intriguing questions, such as why Special Envoy to Ukraine and Russia, General Keith Kellog (retired), was not included in the team, why the talks were held in Riyadh, and why there was neither even a Ukrainian nor a

European observer at the negotiation table, which helps glance into the evolving a post-conflict global and regional order.

Revealingly, the framework of the U.S.-Russia truce talks has made it obvious that the armed conflict in Ukraine has been a proxy war between the two negotiating countries, with Ukraine as the pawn of the U.S.-led West.¹⁾ Also, it is evident that major U.S. allies in Western Europe, especially the United Kingdom, France, and Germany, played little role in the talks as they were excluded even as an observer. Moreover, as the talks were not held in a Western-style open and free city but in Riyadh, the Ukraine and other European governments were left out of the loop because they were neither easily able to conduct intelligence activities there nor exercise good influence through direct and public diplomacy.

More importantly, resetting the world order, which includes the regional order centered on Ukraine as only a part of it, is a primary objective of the truce talks. This is demonstrated by who consisted of the initial U.S. negotiation team that included Special Envoy to the Middle East, Steven Witkoff, not Special Envoy to Ukraine and Russia, Keith Kellog. To be noted, Saudi Arabia is a major regional power and an influential stakeholder and player. As the host of the talks, therefore, the Saudi government played an important facilitating role,²⁾ plausibly with some good informal opportunities and occasions to communicate with U.S. and

1) Masahiro Matsumura, “The Russia-Ukraine warfare as the final stage of U.S.-Russia proxy war in Donbas (2014-2022),” *IFIMES Researchs*, April 6, 2023, <https://www.iffimes.org/en/researches/the-russia-ukraine-warfare-as-the-final-stage-of-us-russia-proxy-war-in-donbas-2014-2022/5156/> accessed on April 1, 2023.

2) Jon Gambrell, “Saudi Arabia’s crown prince wins points for hosting the Russia-US summit on Ukraine,” Associated Press, February 19, 2025, <https://apnews.com/article/saudi-arabia-us-russia-talks-analysis-mohammed-bin-salman-9a42a3f1e09599f423a693262caa179c>, accessed on April 1, 2023; “Saudi Arabia Commends Phone Call Between US, Russian Presidents, Welcomes Hosting Summit Attended by Both Presidents,” Saudi Press Agency, February 15, <https://www.spa.gov.sa/en/N2261807>, accessed on April 1, 2023; and, “Outcomes of the United States and Russia Expert Groups On the Black Sea,” White House,

Russian negotiators about the interplay of conflict-ridden Ukrainian and Middle Eastern affairs and the postwar world order. In fact, the country as a prime oil exporter is able to significantly influence international oil prices through which to condition the postwar viability of the Russian political economy that considerably depends on oil exports.

This power-political approach to the truce talks underscores international stability and security, while depriving Ukraine of a crucial opportunity to participate in the talks. To strike a bargain between the United States and Russia, the approach will likely sacrifice Ukraine's vital national interests, particularly its territorial integrity and political independence. This is inconsistent with the established politico-legal principles and norms under the U.N. Charter and the general political practice under the U.S.-led liberal international order. A central question is whether the approach taken constitutes a temporary deviant outlier or a decisive departure from the existing world order.

2. The emerging global balance-of-power system

Trump's catchphrase, "Make America Great Again (MAGA)", is highly instrumental to capture the essence of his perspective on the evolving world order in which to pursue his international strategy. Obviously, MAGA puts the emphasis on "America" while its exact meaning is probably intentionally kept ambiguous. It may simply denote the country itself or include Canada as he said that it could be the 51st state of the United States, or connote all the Western Hemisphere as he referred to the need of sovereign or effective control over the Panama Canal and Greenland. In any case, MAGA emphasizes the central importance of a geographically limited "America", either a regional or at most a mega-regional power, and definitely not a global power. Naturally, such an

March 25, 2025, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefings-statements/2025/03/outcomes-of-the-united-states-and-russia-expert-groups-on-the-black-sea/>, accessed on April 1, 2026.

America is juxtaposed with other great powers in world politics while it ranks as a first-among-equal.

In practice, however, MAGA's ideational clarity is significantly blurred by the concurrent power struggle against China as the only potentially co-equal competitor, and by the transition from U.S. hegemony to a global balance-of-power system. It remains to be seen if the struggle dominates world politics with the strong inertia of serious US hegemonic decline or if the transition swiftly materializes into such a new system. Thus, these two perceptions on the circumstances lead to either a protracted or swift transition toward the new system, involving an uncertain timeline of it, and complicating the current debates on where the world stands now.

In the increasingly multi-polarizing world, a global balance-of-power system is inevitable at least with the United States, China, Russia, and, perhaps, India. They are strategically independent in world politics in that they possess a full spectrum of military, economic, political, and other relevant power, including strategic nuclear deterrents, which renders them to be genuinely sovereign state actors. A federalized European Union, Japan, and other regional powers with a full spectrum of national power have the good potential if they are free from strategic dependency on the United States. Such a world is very similar to Samuel Huntington's vision on world politics after hegemony as the clash of civilizations³⁾ in which each of them has a great power with its own de facto sphere of influence. This suggests that the international legal definition of sovereignty, particularly as applied to small and middle powers, is irrelevant in understanding the realities of such world politics.

In other words, such a global balance-of-power system works in accordance with a multipolar check-and-balance mechanism between

3) They are the Western, Orthodox, Islamic, Buddhist, Hindu, African, Latin American, Sinic, and Japanese civilizations. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations*, New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996, pp. 26-27.

several great powers, each of which controls its own civilizational region as its sphere of influence, usually consisting of small and middle powers. Despite constant friction on the fault lines between civilizations, the system sustains itself as long as great powers mutually respect their spheres of influence that are considered essential for their respective ways of life. Conversely, a major challenge against the vital civilizational interests by one great power against another, particularly a move to eliminate it as a constitutive player in the multipolar system, will cause a great war, perhaps destabilize and, at worst, disintegrate the system.

Also, this system is insufficiently comparable, as a political-institutional expression, to the U.N. Security Council in which the five permanent members (P5) – the United States, the Soviet Union (now, Russia), the United Kingdom, France, and China – possess veto power. The effective functioning of the Council assumes mutual respect by P5 for their vital national interests, especially their respective spheres of influence that were set in accordance with the then-existing international distribution of power during the formative years of the Charter, which was consequent on their victory over WWII. Thus, it is imperative to not directly challenge the fundamental bargain struck by P5.

Never had such a challenge been made between the United States and the Soviet Union during the Cold War, with the United Kingdom and France strategically dependent on the United States. But the Council's functioning had considerably been hollowed out since they exercised continual exchanges of veto power. Also, the functioning had been weakened as the United Kingdom and France, two great colonial powers, underwent serious decline through the postwar full global decolonization. For the last decade, this has been complicated by the marked rise of China, particularly when it aligns with Russia.

Importantly, the U.S.-led West committed direct challenge against Russia's vital national interests through attempted NATO expansion

toward Ukraine, an integral part of Russia's sphere of influence. This means that the tacitly prohibited move has decisively destabilized the usually latent modus operandi of the post-WWII world order, especially the seemingly ironclad principles, norms and rules on the territorial integrity and political independence of states. In addition, the move was made when the United States and the U.S.-led West suffered marked relative decline in world politics, more specifically, in face of the significant rises of the BRICS and the Global South. Naturally, Russia has found a good opportunity to make a tit-for-tat countermove.

Hence, the ongoing U.S.-Russia truce talks are proceeding in the nascent global balance-of-power system, under the lingering shadow of the dysfunctional U.N. Security Council and the ineffective and perhaps fading liberal international order that the United States once led but has now been leaving from.

3. The emerging modus operandi

The evolving Riyadh regime for global balance of power will hollow out the extant liberal international order that had flourished for eight decades since the establishment of the Yalta regime. An international rule of law, especially during the acme of U.S. hegemony, seemed to have operated for itself, but behind there always existed U.S. preponderance and predominance that buttressed the order, in cooperation with the significant power and influence of the collective West. As French's philosopher Blaise Pascal once said, justice without force is powerless, while force without justice is tyrannical. It is natural that a world order rises and falls in response to major changes in international distribution of power.

In fact, modern international history shows some precedents of major basic changes in world order as related to war and peace, that were brought about by U.S. preponderance and predominance, first in the making and later in the full.

In 1918, President Woodrow Wilson presented the Fourteen Points, including national self-determination, as the terms for peace after WWI. They put an end to the Concert of Europe, a classical balance-of-power system, because they led to dissolutions of the Austro-Hungarian and the Ottoman Empires that constituted essential players in the system.

Also, U.S. Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and Harry S. Truman led to transforming traditional customary international law on war by introducing the unconditional acceptance of severe conditions for surrender (or, “unconditional surrender”). The truce agreement with Japan contained unprecedented preliminary terms for peace treaty, especially political, economic, and social democratization of Japan. This is a decisive departure from traditional post-armistice negotiation for peace treaty about war reparation and cession of territory. Similarly, the wartime U.S. government played a central role in realizing retroactive application of the crime of aggression and the crime against humanity to individual German and Japanese political and military leaders at the Nuremberg and Tokyo war tribunals, which had not been considered legitimate until then under traditional customary international law.

Moreover, during the Cold War, the Soviet Union practiced the Brezhnev Doctrine with *opinio juris sive necessitatis*, effectively modifying the principle of territorial integrity and political independence of states. It is based on the concept of restricted sovereignty of the socialist bloc countries that made it legitimate for the Soviets to make armed intervention in a socialist country for preservation of the socialist bloc, such as the case of Czechoslovakia in 1968. The doctrine was not invalidated due to Soviet veto power in the U.N. Security Council and the cumulative practice through de facto acquiescence of it by the United States and other great powers, and among many, if not all, states.

Hence, the liberal international order is neither natural nor permanent, and now being reset toward a global balance-of-power system amid the

shifting international distribution of power, particularly by the United States and Russia, a debilitating hegemon and a great power that are able together to dictate the general situation in world politics. This transformation will be unstoppable unless the U.S. government under President Trump reverses the current course of its world policy toward holding on to the liberal international order, which will most unlikely happen in the foreseeable future, given the current state of U.S. domestic politics.⁴⁾

Notably, the Munich Agreement of 1938 is superficially similar to but not the same with a possible truce agreement on the war in Ukraine. Both cases sacrifice middle powers, but in different contexts. The former was concluded by Britain, France, and Italy as an appeasement for their temporary security against unsatiated Nazi Germany that was plausibly bent on further aggression and expansion. But the latter aims to strike an arrangement for durable stability and security through resetting mutually acceptable spheres of influence and strategic buffers in accordance with balance-of-power logic.

4. An expulsion from paradise: Europe and Japan

European democracies and Japan have long flourished and prospered under the U.S.-led liberal international order built on U.S. hegemony. Both had taken such circumstances for granted, while cocooned by the U.S. security umbrella and enjoying extensive access to large U.S. domestic markets for growth and development. On the other hand, the United States had willingly shouldered large security and economic burdens as long as the benefits of maintaining global hegemony exceeded the costs.

4) Masahiro Matsumura, “Why truce talks now?: the significance of the Trump revolution,” *IFIMES Research*, March 28, 2025, <https://www.ifimes.org/en/researches/why-truce-talks-now-the-significance-of-the-trump-revolution/5480>, accessed on April 1, 2023.

This used to be a win-win relationship in which Europeans had lived in a Kantian world, while Americans in a Hobbesian one.⁵⁾ The Europeans indulged themselves to enjoy freedom, democracy and an international rule of law with minimal security burdens. Also, the Japanese had had similar experience, but with a significantly less sense of indulgence due to the remaining Cold War structure in East Asia. On the other hand, the Americans had rather successfully pursued global predominance at the price of growing security, economic, and domestic-social burdens.

Yet, with the total cost performance of global hegemony increasingly unfavorable, U.S. domestic political strife had considerably intensified, leading to the birth of the second-term Trump presidency with basic policy lines against global hegemony. Consequently, the President has now been making a decisive U.S. exit from the liberal international order to a global balance-of-power system.

1) Europe

Such an exit has necessitated European democracies to strive to preserve the order that the United States once led and is now making an exit from. This is because the current mainstream European political leaders and policy elites have strong creedal commitment to and material interests in the order. No wonder, the United Kingdom and France have vainly tried to substitute the previous U.S. security role in military assistance to Ukraine, only to have found that they have inadequate military and economic capacities to do so. In fact, they have ended up with a post-truce plan for air and maritime defense with minimal ground forces in Ukraine, perhaps with a total manpower strength of less than 30,000.⁶⁾ Even with some participation of ground troops from other European

5) Robert Kagan, *Of Paradise and Power: America and Europe in the New World Order*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2003.

6) Dan Sabbagh, "Britain and France working on plans for 'reassurance force' to protect Ukraine," *Guardian*, February 19, 2025, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2025/feb/19/britain-and-france-working-on-plans-for-reassurance-force-to-protect-ukraine>, accessed on April 1, 2023.

countries,⁷⁾ such a European “assurance force” would hardly be an effective deterrent against another Russian invasion to Ukraine but degrade itself into a de facto peacetime guarantee occupation of the country while impairing its sovereignty.

Europe’s military capacity is very low due to the serious inadequacy of cumulative defense investment. Naturally, on March 19, 2025, the European Commission unveiled details on “ReArm Europe Plan/Readiness 2030” that are designed to drive an investment surge of €800 billion in defense capabilities.⁸⁾ However, this mid-term plan is a belated move and can by no means get in time to satisfy post-truce security needs of Ukraine. To make matters worse, it remains to be seen whether the EU is able to sustain necessary political momentum for such a large fiscal spending surge amid the deepening recession across Europe.

Outside the EU and in frequent alignment with it through NATO, the U.K. military is probably most well-armed in the region but still hardly able to operate effectively alone without free access to the U.S. intelligence and military information system, for example, the Global Positioning System (GPS).⁹⁾ In addition, the U.K nuclear deterrents are operationally independent, but depend on the United States for missile technology, the related acquisition and maintenance support.¹⁰⁾

7) “UK says a ‘significant number’ of nations ready to provide troops for Ukraine peace,” Reuters, March 17, 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/uk-says-significant-number-countries-ready-provide-peacekeeping-troops-ukraine-2025-03-17/>. accessed on April 1, 2023.

8) “Commission unveils the White Paper for European Defence and the ReArm Europe Plan/Readiness 2030,” European Commission, March 19, 2025, https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_25_793. accessed on April, 2023.

9) “Positioning, Navigation and Timing: Overview,” UK Department for Science, Innovation and Technology, March 26, 2025, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/positioning-navigation-and-timing-overview>, accessed on April 1, 2023.

10) George Allison, “Here’s how Britain’s nukes are ‘operationally independent,’” *UK Defense Journal*, March 9, 2025, <https://ukdefencejournal.org.uk/heres-how-britains-nukes-are-operationally-independent/>. accessed on April 1, 2023.

Obviously, Europe alone neither has necessary military and economic power to set a post-truce regional order centered on Ukraine toward the status quo ante nor to restore the debilitating liberal international order. Europe could buttress a liberal regional order in wider Europe for a while but exhaust its power capacity before long to keep its strategically independent approach. This is highly plausible because the United States might no longer lead Europe in international military security through NATO, as the Trump administration considers giving up NATO Command.¹¹⁾ Then, without solid U.S. defense commitment, Europe might have to rely on France's minimum deterrent power as it considers offering a small and thin nuclear umbrella.¹²⁾

2) Japan

Japan has been adrift without clear strategic orientation. She needs free trade under the liberal international order as a global economic power. On the other hand, she relies on the sole U.S. security guarantor to cope with growing security threats from China, North Korea's nuclear brinkmanship, and Russia's strategic alignment with China and/or North Korea. This results from the unique historical legacy of complete defeat in WWII by the U.S.-led Allies, the subsequent U.S.-led Allied occupation, and the continued existence of U.S. armed forces after the formal re-independence in 1952, having forced Japan to rely on U.S. extended nuclear deterrence and the world's strongest power projection capability. Certainly, Japan's military power is significant with limited power projection capability, but, as Japanese armed forces are built auxiliary to U.S. forces, the former is most effective when combined with the latter.

11) Courtney Kube and Gordon Lubold, "Trump admin considers giving up NATO command that has been exclusively American since Eisenhower," NBC News, March 19, 2025, <https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/national-security/trump-admin-considers-giving-nato-command-exclusively-american-eisenho-rena196503>, accessed on April 1, 2023.

12) John Irish, "Explainer: How realistic is France's offer to extend its nuclear umbrella?" Reuters, March 6, 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/how-realistic-is-frances-offer-extend-its-nuclear-umbrella-2025-03-06/>, accessed on April 1, 2023.

Thus, Japan's choice in strategic orientation is much more constrained by the interplay of its severe security environment and historical legacy than Europe's. Japan's being on China's orbit is impracticable given its communist regime. Her being on U.S. orbit has been practicable under the U.S.-led liberal international order, but now increasingly problematic as the United States itself is making an exit from the order. Japan's standing alone as one of multipoles makes logical sense but involves great risk and uncertainty without knowing where she is situated on the transition from the liberal international order to a global balance-of-power system.

Consequently, until the start of the second-term Trump administration, Japan had emphasized unity of the collective West against Russia's invasion in Ukraine and followed value-based diplomacy in context of the liberal international order, at least seemingly earnestly. Yet, she has been much less entangled with heavy material burden thanks to its distant location in East Asia, making it possible to take a seemingly righteous Ukraine policy. On the other hand, Japan's China policy generally goes well with that of Trump's strong balancing policy against China. It remains to be seen how long Japan can retain good room for maneuver to take an ambiguous world-policy line

5. Concluding remarks

Evidently, the fundamental trends of the era are heading from the debilitating liberal international order to a global balance-of-power system. Yet, it is uncertain whether the transition will be swift or protracted due to the complicated interplay of structural transformation and intensified power-political process.

The current mainstream European and Japanese political leaders and policy elites have been accustomed and, probably, obsessed to adhere to the liberal international order. Should Europe and Japan dare to restore the status quo ante, they would exhaust their power capacity and fail to

become constitutive players of a next multipolar system. This means that such a system would consist of four great powers--the United States, China, Russia, and perhaps, India. Should Europe and Japan do otherwise, the system would include at least six great powers including these four players, Europe, and Japan. Such a system would have six poles with three liberal democratic great powers out of six, which would make such a world order more stable and liberal-democratic, with democratic but not fully liberal India leaning toward the liberal democracies, at least for a foreseeable future.

Chapter 2

Handling the Ukraine Crisis: A Geopolitical Perspective

With the Ukraine crisis increasingly acute as of February 2022, there was growing danger of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, involving a significant possibility of escalating into a full-scale war between Russian and NATO. At the core of the crisis was how to strike an agreement on a durable geopolitical order to which Ukraine is central as a crucial strategic buffer between Europe and the Eurasia, or between a peninsula and a landmass. Thus, prescribing a geopolitical settlement has been more necessary than ever.

1. The Ukraine Question

In the post-Cold War context of significant NATO enlargement into the once Soviet-dominated Eastern Europe and Soviet Baltic republics, the U.S. political circles have continually discussed Ukraine's participation in NATO. This will completely strip Russia of a valuable strategic buffer that remains persistently essential, as long as there exist different and, often, conflicting political cultures and national interests between the country and the West. Already in the late 1990s, the Ukraine Question was obvious because it involves defining what Europe is all about and where its outer limit lies.¹³⁾ Retrospectively, in the negotiation on unification of West and East Germany in 1990, the Soviet Union accepted it together with the continued NATO membership of unified Germany, in return for no NATO

13) Takayasu Murayama, "Rethinking Cold War History : An Essay (in Japanese)," *St. Andrew's University Bulletin of Research Institute*, Vol. 23, No. 2, December 1997, pp. 11-12, https://stars.repo.nii.ac.jp/?action=pages_view_main&active_action=repository_view_main_item_detail&item_id=967&item_no=1&page_id=13&block_id=67, accessed on February 13, 2022.

expansion toward East. At least, Moscow believed so without a legally binding agreement with U.S.-led NATO. Nonetheless, the NATO Bucharest Summit of 2008 recognized Ukraine's candidacy for NATO membership, although Russia opposed it.

U.S. approach to Ukraine had fluctuated over the G.W. Bush (2001~2009), Obama (2009~2017), Trump (2017~2021) and Biden (2021~2025) Administrations. It was well known that the Bush administration had zealously pursued liberal democratic enlargement by taking advantage of the U.S. unipolar moment after the Cold War. In 2004, the pro-Western Orange Revolution overthrew the pro-Russian Ukrainian administration, in the context of a series of Color Revolutions behind which the U.S. intelligence circles are believed to have done significant maneuvering, both overtly and covertly.¹⁴⁾ In 2014, the Ukrainian presidential election resulted in an anti-Russian change of government, to which Russia responded by annexing Crimea populated overwhelmingly by ethnic Russians with strong historical ties at least since 1783. Subsequently, amid the ideological inertia, the declining U.S. hegemon under Obama, in coordination with other major Western powers, imposed significant economic sanctions on Russia. Then, the Trump administration, while continuing the sanctions, deemphasized persistent American antagonism against Russia to prioritize coping with growing China's challenge against declining U.S. hegemony. Yet, the Biden administration had renewed Obama's anti-Russian line, even under the continuing hegemonic decline.

2. A Geopolitical Perspective

A strategic buffer situated between sea and land powers is constantly subjected not only to their political, economic and cultural influence but

14) The operation arms include the National Endowment for Democracy, International Republican Institute, National Democratic Institute and Freedom House. See, Ian Traynor, "US campaign behind the turmoil in Kiev," *Guardian*, November 26, 2004, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/nov/26/ukraine.usa>, accessed on February 13, 2022.

also to military pressure, invasion and even occupation.

Given the rise and fall of these powers, a buffer may be controlled by or sided with one of them at a particular phase of history, but, overall, one half of it has an open and decentralized domestic political order while the other half a closed and centralized one. In modern times, they respectively have a close affinity with liberal democracy or authoritarian regime.

Thus, the population of such a buffer is prone to internal socio-political conflict, further compounded by the existence of ethnic minorities if linked to either a sea or a land power. It often possesses a strong yet ambiguous national identity and, plausibly, an aspiration for national unification and strategic independence. However, *ceteris paribus*, approximately halving a buffer constitutes a stable equilibrium in regional turf competition between two coequal sea and land powers. Should an extra-regional factor, such as intervention or withdrawal of a global hegemon, come into play to upset an equilibrium, the unification of a divided buffer zone would become possible. This chapter will explore if the dynamics can be applied to explain the increasingly unstable state of Ukraine.

3. The Domestic Dynamics of Ethnic Politics

Elusive national identity in a strategic buffer zone is often highlighted on the grand chessboard of sea vs. land powers, because it may provide them with some good room for interference, intervention and, possibly, invasion to influence or control local population to their advantage. On the other hand, local population tends to develop two distinctively different political cultures that are similar to or at least greatly influenced by either a proximate sea or land power. In-between, there is a significant portion of the population with hybrid characteristics, while their geographic gradation and distribution differ case by case.

The Ukrainian case is burdened with complicated ethnic conditions involving elusive national identities. Historically, the triune Russian nation

– White, Little and Great Russians (respectively, Belarussians, Ukrainians, Russians) – has shared their linguistic origin in the Old East Slavic, the Russian Orthodox Church, and the overall political culture based on them, with a notable exception of the Eastern Catholic population in Galicia which used to a part of the Austro-Hungary Empire. From a macro-historical perspective, the three Russians have a good chance for reintegration comparable to European integration, although its specific form remains to be seen, either a single unified state, a federation or a confederation.

Yet, the prospect for reintegration may only be entertained in the distant future because the state of affairs has been greatly compounded over the modern and current history. The Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts (henceforth, Donbas), an eastern part of Ukraine bordering Russia where a significant ethnic Russian population resides, is a historically Russian land that was incorporated forcibly by Germany into Ukraine through the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk of 1918, followed by extensive migration to the Donbas during the Soviet era. Besides, Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev (1953-1964), who was a Ukrainian himself, willy-nilly incorporated the Crimea Peninsula into Ukraine despite the significant modern and current historical ties with Russia and ethnic Russians as an overwhelming majority of local population, on the no-longer tenable assumption that the Soviet Union shall exist forever. Those Russians in both “legally” Ukrainian territories have possessed Russia’s domestic passport that entitles them as Russian nationals to vote its national elections. The Russian government is legally obligated to protect them against possible atrocity by a third country, especially by Ukraine.¹⁵⁾ To fully understand the current state of affairs, it is imperative to go beyond emphasizing the

15) “Ukraine conflict: Moscow could ‘defend’ Russia-backed rebels”, BBC News, April 9, 2021, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-56678665>, accessed on February 13, 2022. Ann Simmons, “At Russia’s Border with Ukraine, Pro-Kremlin Separatists Find Support”, *Wall Street Journal*, February 13, 2022, <https://www.wsj.com/articles/at-russias-border-with-ukraine-pro-kremlin-separatists-find-support-11644770029>, accessed February 15, 2022.

formalistic importance of the territorial integrity and political independence of post-Soviet Ukraine.

4. The Minsk Protocols

As a rule of thumb, the established approach to intractable ethnic conflicts is to grant full autonomy and self-government to a minority population within the framework of the sovereign nation-state concerned, together with an agreement with the neighboring one in which the same ethnic population holds an overwhelming majority. The approach is only feasible if the two states respect preserving peace and security under the status quo with a strong will to depoliticize the ethnic question, especially if without any significant impact on geopolitical power competition. Italy's South Tyrol Autonomous Province bordering Austria is the case in point. Thus, it is crucial to identify which party rejects the approach to the current Ukrainian crisis, Russia, Ukraine or Russian-dominated Donbas.

True, both Russia and Ukraine agree with the self-government approach in principle but disagree on what constitutes genuine Donbas self-government or *de facto* Russian occupation.¹⁶⁾ In June 2014, an armed conflict between the separatist forces of the self-declared Donetsk and Luhansk People's Republics, and the Ukrainian government erupted as an aftermath of the anti-Russian Ukrainian (so-called, Maidan) Revolution and the Euromaidan movement. To end the war, representatives of Ukraine, the Russian Federation, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) formed the Trilateral Contact Group, with mediation by the leaders of France and Germany in the so-called Normandy Format. The Group stroke two protocols in Minsk, Belarus (Minsk Protocol I & II), respective of July 2014 and February 2015, regarding ceasefire, confidence-

16) Duncan Allan, "The Minsk Conundrum: Western Policy and Russia's War in Eastern Ukraine", Chatham House, May 22, 2020, <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2020/05/minsk-conundrum-western-policy-and-russias-war-eastern-ukraine-0/minsk-2-agreement>, accessed on February 13, 2022.

building measures, and early implementation local election for Donbas self-government according to the existing Ukrainian law. Yet, both of them collapsed due to the overall lack of mutual confidence consequent on a chain of battles, while one or the other side was arguably culpable at a particular phase.¹⁷⁾ Notably, even under the ongoing acute crisis, the self-government approach in the Minsk Protocol II remained as the basis for any future resolution to the Donbas conflict, especially at that time.¹⁸⁾ It begs the question of why the Donbas conflict was no longer a protracted low-intensity warfare with continuing diplomatic endeavors for settlement.¹⁹⁾

5. U.S.-Russia Strife over the Status Quo

The then acute crisis, therefore, indicates that the United States and Russia were vying for influence to change or maintain the regional status quo, rather than to jointly preserve it by containing the Donbas ethnic conflict through the self-government approach. More specifically, the conflict is epiphenomenal to U.S.-Russia rivalry over NATO expansion to

17) “Ukraine deal with pro-Russian rebels at Minsk talks,” BBC News, September 20, 2014, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-29290246>, accessed on February 13, 2022. “Ukrainian peace talks lead to buffer zone deal,” CBS News, September 20, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-29290246>, accessed on February 13, 2022.

18) David R. Cameron, “After flurry of high-level diplomacy and another long Normandy format meeting, threat of war in Ukraine continues,” MacMillan Center, February 11, 2022, <https://macmillan.yale.edu/news/after-flurry-high-level-diplomacy-and-another-long-normandy-format-meeting-threat-war-ukraine>, February 13, 2022.

19) Then-German Chancellor Angela Merkel understood and implicitly endorsed that the Ukrainian government just liked to buy time for enhancing its military posture, without intent to observe the Minsk Protocol II. Jeremy Kuzmarov, “Former German Chancellor Merkel Admits that Minsk Peace Agreements Were Part of Scheme for Ukraine to Buy Time to Prepare for War With Russia,” Orinoco Tribute, December 24, 2022, <https://orinocotribune.com/former-german-chancellor-merkel-admits-that-minsk-peace-agreements-were-part-of-scheme-for-ukraine-to-buy-time-to-prepare-for-war-with-russia/>, accessed on June 25, 2025.

Ukraine, not a primary phenomenon per se that might escalate into a U.S.-led NATO's war with Russia. Russian President Putin essentially demanded that the United States shall not accede to Ukraine's NATO membership. Once Ukraine is admitted to NATO, the organization has to provide collective self-defense for the country, making Russia's attack highly risky and, possibly, a strategic blunder. Then, if Russia would like to annex the Donbas, it would have to act then than later. Conversely, should Russia annex the Donbas, NATO should not be able to grant Ukraine's membership without preparing itself for a war with Russia.

Naturally, both the United States and Russia were engaged in an intense battle of mutual condemnation and saber rattling. At the behavioral level, Russian appeared very aggressive because it was increasingly relying on military instruments, particularly military exercises of more than 150 thousands soldiers with a large number of land, aerial and naval platforms in those areas in Russia and Belarus that are very close to Ukraine as well as in the Black Sea. On the other hand, the United States and European NATO allies were strongly condemning Russia while dispatching a far smaller size of infantry forces to countries close to Ukraine, including nine thousands of U.S. soldiers, and providing Ukraine with weapons, including portable anti-tank missiles. At the level of strategic intent, the United States was aggressive in changing the status quo, while Russia was defensive in preserving it. Yet, international law illegitimizes aggressive behavior, not intent. In the event of its armed attack against Ukraine, Russia would surely be labelled as a rogue state under international law and in a court of world opinion that is heavily influenced Western international media.

6. Risks and Resultants

It begs the question of why the U.S.-led West brought Russia to bay in propaganda war while committing significant risks of a full conventional war with it. Russia possessed strategic nuclear parity against the United

States, ensuring strategic stability between the two through mutual assured destruction. This rather legitimated the authoritarian Putin administration, at least domestically, as the guarantor of national security, not of liberal democracy and prosperity, particularly then due to possible NATO expansion to Ukraine. In addition, Russia enjoyed a large conventional military advantage over the United States in the Ukraine theater of operation, given that the United States greatly suffers the tyranny of distance. It was plausible that Russia would wage a war to annex the Donbas for preventing NATO expansion, once the Donbas separatist authority should request its annexation with Russia on the basis of a popular referendum, particularly because the Russia's Duma already passed a resolution for such an independence,²⁰⁾ out of rising Russian nationalism in tandem with Putin's enhanced legitimacy.

Prior to the Russian invasion to Ukraine, the U.S. government and military released a steady stream of information on the ever-intensifying state of Ukraine crisis, while Western media hyper-actively propagated the image that Russia was about to invade Ukraine, involving a strong self-fulfilling prophesy effect. Already, President Biden unequivocally stated that, even in the event of such an invasion, he would send no U.S. forces to the country.²¹⁾ Instead, the U.S. would impose strong economic sanctions against Russia. Yet, the sanctions would hardly be effective, given that Russia already developed significant capacity to resist because it had survived those imposed after its invasion to Crimea in 2014. Moreover,

20) "Russian Duma chair calls to recognize Donbas independence from Ukraine," *Jerusalem Post*, January 21, 2022, <https://www.jpost.com/breaking-news/article-694173>, accessed on February 13, 2022. "Russian parliament may delay vote on recognizing eastern Ukraine", Reuters, February 11, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russian-parliament-mulls-delaying-vote-recognising-eastern-ukraine-2022-02-11/>, accessed on February 14, 2022.

21) John Wagner and Ashley Parker, "Biden says U.S. ground troops 'not on the table' for Ukraine," *Washington Post*, December 8, 2021, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/biden-says-ground-troops-not-on-the-table-but-putin-would-face-severe-economic-sanctions-for-ukraine-invasion/2021/12/08/3b975d46-5843-11ec-9a18-a506cf3aa31d_story.html, accessed February 13, 2022.

Russia would probably be unaffected to such sanctions, because China was willing to purchase the oversupply of Russian oil and gas. This would enable Russia to reduce great vulnerability dependency on the U.S.-led West for stable macro-economic performance. Russia already secured significant room for strategic maneuvering. From a Russian viewpoint, therefore, the U.S. approach implied that an invasion to the Donbas would be overlooked before Ukraine became a NATO member.

Rather it would be Europe, especially Germany, that would suffer most by making itself unable to import Russian natural gas on which it depended as a major source of energy. Germany has reluctantly accepted U.S. hardline against Russia to postpone starting operation of the recently completed Nord Stream 2 pipeline that was designed to secure stable natural gas supply from Russia. This means that the German policy was subordinated to the U.S. line that would force Europe as a whole to face an energy crisis

Thus, it was not difficult to see that the U.S. hardline to the Ukraine crisis would eventuate in a face-down between the West and Russia in which the latter would likely outplay the former, both militarily and geoeconomically. This would likely make it very hard for Germany to continue its obedient alignment of its Russia policy with the hardline that involves interruption of Russian gas supply and, as a result, macro-economic hardship. Thus, bulldozing the hardline effectively constitutes a veiled geoeconomic offense against Germany that had tried to lead Europe for reconciliation with Russia, prompting Germany to become strategically independent of the U.S. hegemon toward multipolarity, at least over a long run.

On the other side of the globe, Japan as the world largest liquefied natural gas (LNG) importer was called upon to provide Europe with spare reserve of it.²²⁾ Yet, this would only work as short-term crisis management,

22) Yuka Obayashi and Marwa Rashad, "Japan to divert LNG to Europe amid

because the country had only limited spare gas and because LNG was significantly more expensive than pipelined gas. To make the matter worse, Japan would have to stop importing Russian gas, which currently occupies some 10% of the total imports, if it should participate in U.S.-led West's economic sanctions against Russia in the event of its invasion to Ukraine. Japan would also experience economic hardship by aligning itself with the U.S. hardline.

An economic sanction makes sense only if the sanctionee bears significantly higher costs than the sanctioner. Evidently, the payoff of economic sanctions against Russia remains highly problematic, which may weaken the solidarity between the U.S. hegemon and major allies and debilitate the U.S. hegemony.

7. A Then-acceptable Proposal

Evidently, all the parties involved in the Ukraine crisis would have been better off with a diplomatic settlement, rather than with a Russia-Ukraine war, West's economic sanctions against Russia, and a protracted confrontation between the West and Russia.

Certainly, Russia then would be able to survive such a confrontation by relying on China, but it might also like to avoid exclusive reliance on China, a hegemonic aspirant land power, that has expressed the territorial claim on Russia's Maritime Territory and, potentially, an ambition to occupy the sparsely populated Eastern Siberia. In fact, Russia needs to continue significant economic relations with the West as a major counterweight against China.

Hence, all the parties were recommended to return to the Minsk

Russia-Ukraine tension," Reuters, February 10, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/japan-diverting-lng-europe-some-already-route-industry-minister-2022-02-09/>, accessed on February 15, 2022.

Protocol II and build an effective system that allows full self-government for the Donbas within Ukraine. At the same time, they also had to agree on Ukraine's non-membership in NATO, and instead make necessary arrangements to keep Ukraine as a strategic buffer between the West and Russia either in the form of a neutral country or a Finlandized state.

Chapter 3

Ukraine As Biden's Sacrificed Pawn: a Mismanagement under the Declining U.S. Hegemony

With its swift and full-scale invasion from three fronts into Ukraine, Russia attempted to turn the table on the U.S.-led West by controlling the strategic buffer state. The change would likely be a worst-case outcome for the Ukrainians, though some geopolitical adjustment was inevitable in the not-so-distant future as a consequence of the evolving grand power shift consequent on conspicuous U.S. hegemonic decline. By achieving an overwhelming military victory, Russia would put Ukraine tightly in its orbit, probably, through a pro-Russian regime change involving external reorientation from the West to Russia. This would probably necessitate Ukraine to be semi-sovereign through demilitarization and neutralization, including complete elimination of the potential for nuclear armament.²³⁾

It begs the question of why Russia bluntly chose to take a military solution and why Ukraine did not pursue an accommodative diplomatic settlement with favorable terms. Chapter 2 of this work already analyzed the Ukraine crisis prior to the invasion from a geopolitical perspective. Yet geopolitics does not determine an outcome but only constrains the scope of possible outcomes.²⁴⁾ Thus, this chapter will inquire about the course and

23) Andrew Drake, Francesca Ebel, Yuras Karmanau and Mstyslav Chernov, "Attack on Ukrainian nuclear plant triggers worldwide alarm," AP News, March 6, <https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-war-nuclear-plant-attack-33b6c1709dee937750f95c6786832840>, accessed on March 7, 2022.

24) Masahiro Matsumura, "Handling the Ukraine Crisis: A Geopolitical Perspective," *IFIMES Research*, February 18, 2022, https://www.ifimes.org/en/researches/handling-the-ukraine-crisis-a-geopolitical-perspective/4998?fbclid=IwAR13SUACUFWkTxA_dW4aPNpPeY7ho-CA4NWZxFfBigL2HN6b0Mjn5-cBfsE, accessed on March 7, 2022.

circumstances of important events in search of direct causation.

1 . Biden’s Inadequate Reponses

For the several months prior to the Russian invasion, the Biden administration had spoken tough to Russia without a big stick, contrary to the recipe for effective deterrence policy. At the pre-crisis stage of deteriorating bilateral relations over Ukraine, in a video call with President Vladimir Putin on December 7, 2021, President Joe Biden warned him of severe economic sanctions in the event of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, while explicitly ruling out military intervention against the invasion, especially any dispatch of U.S. ground troops.²⁵⁾

True, given that Ukraine was not a NATO member state, the United States could not exercise the treaty-based right of collective self-defense to defend the country. Neither could the United Nation Security Council authorize a U.N. military sanction against Russia because it was able to veto such a resolution, though the U.N. General Assembly can pass a non-legally binding resolution against the invasion of Ukraine over which Russia has no veto. Neither will the United States organize and lead a coalition of the willing against Russia for the defense of Ukraine, with no vital American interests at stake. Moreover, a full-scale conventional war with Russia, a great power possessing strategic nuclear parity with the United States, was practically infeasible because it involves great risks of escalation into a thermo-nuclear war and a nuclear Armageddon. This is in sharp contrast to the Afghanistan and Iraq cases in the U.S.-led global war on terrorism. Even well before Russia’s aggression, it was crystal clear that Ukraine alone would surely have to resist without any NATO

25) John Wagner and Ashley Parker, “Biden says U.S. ground troops ‘not on the table’ for Ukraine,” *Washington Post*, December 8, 2021, https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/biden-says-ground-troops-not-on-the-table-but-putin-would-face-severe-economic-sanctions-for-ukraine-invasion/2021/12/08/3b975d46-5843-11ec-9a18-a506cf3aa31d_story.html, accessed on March 7, 2022.

reinforcements, but primarily with small arms, light weapons and ammunition provided by the United States and its allies. (Later with the conflict protracted, however, they began to provide Ukraine with a limited quantity of larger and more advanced defensive weapons.)

To make the matters worse, international history shows that the effectiveness of economic sanctions is highly problematic, with few cases of success in compelling a determined aggressor to back down, at least in a short term, while sustained sanctions require the strong and yet hardly securable political will and solidarity of sanctioning countries. This has surely applied to the current Russian case because the country survived those sanctions imposed after its invasion to Crimea in 2014 and already developed significant capacity to resist since then. Moreover, Russia would probably be unaffected to such sanctions, because China had been willing to purchase the consequential surplus of Russian oil and gas, an overwhelming source of national income, and because Russia had significantly de-dollarized its trade and other external economic transactions through cooperation with China and major developing countries.²⁶⁾ This means that the exclusion of Russia from SWIFT, a predominant dollar-based network for international financial settlement among financial institutions across the world, would probably not trouble the country as much as expected.

2. Biden's Willful Negligence

Without any good cards in hand, the United States in close coordination with major allies should have explored a diplomatic settlement of the

26) Chen Taizhou, "Russia, China agree 30-year gas deal via new pipeline, to settle in euros," Reuters, February 2, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/exclusive-russia-china-agree-30-year-gas-deal-using-new-pipeline-source-2022-02-04/>, accessed on March 7, 2022. Joe McDonald, "China is Russia's best hope to blunt sanctions, but wary," Associated Press News, February 26, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-vladimir-putin-business-china-beijing-0cddeb31f04748a3de8f36b5cd1ac7df>, accessed on March 7, 2022.

Ukraine Question. But the open-source information available suggests that then-President Joseph Biden and his top foreign policy team have taken few effective measures to reduce Russia's existential concern on NATO expansion to Ukraine, instead having continuously turned away it as a matter of principle, while having urged China bilaterally behind the scenes to help avert the invasion,²⁷⁾ despite deepening U.S.-China hegemonic rivalry.

Connecting these dots, there is no wonder that President Putin would construe the invasion to be overlooked before Ukraine would become a NATO member state, more bluntly, as a periphrastic acquiescence for invasion. In contemporary times, there are some notable precedents in which the U.S. government made formal statements to put a victim country outside the line of defense, prompting the aggressor country to sweep away the sense of hesitation, such as the Korean War, the First Taiwan Crisis, and the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait. (Whether those U.S. moves were purposeful or inadvertent is arguable and require detailed analyses.)

Contrarily, the Biden administration took some specific measures that would precipitate Russia's invasion, under the condition of its tenacious policy line on NATO expansion to Ukraine and of continued support for its pro-U.S. government bent on NATO accession, together with significant arms transfers and the related military training.²⁸⁾ More specifically, just for three to four months prior to the invasion, the Biden administration

27) The U.S made some good bilateral diplomatic approach to China behind the scenes, with the hope that it would dissuade Russia from invading Ukraine. See, Edward Wong, "U.S. officials repeatedly urged China to help avert war in Ukraine," *New York Times*, February 25, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/25/us/politics/us-china-russia-ukraine.html>, accessed on March 7, 2022.

28) "Ukrainian military live-fires US Javelin anti-tank missiles in Donbass for first time-TV," TASS, December 23, 2021, https://tass.com/world/1379343?utm_source=search.yahoo.co.jp&utm_medium=organic&utm_campaign=search.yahoo.co.jp&utm_referrer=search.yahoo.co.jp, accessed on March 7, 2022. Elias Yousif,

openly made substantial deliveries of arms to Ukraine, including 180 portable lethal Javelin anti-tank missiles, as well as many portable Stinger anti-air missiles that once harassed Soviet invasion forces in Afghanistan (1979-1989) and ultimately compelled them to make an embarrassing retreat therefrom.²⁹⁾ The move was revealingly significant because then-President Obama flatly rejected providing Ukraine with Javelins due to high risks of provocation and escalation,³⁰⁾ that then-Vice President Biden, who took primary charge of Ukraine's affairs, implored him. Evidently, he dared to commit the well-acquainted risks at the pre-crisis stage in which there was still some good room for diplomatic negotiation, as long as he would be ready to put the issue of NATO expansion on the table. (Despite heavy doses of praise and censure, if with opportunities, first-term President Donald Trump would surely have attempted to make a grand deal through summit meetings and other direct personal initiatives with Presidents Putin and Zelensky.)

It begs the question of why both the United States and Ukraine adhered rigidly to the policy line on NATO expansion to Ukraine at the time of the clear and impending danger of war.

3. Ukraine's Institutionalized Intransigence Toward NATO Accession

After the Maidan Revolution of 2014, Ukraine steadily embedded its

"U.S. Military Assistance to Ukraine," Stimson Center, January 26, 2022, <https://www.stimson.org/2022/u-s-military-assistance-to-ukraine/>, accessed on March 7, 2022.

29) David E. Sanger and Eric Schmitt, "U.S. Costs of a Russia Invasion of Ukraine," *New York Times*, January 8, 2022, <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/08/us/politics/us-sanctions-russia-ukraine.html>, accessed on March 7, 2022.

30) Marc Thiessen, "Sorry, Joe: Team Obama refused to arm Ukraine at all," *New York Post*, October 9, 2019, <https://nypost.com/2019/10/09/sorry-joe-team-obama-refused-to-arm-ukraine-at-all/>, accessed on March 7, 2022. Melinda Haring, "Q&A: Ukraine's Got Javelins Now, So What?" *UkraineAlert*, April 30, 2018, <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/q-a-ukraine-s-got-javelins-now-so-what/>, accessed on March 7, 2022.

NATO accession policy firmly in its legal system, making the policy line irreversible over a change of government. This marks a stark departure from continual shifts between pro-Russia and pro-West external orientation, considerably hardening Russia's approach to Ukraine that already generated a remote cause of the current invasion.

More specifically, in June 2017, Ukraine amended its laws on national security and internal and external policy line through its legally-binding commitment to achieving its NATO membership.³¹⁾ In September 2018, the country's unicameral Legislature submitted a bill of constitutional amendments to the constitutional court, the preamble of which confirms European identity of the Ukrainian people. Article 85 of the bill empowers the Legislature to set the foundations of domestic and foreign policy and implement the state's strategic course for obtaining the country's full NATO as well as EU membership. Article 102 designates the President as the guarantor of the implementation. Article 116 requires the Cabinet of Ministers to ensure the implementation. Most offending from a Russian perspective is Clause 14 of Section 15 that makes it possible to lease existing military bases for temporary stationing of foreign military formations, in effect, with NATO forces in mind.³²⁾ In the following November, the court approved the amendment.

Apparently, the above hasty institutionalization during the Poroshenko's presidency (June 7, 2014-May 20, 2019) did not evolve intrinsically out of Ukrainian domestic political dynamics, in general given the active U.S. public diplomacy under Presidents G.W. Bush and Obama that pursued

31) Jaroslaw Adamowski, "Ukraine parliament restores NATO membership as strategic target," *Defense News*, June 10, 2017, <https://www.defensenews.com/global/europe/2017/06/09/ukraine-parliament-restores-nato-membership-as-strategic-target/>, accessed March 2, 2022.

32) "Ukraine's parliament backs changes to Constitution confirming Ukraine's path toward EU, NATO," UNIAN Information Agency, February 7, 2021, <https://www.unian.info/politics/10437570-ukraine-s-parliament-backs-changes-to-constitution-confirming-ukraine-s-path-toward-eu-nato.html>, accessed March 2, 2022.

liberal democratic enlargement, and in particular given significant maneuverings of the U.S. intelligence circles, both overt and covert, that led to the Maidan Revolution of 2014 in the context of a series of Color Revolutions.³³⁾ It is necessary to check if Joe Biden had notable involvements and, possibly, interferences in the transformation of Ukrainian politics.

4. Biden as a Wirepuller

Biden made six official visits to Ukraine during his U.S. Vice Presidency, as he took primary charge of Ukrainian affairs under the Obama administration. These visits underscored U.S. support for the country in the context of liberal democratic enlargement, and highlighted his personal involvement in providing the support.³⁴⁾ Already during his first visit of July 2009, Biden reassured the Ukrainian government of U.S. support for Ukraine's bid for NATO membership as well as for its lower dependency on Russia for energy.³⁵⁾ He reinforced his rhetoric for the support, considerably and increasingly, before and after the Maidan Revolution,³⁶⁾ to the extent that the Ukrainians would vainly expect U.S. military intervention in the event of Russia's aggression.

33) The operation arms include the National Endowment for Democracy, International Republican Institute, National Democratic Institute and Freedom House. See, Ian Traynor, "US campaign behind the turmoil in Kiev," *Guardian*, November 26, 2004, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2004/nov/26/ukraine.usa>, accessed on March 2, 2022.

34) Rob Crilly, "Joe Biden visited Ukraine six times in eight years while vice president," *Washington Examiner*, October 10, 2019, <https://www.washingtonexaminer.com/news/1961933/joe-biden-visited-ukraine-six-times-in-eight-years-while-vice-president/>, accessed on June 29, 2025.

35) "Ukraine: Events of 2009," *World Report*, Human Right Watch, 2010, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2010/country-chapters/ukraine>, accessed on March 2, 2022.

36) Crilly, *op.cit.* Remarks to the Press by Vice President Joe Biden and Ukrainian Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk, April 22, 2014, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2014/04/22/remarks-press-vice-president-joe-biden->

The records attest to Biden's extensive contacts with Ukraine's political and business circles. These contacts led to building substantial interpersonal networks that gave him opportunities for political maneuvering and then significant power and influence over them, particularly because the Obama administration pledged to provide the country with significant military and economic aids as well as to actively promote U.S.-led West's investment in the energy sector, under the conditions of implementation of democratic, judiciary and economic reforms. This involved elimination of corruption,³⁷⁾ post-Soviet oligarchs, other Soviet legacies and overall Russia's dominant influence from Ukraine.

In fact, Biden exercised his power on Ukrainian politics to replace then-Prosecutor General Shokin for his failure to work on anti-corruption efforts, by dangling suspension of the U.S. financial package in front of the Ukraine government. This is highly controversial because Hunter Biden, a son of the then-Vice President, was strongly suspected to be involved in a corruption scandal as related to Burisma Holdings, the largest private oil and gas extracting company in Ukraine. The Vice President always took the son with him on his official visits to Ukraine, while the son served as a board member of the company with the monthly salary of \$50,000 dollars.³⁸⁾

and-ukrainian-prime-minister-arse, accessed on March 2, 2022. Remarks by Vice President Joe Biden to the Ukrainian Rada, December 9, 2015, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2015/12/09/remarks-vice-president-joe-biden-ukrainian-rada>., accessed on March 2, 2022. Remarks by Vice President Joe Biden With Ukrainian President Petro Poroshenko, January 17, 2017, <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2017/01/17/remarks-vice-president-joe-biden-ukrainian-president-petro-poroshenko>, accessed on March 2, 2022.

37) Transparency International's Corruption Perception Index ranks Ukraine as 120th out 180 countries. See: <https://www.transparency.org/en/countries/ukraine>, accessed on March 2, 2022.

38) Viola Gienger and Ryan Goodman, "Timeline: Trump, Giuliani, Biden, and Ukrainegate," Just Security, January 31, 2020, <https://www.justsecurity.org/66271/timeline-trump-giuliani-bidens-and-ukrainegate/>, accessed on March 2, 2022.

It is beyond the scope of this analysis to examine if the case constitutes a simple adult-child's scandal in which his father is mired³⁹⁾ or a grand father-son conspiracy to corruption.

Obviously, President Biden had been a protagonist in U.S. policy toward Ukraine that had led Ukraine to solidify its NATO accession policy through constitutional amendment, yet without making necessary military commitments to the defense of Ukraine. Despite his seemingly solid support for Ukraine, President Biden left Ukrainian President Zelensky at the altar at the critical moment of Russia's aggression.

5. Biden's Role from a Bird-Eye Perspective: U.S. Hegemonic Decline

To understand the direct root cause, it is essential to grasp Biden's role in the macro-historical dynamics of world politics, rather than to ascribe it to his own free will.

For two decades, the United States had faced rapid China's rise involving its relative hegemonic decline, as marked by President Obama's well-known remarks of September 2013 that the United States was no longer the world's policeman. The decline had been seriously compounded by an imperial overstretch under the condition of growing economic structural vulnerabilities consequent on hyper-dynamic globalization.

Naturally, there had emerged a deeply entrenched divide among the American elites and the public alike, regarding whether to continue or discontinue the hegemonic policy line. The globalist establishment liked continuing the line that would worsen U.S. industrial hollow-outs and socio-economic bipolarization. Notably, the birth of Donald Trump's presidency (2017-2021) demonstrated the rise of anti-globalist counterforces in

39) Glenn Thrush and Kenneth P. Vogel, "What Joe Biden Actually Did in Ukraine," *New York Times*, November 10, 2019, <https://www.nytimes.com/2019/11/10/us/politics/joe-biden-ukraine.html>, accessed on March 2, 2022.

American politics that challenged the hegemonic line toward multipolarity in tandem with “America First.”

With this backdrop, the Russia Question was on top priority agenda, at least for anti-globalist tactical purposes, even in the prelude stage of the 2017 presidential election campaign, because diplomatic alignment with Russia was thought essential to utilize the country as a major strategic counter-weight against China, or a prime rival in the making. This involved the necessity of deemphasizing strong American antagonism against Russia and making a deal with it to form a common front against China or at least its benevolent neutrality toward the United States. On the other hand, the globalists pursued a policy of the antagonism against Russia, while maintaining the status quo under globalization, including the strong interdependence with China,

No wonder, the globalists vainly cooked up the so-called “Russiagate” to impeach President Trump. Having confronted intense counter-offensives of the globalist establishment, he was forced to have removed his first National Security Advisor, Gen. Michael Flynn, at the initial phase of the “Russiagate” after less than a month since the appointment. Mired in the fabricated scandal, therefore, the President appeased the establishment by appointing Gen. Herbert McMaster and then John Bolton to the post, both of whom continued the longtime anti-Russia approach while taking a competitive and then confrontational approach to China, which had made Trump’s China strategy less effective than otherwise. Also, the Trump administration’s first Secretary of State was Rex Tillerson who had extensive expertise on Russia and contacts with Russian leaders through his lifelong career in the energy sector, including a former CEO of the Exxon Mobil Corporation. He could have been instrumental for Trump’s Russia policy, but only replaced by Michael Pompeo after 13 months because Tillerson took a strong anti-Russia policy position.

Thus, it was considered that, should President Trump have been

reelected for the second term, he would have adopted at least a partially accommodative approach to Russia in a way to enable formation of a common front against China, with efforts to abandon the longtime hegemonic policy toward multipolarity. This would certainly involve making a deal with Russia to maintain regional stability centered on Ukraine, by transforming the country into a buffer state such as a neutral state or a Finlandized state. In doing so, it would have been possible to strike more favorable terms than those to be set possibly by a catastrophic Ukraine's defeat in the current war with Russia.

Evidently, the Russia-Ukraine war has been consequent on the globalist mismanagement of the U.S. hegemonic decline in which President Biden had continually played a central role for more than a decade, in the geopolitical context that constrains the possible scope of outcomes. Nonetheless, what triggered President Putin to commit the unspeakable act of aggression against Ukraine remains a mystery for years to come as other major wars in world history. For the time being, moral repugnancy to the aggression and consequential humanitarian calamity hamper a coolheaded analysis.

Chapter 4

Unmasking War Propaganda against Russian Aggression: An Investigative Approach

Since its unprovoked military aggression against Ukraine, Russia continuously inundated the world with misinformation and disinformation in efforts to justify its military operations and claim its strict observance of the rules of warfare. Unsurprisingly, many of these efforts were often penetrated due to the poor and blatant construction exposed by the mainstream Western mass media that perhaps interacted closely with the intelligence circles.

But this hardly means that Western governments and the mass media were bona fide disseminators of war information that was free from distortion and manipulation. This is because, in the modern and contemporary history of war, government propaganda is commonplace. It is instrumental to mobilize, sustain and strengthen domestic and international support for war efforts, particularly when magnified by mass media. An underdog country can use such propaganda to enhance justification for international support, especially through provision of weapons, ammunition, logistics and, if feasible, reinforcements, to complement its inferior war capability, as well as economic sanction against the top dog country. On the other hand, the latter can employ such propaganda to enhance popular morale and supplement resource mobilization capacity.

In fact, Western government war propaganda and the mainstream mass media reports established a predominant international opinion favoring Ukraine as the innocent underdog⁴⁰. This is particularly because numerous

40) Despite the image of an innocent victim, Ukraine continually played a

video footage lively covered massive exoduses of Ukrainian women and children to neighboring countries, missile bombardment and other forms of shelling against urban residential areas, and vivid images of killed and injured noncombatants as well as combatants, among others. Unfortunately, timely open-source information on evolving operational and tactical realities was limited, partial, unbalanced and/or, biased, possibly with intentional distortions and manipulations. Yet, the reports seemed to prove atrocities committed by the Russian invasion forces, demonizing these forces and President Vladimir Putin at the levels of *jus ad bellum* and *jus in bello*.

Yet, war propaganda becomes unpalatable and ineffective, especially when detached from evolving battlefield realities. Until then, war propaganda surely hampers cool-headed analysis and appropriate policy prescription on how to end a war, while unnecessarily protracting warfare involving a significantly higher death toll and further destruction.

In this light, this chapter will cast some different light on the validity of the widely recognized facts and discourse in mainstream Western mass media. The first *jus in bello* cases are about Western allegation of atrocities committed by the Russian side against Ukrainian non-combatants, particularly under the condition of extremely fierce urban and suburban warfare in the cities of Mariupol and Bucha. The second *jus ad bellum* case is about Russian allegation of U.S.-assisted biological weapon R&D in Ukraine. These cases are particularly important because most of Western news and reports flatly turned down Russian counterparts as

disturbing role to Asian and international security, particularly because it sold an ex-Soviet aircraft carrier, Varyag, as scrap to China, that was already repaired and commissioned as the country's first aircraft carrier, Liaoning; and because Ukraine did not effectively banned outflows of ballistic missile technologies to North Korea that significantly contributed to the development of its nuclear weapon programs. William J. Broad and David E. Sanger, "North Korea's Missile Success Is Linked to Ukrainian Plant, Investigators Say," *New York Times*, August 14, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/14/world/asia/north-korea-missiles-ukraine-factory.html>, accessed on April 10, 2022.

misinformation and disinformation, without any serious examination. Certainly, the current author of this monograph does not enjoy any privileged access to classified information but only to open sources. Yet, careful cross-examination of open-source materials, including Russian and alternative media sources, may make it possible to identify blind assumptions and invalid judgements in the dominant Western discourse, if not to present correct facts and cogent judgements.

1 . The Mariupol Case

1) The Context

Ukrainian President Zelensky stated in his on-line speech of March 23, 2022 to the Japanese Diet that several thousand Ukrainian civilians, including 121 children, had been killed, together with nine millions refugees and internally displaced civilians.⁴¹⁾ This unexpectedly low level of death toll may indicate that Russian invasion forces exercised certain self-restraint in attacking civilians, except collateral damage.

In fact, Douglas Macgregor,⁴²⁾ a retired U.S. Army Colonel and a Senior Advisor to Acting Secretary of Defense Christopher Miller, stated that, despite the strong impression generated by the repeated exposure to video footage, President Putin strictly ordered from the outset of the war to avoid killing civilians and destroying urban areas as much as possible.⁴³⁾

41) Ukrainian President Zelensky's speech to the Japanese Diet, *Japan Forward*, March 24, 2022, <https://japan-forward.com/read-the-full-speech-by-president-of-ukraine-volodymyr-zelenskyy-to-japans-national-diet/>, accessed on April 10, 2022.

42) Steve Benen, "Why a former Trump appointee's pro-Russia rhetoric matters," MSNBC, March 1, 2022, <https://www.msnbc.com/rachel-maddow-show/maddowblog/former-trump-appointees-russia-rhetoric-matters-rena-17957>, accessed on April 10, 2022.

43) Tyler Stone, "Macgregor: Washington Wants War To Continue As Long As Possible In Hopes To Overthrow Putin," *Real Clear Politics*, March 16, 2022, https://www.realclearpolitics.com/video/2022/03/16/macgregor_washington_wants_war_to_continue_as_long_as_possible_in_hopes_to_overthrown_putin.html.

This is consistent with his historical outlook on the triune Russian national identity – White, Little and Great Russians (respectively, Belarussians, Ukrainians and Russians), characterized by strong historical unity and brotherhood.⁴⁴⁾ Naturally, it begs the question of why the Russian forces killed many Ukrainian civilians and severely destroyed urban residential areas in Ukraine, involving an inscrutable disjunction between Putin’s own creed and practice.

Extremely fierce urban warfare, especially in the City of Mariupol, was a natural consequence of the stark disparity of Russian and Ukrainian military power, to which both sides even introduced foreign volunteer fighters and mercenaries.⁴⁵⁾ With its overwhelming superiority, the Russian invasion forces neutralized a significant portion of main high-end platforms, assets and on-ground facilities of the Ukrainian armed forces at the initial stage of the war, including air superiority fighters, major battle tanks and the command & control systems.⁴⁶⁾ This is consistent with numerous video

“Former top Pentagon advisor Doug Macgregor on Russia-Ukraine war,” https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NFnge_8RiVc. His statement is faithfully recorded in: “American military expert explains ‘slow’ Russian advance in Ukraine,” RT, March 16, 2022, <https://www.rt.com/russia/552098-ukraine-speed-operations-civilians/>. accessed on April 10, 2022.

44) Vladimir Putin, “On the Historical Unity of Russians and Ukrainians,” July 12, 2021, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/66181>, accessed on April 10, 2022.

45) Will Fyfe, “Ukraine: Private militias recruiting former soldiers,” BBC News, March 10, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-60676720>, accessed on April 10, 2022; “Russia claims to kill ‘180 foreign mercenaries’ in strike on western Ukraine,” *Time of Israel*, March 13, 2022, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/russia-claims-missile-strike-in-western-ukraine-killed-180-foreign-mercenaries/>, accessed on April 10, 2022; Mari Saito and Elaine Lies, “Dozens volunteer to fight for Ukraine in pacifist Japan,” *Japan Times*, March 2, 2022, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2022/03/02/national/japan-volunteers-ukraine/>, accessed on April 10, 2022; and, Jack Losh, “Putin Resorts to Syrian Mercenaries in Ukraine. It’s Not the First Time,” *Foreign Policy*, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2022/03/25/russia-war-syrian-mercenaries-car-ukraine/>, accessed on April 10, 2022.

46) Luke MacGee, “How long can Ukraine hold out in the war for the skies?” CNN, March 18, 2022, <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/03/17/europe/air-superiority-ukraine-russia-intl-cmd/index.html>, accessed on April 10, 2022.

footage available in public domain that primarily captures Ukrainian infantry operations with portable anti-tank missiles for close combat and low-altitude anti-air missiles, while few high-end platforms are visible. In fact, the Russian Defense Ministry said that, soon after the start of the war, the Russian forces totally destroyed Ukrainian Air Force combat aircraft while some of them escaped to Poland and Romania.⁴⁷⁾ Reportedly, the Russia forces destroyed 974 Ukrainian tanks and other armored vehicles just for the first three weeks.⁴⁸⁾ No wonder, MacGregor judged that the Ukrainian until, still active, "(were) completely surrounded, cut off and isolated in various town and cities", with supplies likely running out soon.⁴⁹⁾ Ukrainian infantry and special operation forces in Mariupol were cornered without reinforcements nor air cover. An Azov Battalion commander there vainly urged the U.S.-led NATO to make armed intervention against Russia, especially to set an effective no-fly zone over Ukraine, while attributing a grave humanitarian crisis in the making to Russia.⁵⁰⁾

2) Who attacked the maternity hospital and the drama theater ?

The Ukrainian government strongly condemned Russia for its military attack against a maternity hospital in Mariupol on March 17, 2022,⁵¹⁾ which

47) Joseph P Chacko, "Ukrainian Airforce combat aircraft totally destroyed, some escaped to Poland and Romania, says Russia," *Frontier India*, March 7, 2022, <https://frontierindia.com/ukrainian-airforce-combat-aircraft-totally-destroyed-some-escaped-to-poland-and-romania-says-russia/>, accessed on April 10, 2022.

48) "Russia says it destroyed 974 Ukrainian tanks and armoured vehicles -TASS," Reuters, March 9, 2022, <https://jp.reuters.com/article/ukraine-crisis-russia-tanks/russia-says-it-destroyed-974-ukrainian-tanks-and-armoured-vehicles-tass-idUSP4N2HB01U>, accessed on April 10, 2022.

49) "Former top Pentagon advisor Doug Macgregor on Russia-Ukraine war," *op. cit.*, accessed on April 10, 2022.

50) "Official appeal of Azov commander, the major Denis Prokopenko, to the world community," March 7, 2022, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dZ8KFqQWRbY>, accessed on April 10, 2022.

51) "Mariupol hospital attack: Pregnant woman hurt in bombing gives birth," BBC, March 11, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60715492>, accessed on April 10, 2022.

injured 17 people including women, children and doctors, with at least five of them dead thereafter.⁵²⁾ But Russian Foreign Minister Lavrov justified the attack because an Azov Battalion unit turned the hospital to a combat base,⁵³⁾ claiming the victims as unavoidable and lawful collateral damage. Surprisingly, the pregnant woman on spotlight in the reports later disclosed that Ukrainian soldiers used the hospital as base while holding these civilians as human shield against Russian forces, suggesting that the incident was an act of self-destruct and a false flag operation by the Ukraine's side.⁵⁴⁾ This is compatible with other fragmentary video footage that capture how Ukrainian civilians in Mariupol have been used as human shield⁵⁵⁾ and prevented from leaving the city.⁵⁶⁾

Also, the Ukrainian government alleged, echoed aloud by major Western mass media, that, on March 16, 2022, a Russian airstrike dropped a powerful bomb on the Mariupol Drama Theater sheltering some 1,300 local residents, including women and children, and despite large signs of “children” that were clearly visible from aircraft. Reportedly, the death toll reached at least to 300.⁵⁷⁾ The Russian government flatly denied the allegation and instead accused the Azov Battalion, a far-right Ukrainian

52) Katie Polglase, Gianluca Mezzofiore and Livvy Doherty, “Anatomy of the Mariupol hospital attack,” CNN Special Report, March 17, 2022, <https://edition.cnn.com/interactive/2022/03/europe/mariupol-maternity-hospital-attack/index.html>, accessed on April 10, 2022.

53) *Ibid.*

54) An interview with Marianna Vyshemirskaya, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AWn6I8cCAug>, accessed on April 10, 2022.

55) https://mobile.twitter.com/j_sato/status/1507201492326838273, accessed on April 10, 2022.

56) <https://twitter.com/stillgray/status/1504758870635597831>, accessed on April 10, 2022.

57) “Historic Theater Sheltering Mariupol Civilians Hit By Air Strike, Number Of Casualties Unknown,” Radio Free Europe, March 16, 2022, <https://www.rferl.org/a/ukraine-mariupol-theater-destroyed-strike/31756641.html>, accessed on April 10, 2022. Tim Stelloh, “Satellite images show apparent devastation, hunger in Mariupol,” NBC News, March 30, 2022, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/satellite-images-show-apparent-devastation-hunger-mariupol-rcna-22119>, accessed on April 10, 2022.

militia, of blowing up the theater building. This is compatible with the interview of a 17-year-old female survivor of the incident with the Abkhazian Network News Agency, who eye-witnessed Azov soldiers hiding themselves behind civilian hostages in the building.⁵⁸⁾

More specifically, a Russian military spokesman stated that Azov Battalion units held civilian hostages in the theater building as human shields, using the upper floor as firing points. This means that the Russian attack aimed at these units, involving significant civilian casualties due to collateral damage during the engagement.⁵⁹⁾ This is a plausible account on what happened, particularly given the very similar circumstances of the above hospital case.

It is now crucially important to inquire as to what the Azov Battalion is all about and if the troop has the established notoriety of committing such atrocities.

3) The Azov Battalion⁶⁰⁾

The Azov Battalion was a part of the Ukrainian National Guard, which was the country's gendarmerie under the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Its name originates from the fact that it had been based in Mariupol located in the Azov Sea coastal region, since 2014, first as a volunteer militia that fought against Russian separatist forces in the Donbas War and later in

58) Max Blumenthal, "Was bombing of Mariupol theater staged by Ukrainian Azov extremists to trigger NATO intervention?" Monthly Review Online, March 22, 2022, <https://mronline.org/2022/03/22/was-bombing-of-mariupol-theater-staged-by-ukrainian-azov-extremists-to-trigger-nato-intervention>, accessed on April 10, 2022.

59) "Ukraine backtracks on Mariupol theater claims," RT, March 18, 2022, <https://www.rt.com/russia/552266-mariupol-theater-civilians-survived/>, accessed on April 10, 2022.

60) There are at least several major pro-Ukraine and pro-Russian militias, including those similar to the Azov Battalion. This chapter focuses primarily on the Azov as a typical example due the limited analytical purpose. Mitch Ruhl, "Paramilitary Forces in Ukraine: Matches to a Powder Keg," *Small Wars Journal*, February 21, 2022, <https://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/paramilitary-forces-ukraine-matches-powder-keg>, accessed on April 10, 2022.

the same year incorporated into the National Guard while expanded in scale into a regiment. As Russia labels it as neo-Nazis, it in fact uses controversial symbols resembling the Nazis SS *Wolfsangel*, though it denies any connection with Nazism.⁶¹⁾ Yet, in 2015, an Azov spokesman disclosed 10-20% of units consisted of neo-Nazis members.⁶²⁾ The concern over the Azov is serious enough to the extent that the U.S. Congress enacted a legislative measure, Consolidated Appropriation Bill of 2018, to ban military aids to the paramilitary due to its white supremacist ideology and neo-Nazism.⁶³⁾

The Azov has faced serious allegations of committing torture and war crimes, including the grossly under-investigated case of the 2014 Odessa Clashes in which some 50 pro-Russia separatists were killed.⁶⁴⁾ In fact, the U.N. Human Rights Office of High Commissioner published reports that connect the Azov Battalion to war crimes such as mass looting, unlawful detention, and torture.⁶⁵⁾ Clearly, Russia's counter-allegations on the above atrocities in Mariupol are at least compatible with an established

61) "Profile: Who are Ukraine's far-right Azov regiment?" Aljazeera, March 1, 2022, <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/3/1/who-are-the-azov-regiment>, accessed on April 10, 2022.

62) Oren Dorell, "Volunteer Ukrainian unit includes Nazis," *USA Today*, March 01, 2015, <https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/world/2015/03/10/ukraine-azov-brigade-nazis-abuses-separatists/24664937/>, accessed on April 10, 2022.

63) Rebecca Kheel, "Congress bans arms to Ukraine militia linked to neo-Nazism," *Hill*, March 27, 2018, <https://thehill.com/policy/defense/380483-congress-bans-arms-to-controversial-ukrainian-militia-linked-to-neo-nazis/>, accessed on April 10, 2022.

64) Roman Goncharenko, "The Odessa file: What happened on May 2, 2014?" *Deutsche Welle*, May 2, 2015, <https://www.dw.com/en/the-odessa-file-what-happened-on-may-2-2014/a-18425200>, accessed on April 10, 2022.

65) "Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine 16 November 2015 to 15 February 2016," Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, February 2016, https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Countries/UA/Ukraine_13th_HRMMU_Report_3March2016.pdf, accessed on April 10, 2022; and, "Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine 16 February to 15 May 2016," Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, May 2016, https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Countries/UA/Ukraine_14th_HRMMU_Report.pdf, accessed on April 10, 2022.

understanding on Azov's behavioral pattern connected to war crimes.

Actually, Russia's emphasis and Western de-emphasis on the Azov Battalion is obscurely central to their intensified exchanges of war propaganda and counter-propaganda, on the ground that the paramilitary constituted a major U.S instrument of covert military intervention in Russia-Ukraine armed conflict. More specifically, the CIA had a secret advisory and training program for Ukrainian paramilitaries and militias, most probably including the Azov, for eight years until shortly before the start of the current war, despite the aforementioned legislative ban. The CIA has had training centers in the United States and eastern Ukraine for sniper techniques,⁶⁶⁾ anti-tank missile handling, covert communications, and other tactics necessary for insurgency and counter-insurgency.⁶⁷⁾ Thus, the issue of the Azov Battalion cannot simply be reduced to the question of war crimes, but can only be fully comprehended in the context of the U.S.-Russia proxy war over the Donbas region that is central to NATO expansion to Ukraine and determination of their spheres of interest.

2. The Bucha Case

A similar suspicion of war propaganda is not easily excludable, with a focus on the atrocities allegedly committed by the Russian armed forces against local Ukrainian civilians in the city of Bucha. Major Western governments and the mainstream mass media have condemned, with strongest terms, the unspeakable atrocities against local Ukrainian civilians on the way of retreat after hard battles to vainly capture Kiev. However, on March 31, 2022, when the Russian forces left the city, its

66) Ben Tobias, "War in Ukraine: Fourth Russian general killed – Zelensky," BBC News, March 16, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60767664>, accessed on April 10, 2022.

67) Zach Dorfman, "CIA-trained Ukrainian paramilitaries may take central role if Russia invade," *Yahoo News*, January 14, 2022, <https://www.yahoo.com/news/cia-trained-ukrainian-paramilitaries-may-take-central-role-if-russia-invades-185258008.html>, accessed on April 10, 2022.

mayor did not at all mention of the atrocities in an interview with a Ukrainian on-line news site,⁶⁸⁾ which is compatible with his bright expression in a selfie video taken on the same day.⁶⁹⁾ On April 2, when Ukrainian army forces entered the city to make sure of a complete retreat of the Russian forces, the video footage by a local news media captured no corpse on roads and no sign of emotional distress among the local population. On April 1, Azov Battalion troops entered the city,⁷⁰⁾ and on April 3, the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense released video footage as evidence of the atrocities committed by the Russian forces, which neither the New York Times nor the Pentagon was independently able to verify the assertion of the Ministry.⁷¹⁾ In addition, in the U.N. Security Council, the United States and the United Kingdom blocked Russia's proposal to send an independent fact-finding mission to Ukraine.⁷²⁾

Thus, it appears possible that the Azov Battalion fabricated or purposefully committed at least some parts of the “atrocities” by itself.⁷³⁾ More specifically, to differentiate which camp they belong, pro-Ukraine and pro-Russian civilians wore blue or white armbands respectively. Many corpses in Bucha wore white armbands as in video footage available. The

68) “Bucha liberated from Russian invaders – mayor,” UKRINFORM, April 1, 2022, <https://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-ato/3445989-bucha-liberated-from-russian-invaders-mayor.html>, accessed on April 10, 2022.

69) https://twitter.com/j_sato/status/1510943234129682432.

70) “Scenes of desperation and death as the Russians retreat from suburbs outside Kyiv,” *New York Times*, April 2, 2022, 10:27 p.m. ET, <https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/04/03/world/ukraine-russia-war>, accessed on April 10, 2022.

71) Anushka Patil, April 3, 2022, 7:03 pm ET, *Ibid*. “Pentagon can't independently confirm atrocities in Ukraine's Bucha, official say,” Reuters, April 5, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/pentagon-cant-independently-confirm-atrocities-ukraines-bucha-official-says-2022-04-04/?fbclid=IwAR1rCp3Z1FlmsyaJhHP3L8roWIyS8OrFiOoDW2pVIwVzqoNPMblxw7THUDg>, accessed on April 10, 2022.

72) “Russia calls Security Council meeting over Bucha,” RT, April 3, 2022, <https://www.rt.com/russia/553242-bucha-un-security-council/>, accessed on April 10, 2022.

73) “Russia and Ukraine trade accusations over Bucha civilian deaths (TIMELINE),” RT, April 4, 2022, <https://www.rt.com/russia/553274-bucha-war-crimes-allegations/>, accessed on April 10, 2022.

Azov and/or other ultra-right militia units may have committed the atrocities out of emotional impulse, while the mass media and propaganda section of the Ukrainian Ministry of Internal Affairs may have made up the scene to impute responsibilities of war crime to the Russian invasion forces.⁷⁴⁾ It should be reminded that the war has the dimension of ethnic conflict as well as that of inter-state war.

Given the leading role of BBC reports on this matter with the analysis of a satellite image, this begs the question of if the U.K. intelligence circles were engaged in elaborate war propaganda against Russia to mislead and manipulate other major Western governments and mass media.⁷⁵⁾

3. The Case of Biological Weapon R&D

Possession of weapon of mass destruction by a revisionist power may constitute a *casus belli* of a status quo power, particularly when the latter sees the former's move as an existential or serious threat against its vital national interests. Yet, legitimatizing a war has to satisfy some procedural requirements according to international law with presentation of solid evidence to the international society.

In this light, Russia's allegation of Ukraine's nuclear weapon programs is not tenable at all as Russia's *casus belli* due to its abrupt aggression against Ukraine without having presented any substantial evidence of them.⁷⁶⁾ Also, there is little significant related information in public domain,

74) "If you are living in Bucha, please use blue arm band. don't use white arm band like Russian," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SFZar6DXDIY>, accessed on April 10, 2022; Nick Griffin, "MSM's Bucha Tall Tale," *Sputnik International*, April 5, 2022, <https://sputniknews.com/20220405/msms-bucha-tall-tale-109450450.html>, accessed on April 10, 2022.

75) "Bucha killings: Satellite image of bodies site contradicts Russian claims," BBC News, April 6, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/60981238>, accessed on April 10, 2022.

76) "Russia, without evidence, says Ukraine making nuclear 'dirty bomb'," Reuters, March 6, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russia-without-evidence->

though Ukraine has active nuclear power plants with some substantial potential to develop nuclear weapons as the country was part of the Soviet Union, a nuclear superpower.

But Russia's accusation of U.S.-assisted biological weapon R&D in Ukraine, as articulated with a trove of original documentation by Lieutenant-General Igor Kirillov, Commander of Nuclear, Biological and Chemical Protection Troop of the Russian Army,⁷⁷⁾ is not totally deniable but seems plausible with open-source information.⁷⁸⁾ Most remarkably, Victoria Nuland, then-U.S. Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs, admitted the existence of biolaboratories in Ukraine under the bilateral cooperative programs of the U.S. Defense Threat Reduction Agency during a hearing before the U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations,⁷⁹⁾ while the White House, the Pentagon and the State Department unequivocally denied U.S.-funded biological weapon laboratories in Ukraine.⁸⁰⁾ In addition, an official letter from an official in charge at the Ukrainian Ministry of Defense to a project manager of Black & Veatch, a DTRA contractor, attests to their significant collaborative research relationship, while another official letter from an official in charge at the DTRA office in Kiev to an official in charge at the Ukraine Ministry

says-ukraine-making-nuclear-dirty-bomb-2022-03-06/, accessed on April 10, 2022.

77) "US biological facilities in #ukraine #russia #war," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYzmIIYfx4g>, accessed on April 10, 2022.

78) More than a dozen of DTRA documents on biolabs in Ukraine are archived though they had been removed from the official website of the U.S. Embassy in Ukraine. For the hyperlinks to them, see, Silviu Costinescu, "US ran gruesome bioweapon research in over 25 countries. Wuhan, tip of an iceberg," June 3, 2021, <https://silview.media/2021/06/03/us-ran-greusome-bioweapon-research-in-over-25-countries-wuhan-tip-of-an-iceberg-ecohealth-alliance-implicated-again/>, accessed on April 10, 2022.

79) "What Victoria Nuland really said about biolaboratories in Ukraine," EURORADIO, March 13, 2022, <https://euroradio.fm/en/what-victoria-nuland-really-said-about-biolaboratories-ukraine>, accessed on April 10, 2022.

80) Ling Qiu "Theory about U.S.-funded bioweapons labs in Ukraine is unfounded," *New York Time*, March 12, 2022, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2022/03/12/world/ukraine-biolabs-media-claims/>. accessed on April 10, 2022.

Defense indicates their clear awareness of the potential usefulness of their research collaboration for biological weapon development.⁸¹⁾

Certainly, the Agency's Biological Threat Reduction Programs may serve bona fide statutory purposes, not designed to contribute to viruses and other biological weapon R&D. Yet, suspicion remains, given that the offense and defense of biological warfare is generally the head and tail of similar biological weapon technologies while there is no clear demarcation line between military and civil research in most advanced virus and other biological R&D that involves genetic manipulation. The lack of confidence in the sectoral culture had become worse because Anthony Fauci, then-Chief Medical Advisor to the President Biden, hid the fact before a Senate hearing that the EcoHealth Alliance, New York City-based nonprofit organization, funneled U.S. public funds to gain-of-function research on bat coronaviruses at China's Wuhan lab, making it feasible to bypass stringent domestic regulations and strict public eyes. The experiment is suspected to be potentially useful for biological weapon R&D, and a virus leak from the lab might have been a primary cause of the COVID-19 pandemic.⁸²⁾

4. Reflection

Hitherto, this investigative inquiry has cast significant doubt and suspicion on the established Western discourse that sided uncritically with Ukraine in its war against hyper-demonized Russia, almost exclusively on the basis of Western government war information and mass media reports, and without carefully checking Russian reports.

81) Ilya Tsukanov, "Russian MoD Names Curator of Pentagon-Funded Biolabs in Ukraine, Releases Original Docs," Sputnik International, March 17, 2022, <https://sputniknews.com/20220317/russia-believes-components-of-biological-weapons-were-created-in-ukraine---mod-1093960475.html>, accessed on April 10, 2022.

82) Emily Crane, "NIH admits US funded gain-of-function in Wuhan – despite Fauci's denials," *New York Post*, October 21, 2021, <https://nypost.com/2021/10/21/nih-admits-us-funded-gain-of-function-in-wuhan-despite-faucis-repeated-denials/#>, accessed on April 10, 2022.

Of course, Russia's unprovoked aggression against Ukraine is utterly indisputable, and a great number of innocent Ukrainian civilians have been killed in the current war, either in atrocity or collateral damage. But who killed how many civilians and in what ways is not self-evident as reported in the Western media, especially in the context of ethnic conflict and urban warfare as the world learnt from gross information manipulation in the former Yugoslavia ethnic conflict.⁸³⁾ It is increasingly necessary to check Western reports carefully against Russian ones, while verifying the authenticity of allegedly "original" U.S. documents on biolaboratories in Ukraine that were presented by the Russian government and mass media. The U.S. government will be accountable, if verified.

Inundated with propaganda and counter-propaganda both by the West and Russia day after day, both political leaders and the public in the West have suffered self-poisoning effect of the hyper-demonized image of Russia on making cool-headed policy analysis. It is high time that the Western governments and mainstream mass media recalibrate war propaganda and counter-propaganda, in view of the need to consider how to end the war and to keep diplomatic channels open with Russia that would most unlikely capitulate, given that it is a nuclear power coequal to the United States.

83) Shinya Watanabe, "The Influence of the Nation-State on Art : The Case of the Former Yugoslavian Countries," 2004, <http://www.shinyawatanabe.net/nationstate/thesis3.htm>, accessed on April 10, 2022.

Chapter 5

The Russia-Ukraine warfare as the final stage of U.S.-Russia proxy war in Donbas (2014-2022)

As of March 2023, after thirteen months since the outbreak of the Russia-Ukraine warfare, neither country would likely be able to achieve absolute victory,⁸⁴⁾ while confronting the daunting possibility of war protraction. Thus, it was high time to identify its root cause in search for an end to the warfare.

True, Russian's aggression against Ukraine is evident, but it is a result, rather than a cause, of the circumstances, as in the common saying "there is no smoke without fire." Given that Ukraine neither made an armed attack nor deliberated an imminent attack against Russia, its armed invasion seems to constitute a quintessential case of one nation-state's unprovoked aggression against another according to basic international law. Yet, Russian President Vladimir Putin has justified the invasion by invoking "the responsibility to protect", another international law principle. It is often applied to an ethnic conflict in an independent state that involves mass atrocity crimes, such as genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, and crimes against humanity, allowing another state (or states) to militarily intervene to stop these acts in the name of international community. Putin claims that the invasion forces have carried out a special military operation aimed to demilitarize and de-Nazify Ukraine and to stop

84) Samuel Charap and Miranda Priebe, "Avoiding a Long War: U.S. policy and the Trajectory of the Russian-Ukraine Conflict", Perspective – Expert Insights on a Timely Policy Issue, RAND, January 2023, <https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PEA2510-1.html>, accessed on March 22, 2023.

Ukraine's armed forces from committing mass atrocities in the Donbas.⁸⁵⁾ As Russia already recognized the independence of two former Donbas oblasts⁸⁶⁾ and concluded security treaties with them, the legal status of the armed conflict arguably changed from an internal to an inter-state one. After that, Putin may also justify the intervention by invoking the right of collective self-defense under Article 51 of the U.N. Charter.

Now, it is more essential than ever to grasp the context and circumstances of the Russian invasion in search of a settlement through diplomatic negotiation. This is because the evolving situation on battlefield seems to exclude the possibility of an early military solution of the armed conflict, given that it will surely be protracted due to the unflinching war efforts of Russia and Ukraine and to the sizable military assistance and economic sanctions of the U.S.-led West that support Ukraine. Yet, neither Western governments nor the mainstream mass media have provided adequate background information and analysis on which to judge Putin's claim and the justifiability of the invasion, while treating the invasion as a bolt from the blue. To fill in the gap, therefore, this chapter will inquire some crucial facts that have been missed or de-emphasized in the mainstream discourse on the warfare in Ukraine.

1. Ukraine's offensives against Donbas preceded

The start of Russia's aggression against Ukraine on February 24, 2022, was not at all a bolt from the blue, given that, for several days since

85) Andrew Osborn and Polina Nikolskaya, "Russia's Putin authorises 'special military operation' against Ukraine," Reuters, February 24, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russias-putin-authorises-military-operations-donbass-domestic-media-2022-02-24/>, accessed on March 22, 2023.

86) In fact, ridden with the Tibet, Xinjiang, and Inner Mongolia questions, China has neither recognized nor supported the move to the declaration of independence on the basis of national self-determination, even though China remains a critical factor for the West's anti-Russia approach to the Ukraine war to be successful.

February 16, Ukraine's armed forces had sharply intensified artillery shelling against the Russian-speaking Donbas region, as indicated by *Daily Reports* of the Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine of the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE).⁸⁷⁾ Evidently, this is an outright violation of the Minsk Agreement II of February 2015, a cease-fire agreement between the Ukrainian government and the Donbas separatist authorities that reflects the preceding negotiation among the then-top Ukrainian, Russian, Donbas, French, and German leaders. Apparently, Kiev made a politico-strategic decision regarding the offensive, in marked contrast to minor violations of tactical nature on frontline, such as skirmishes, that both sides had sporadically committed without such a decision. There is little wonder that the offensive gave Putin a good pretext to venture a "special military operation", at least against the region.⁸⁸⁾

Notably, Ukraine's military had planned the offensive well beforehand, given the necessity of munitions and other logistical stockpiles near the designated areas of offensive operation. More specifically, in March 2021, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky submitted the draft law on

87) Daily Report, February 17, 2022, https://www.osce.org/files/2022-02-17%20Daily%20Report_ENG.pdf?itok=21446, accessed on March 22, 2023; *Ibid*, February 21, 2022, https://www.osce.org/files/2022-02-20-21%20Daily%20Report_ENG.pdf?itok=82567, accessed on March 22, 2023; and, *Ibid*, February 22, 2022, https://www.osce.org/files/2022-02-22%20Daily%20Report_ENG.pdf?itok=63057. Jacques Baud, former Colonel of the Swiss Army, and former intelligence officer of the Swiss Strategic Intelligence Service, estimates the increase of shelling that is about 30 times as used to be. See, Rhoda Wilson, "Jacques Baud discusses Putin's demilitarization and de-Nazification of Ukraine," *Expose*. April 17, 2022, <https://expose-news.com/2022/04/17/putins-demilitarisation-and-denazification-of-ukraine/>, accessed on March 22, 2023. Jacques Baud, Table: Number of Explosion in Donbas (19-20 February 2022) in "The Road to War," *Postil Magazine*, July 1, 2022, <https://www.thepostil.com/author/jacques-baud/>, accessed on March 22, 2023.

88) Russia's special military operation outside the Donbas is unproportional to Ukraine's offensives and perhaps imprudent under international law, involving Putin's opportunism.

indigenous peoples of Ukraine to the National Legislature (Rada).⁸⁹⁾ which was adopted in early July of the year.⁹⁰⁾ Based on the law, the President authorized the “strategy for the de-occupation and reintegration of the temporarily occupied territory of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea and the City of Sevastopol”⁹¹⁾ and issued a decree for the recapture of the Crimea (No. 117/2021),⁹²⁾ involving a sizable deployment of Ukraine’s armed forces to the southern areas of the country bordering with the Donbas.

Of course, this move by Zelensky did not happen in vacuum, but out of the context of the protracted warfare in Donbas for eight years since Russia’s annexation of Crimea in 2014, as indicated by the OSCE Special Monitoring Mission to Ukraine that existed from March 21, 2014, to March 31, 2022.

2. The Ethnic Conflict in Donbas

The regional warfare in Donbas was consequent on intensification and expansion of the armed ethnic conflict between the Ukrainian government in Kiev and the Russian-speaking separatists across the country, especially in the Donbas where the Russian-speaking residents occupy a significant

89) “The Indigenous Bill: Why Russia Has Reacted Negatively to It. Experts explain,” *Suspilne Crimea*, June 21, 2021, <https://crimea.suspilne.media/en/articles/82>, accessed on March 22, 2023. For the text of the law draft, see, [https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL\(2004\)079-e](https://www.venice.coe.int/webforms/documents/default.aspx?pdffile=CDL(2004)079-e), accessed on March 10, 2023.

90) Ali Cura and Emre Gürkan Abay, “Ukraine’s parliament adopts law on indigenous peoples,” Anadolu Agency, July 2, 21, <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/europe/ukraine-s-parliament-adopts-law-on-indigenous-peoples/2291885>, accessed on March 10, 2023.

91) Kateryna Glyanko, “The main directions of the Strategy for the de-occupation of Crimea revealed,” *Suspilne Crimea*, March 14, 2022, <https://crimea.suspilne.media/en/news/3413>, accessed on March 10, 2023.

92) <http://www.ppu.gov.ua/en/sogodni-prezydent-ukrayiny-volodymyr-zelenskyj-pidpysav-ukaz-117-2021-vid-24-bereznya-2021-roku-pro-rishennya-rady-natsionalnoyi-bezpeky-i-oborony-ukrayiny-vid-11-bereznya-2021-roku-pro-strategiyu-deo/>, accessed on March 10, 2023.

majority of the total local population. In 2014, there were a series of mass protest demonstrations and riots in some Russian-speaking regions (Odessa, Dnepropetrovsk, Kharkov, Lugansk, and Donetsk), against the central government. The government used its security forces to repress the riots, while volunteer militia were actively engaged in atrocities against the Russian-speaking population.⁹³⁾

The conspicuous destabilization of domestic security was brought about by a major shift in cultural and language policy of the Ukrainian central government against the vital interests of the Russian-speaking population. In February 2014, the Ukrainian government abolished the Kivalov-Kolensnichenko Language Law of 2012 that granted the Russian language the status of a regionally official language,⁹⁴⁾ several days after the anti-riot laws restricting the freedom of speech and that of assembly were passed.⁹⁵⁾ The move is against the rule of thumb for managing an ethnic problem by granting full autonomy and self-government to a minority population within the framework of the sovereign state concerned, as demonstrated by the classical case of Italy's South Tyrol Autonomous Province.⁹⁶⁾

93) Roman Goncharenko, "The Odessa file: What happened on May 2, 2014?" Deutsche Welle, May 2, 2015, <https://www.dw.com/en/the-odessa-file-what-happened-on-may-2-2014/a-18425200>, accessed on March 10, 2023. "Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine 16 November 2015 to 15 February 2016," Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, February 2016, https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Countries/UA/Ukraine_13th_HRMMU_Report_3March2016.pdf, accessed on March 10, 2023; and, "Report on the human rights situation in Ukraine 16 February to 15 May 2016," Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, May 2016, https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Countries/UA/Ukraine_14th_HRMMU_Report.pdf, accessed on March 10, 2023.

94) Bogdan Pavliy, "The abolition of the 2012 language law in Ukraine: was it that urgent?" *Journal of the Faculty of Contemporary Society*, Toyama University of International Studies, 2014, No.6, <https://www.tuins.ac.jp/common/docs/library/2014gensha-PDF/2014-08pavliy.pdf>, accessed on March 10, 2023.

95) "Summary of laws adopted by the Ukrainian Parliament on 16 January 2014," Transparency International, January 17, 2014, <https://web.archive.org/web/20140121054645/http://ti-ukraine.org/news/4269.html>, accessed on March 10, 2023.

96) Masahiro Matsumura, "Handling the Ukraine Crisis: A Geopolitical

Naturally, Russia saw the move aggressive against the “Russian-speaking population” in Ukraine.⁹⁷⁾ With Russia’s understanding, therefore, the Russian-speaking population in Donbas dared to organized itself for protest demonstration, autonomy, and self-government, involving the strong potential to develop into an independence movement unless its demands were adequately accepted.

3. The U.S.-led West’s subversion and proxy war

The Maidan Revolution of 2014 necessitated the Ukrainian government to shift from its longtime pro-Russian to a pro-Western external orientation, and also marked a turning point toward protracted ethnic conflict in Donbas. These two seemingly separate phenomena are in fact the head and tail of the Donbas ethnic question because the region is a legal territory of Ukraine and an integral part of the arguably historical Novorossiya of the Russian Empire,⁹⁸⁾ in which the Russian-speaking residents constitute a significant majority of the region’s total population. Yet, the ethnic volatility there was only latent because the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic existed as a constituent republic of the Soviet Union, with little substantive political independence and power under a one-party system ruled by the Communist Party of Ukraine, a branch of the Communist Party of Soviet Union.⁹⁹⁾ Thus, the Republic’s secession

Perspective,” *IFIMES Research*, February 18, 2022, <https://www.ifimes.org/en/researches/handling-the-ukraine-crisis-a-geopolitical-perspective/4998?page=3>, accessed on March 10, 2023.

97) Tetyana Ogarkova, “The Truth Behind Ukraine’s Language Policy,” Kharkiv Human Rights Protection Group, March 13, 2018, <https://khpg.org/en/1520890100>, accessed on March 10, 2023.

98) Adam Taylor, “‘Novorossiya,’ the latest historical concept to worry about in Ukraine,” *Washington Post*, April 18, 2014, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wkp/2014/04/18/understanding-novorossiya-the-latest-historical-concept-to-get-worried-about-in-ukraine/>, accessed on March 10, 2023.

99) It has to be noted that the Ukrainian SSR as a Soviet quasi-state became a founding member of the United Nations and participated in many of its specialized agencies.

from the Union was unrealistic and practically infeasible until the debilitation and demise of the Union under Mikhail Gorbachev, despite the constitutional right to secede.

The birth of a pro-West Ukrainian government after the 2014 Revolution met U.S. hegemonic interests well because Russia would not be able to come back as a primary great power without Ukraine that possesses geopolitical, population, and economic significance.¹⁰⁰⁾ In fact, the Barak Obama administration intervened extensively and deeply in Ukrainian domestic politics of constitutional revision toward NATO accession in which then-Vice President Joe Biden played a primary role.¹⁰¹⁾

Also, to help Kiev throw its militia against Donbas separatist armed forces, the United States as well as the United Kingdom, Canada, France, Germany, and Poland, financed to form the Centuria Project to arm and train some 100,000 soldiers, with strong ties to Ukraine's far-right Azov movement.¹⁰²⁾ (The U.S. Congress enacted a legislative measure, Consolidated Appropriation Bill of 2018, to ban military aids to the Azov paramilitary due to its white supremacist ideology and neo-Nazism¹⁰³⁾.)

100) Matsumura, "Handling the Ukraine Crisis," *Ibid*.

101) Masahiro Matsumura, "Ukraine as Biden's Sacrificed Pawn: A Mismanagement under the Declining U.S. Hegemony," *IFIMES Research*, March 12, 2022, <https://www.ifimes.org/en/researches/ukraine-as-bidens-sacrificed-pawn-a-mism-anagement-under-the-declining-us-hegemony/5011>, accessed on March 10, 2023.

102) Jacques Baud, "NATO lies exposed! Former agent speaks out!" In *Defense of Marxism*, April 12, 2022, <http://www.marxist.com/nato-lies-exposed-former-agent-speaks-out.htm>, accessed on March 10, 2023; Oleksiy Kuzmenko, *Far-Right Group Made Its Home in Ukraine's Major Western Military Training Hub*, Occasional Paper No. 11, Transnational History of the Far Right Series, George Washington University Institute for European, Russia and Eurasian Studies, September 2021, <https://www.illiberalism.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/IERES-Papers-no-11-September-2021-FINAL.pdf>, accessed on March 10, 2023.

103) Rebecca Kheel, "Congress bans arms to Ukraine militia linked to neo-Nazism," *Hill*, March 27, 2018, <https://thehill.com/policy/defense/380483-congress-bans-arms-to-controversial-ukrainian-militia-linked-to-neo-nazis/>, accessed on March 10, 2023.

With the Cold War over, the Donbas issue merely constituted a potentially volatile ethnic question. Since its metamorphosis into a domestic armed conflict, it had become an intrinsically “civil war” within Ukraine. But it did not matter to the U.S.-led West without any vital security interests involved, although the contrary was the case for Russia. Nonetheless, the U.S.-led West had intervened there with persistent acts of anti-Russia subversion and proxy warfare, bringing Russia to bay to eventually commit the act of unprovoked aggression against Ukraine. It is natural that Russia fiercely resisted the U.S.-led West.

Since the West has imposed maximal economic sanctions short of direct military intervention while extending various military and financial assistance to Ukraine, Russia is intensely challenging the U.S.-led international order. The U.S.-Russia confrontation has fallen into a stalemate because the U.S. economic-financial hegemony greatly relies on the manufacturing power and supplies of natural resources and materials from the BRICS and the developing world, while they are not sided with the U.S.-led economic sanction against Russia. The negative spiral of the confrontation has dramatically raised U.S. stakes, unnecessarily transforming the confrontation into a grave continental-European security problem and then an increasingly global geostrategic and geoeconomic one.

4. Needed: a *realpolitik* approach to political settlement, not war propaganda

Hitherto, this chapter has examined, in reverse over time, major features of the backgrounds through which the warfare in Ukraine had evolved out, with a focus on the U.S.-led political interference and military intervention in Ukraine, and the Donbas in particular. The analysis has found that, in the prelude to the warfare, the U.S.-led West had successfully engineered continual subversion and a prolonged proxy war against Donbas separatist armed forces and the authorities, while having cornered Russia politico-strategically.

The above U.S.-led interference and intervention to Ukraine is nothing more than a commonplace affair in anarchical international politics. A strong state is assumed to maneuver aggrandizing its power and/or weakening its opponent. Some maneuvers are legitimate under international law, some in gray zones, and others illegitimate though great powers often employ dirty hands to one another.

With war propaganda increasingly intensified, however, the dominant Western international media has consistently deemphasized and often ignored the above *realpolitik* background, instead emphasized Russia's outright violation of international law regarding the unprovoked aggression against Ukraine and alleged acts of unspeakable atrocity. On the other hand, Russia counterpropaganda has been comparatively limited and less effective. It is unknown if this is because Russia is less capable of war propaganda or because Russia calculates that such propaganda will lead the West to a protracted warfare in Ukraine, which may harm the West and benefit Russia.¹⁰⁴⁾

Given that neither Ukraine nor Russia is able to achieve absolute victory in a foreseeable future, and that war protraction will not necessarily benefit the U.S.-led West,¹⁰⁵⁾ it is imperative to put an end to the warfare through diplomatic negotiation, hopefully a political settlement or at least an armistice. Evidently, now is high time for Ukraine, Russia, and the U.S.-led West to get emancipated from war propaganda and squarely face the *realpolitik* background as can be found over the prelude period to the warfare in Ukraine (2014-2022), involving a cool-headed geostrategic deal between the U.S. and Russia.

104) Charap, *op.cit.*

105) *Ibid.*

Chapter 6

Hindered: a frozen conflict in Ukraine¹⁰⁶⁾

The destruction of the Nova Kakhovka dam on June 6, 2023, evoked strong moral loathing against Russia, the alleged perpetrator, according to major Western international media, and considerably diminished momentum toward a frozen conflict in Ukraine. The incident spoiled the common understanding in the making across major Western countries that, given the prospect for further conflict protraction, a cessation of hostilities there is prerequisite to an eventual political settlement or at least a formal cease-fire.

1. The Attribution Problem

1) Conjecturing the motive at the operational and tactical levels

The questions of who perpetrated the destruction and which country is answerable for it remain undetermined and will be so without adequate hard evidence solely available at the scene, which is obtainable only after the warfare ends. Until then, it is merely feasible to speculate the perpetrator by conjecturing who and/or which country benefits most on the basis of circumstantial evidence. Certainly, Russia is a highly plausible perpetrator, given the strong confirmation bias against the country that committed unprovoked aggression against Ukraine and the deduction therefrom with operational and tactical circumstances, particularly because Ukraine was about to launch a major counter-offensive against Russian invasion forces. But Ukraine is also a possible perpetrator in terms of a similar reasoning but with different calculations. In addition, either

106) A frozen conflict means the de facto cessation of hostilities in the continuing state of armed confrontation without a political settlement or without a formal cease-fire.

country of the two could have miscalculated or underestimated possible outcomes and impacts of the destruction.

The incident is similar to the Bucha massacre in light of the level and magnitude of psychological shock, as indicated by the fact that both cases were promptly put onto deliberation at the U.N. Security Council. Notably, the massacre also suffers similar confirmation bias amid intensive reports by Western international media, having led to the widely accepted allegation that Russia perpetrated it.¹⁰⁷⁾ The U.N. Security Council had failed to timely dispatch a fact-finding commission under its aegis to the scene for collecting forensic¹⁰⁸⁾ and other hard evidence, despite Russia's and other countries' proposals and suggestions.¹⁰⁹⁾ This has precluded an objective and reliable identification of the perpetrator.

Apparently, as seen in the Bucha and Kakhovka cases, there is a pattern of the formation of an established allegation as the consequence of the interplay between allegation, media reports, and attribution.

2) Conjecturing the motive at the strategic level

At the strategic level, Ukraine could have benefited more from the self-

107) Masahiro Matsumura, "Unmasking War Propaganda against Russian Aggression: An Investigative Approach," *IFIMES Research*, April 20, 2022, <https://www.ifimes.org/en/researches/unmasking-war-propaganda-against-russian-aggression-an-investigative-approach/5039?q=matsumura>, accessed on June 18, 2023.

108) "Fue el ejército ucraniano quien cometió la matanza de Bucha," mpr21, April 26, <https://mpr21.info/fue-el-ejercito-ucraniano-quien-cometio-la-matanza-de-bucha/>, accessed on June 18, 2023 ("Bucha Investigation Contradicts Itself, Confirms AFU's Atrocities"), Southfront, April 25, 2022, <https://southfront.press/bucha-investigation-contradicts-itself-confirms-afus-atrocities/>, accessed on June 18, 2023.).

109) "Russia calls Security Council meeting over Bucha," RT, April 3, 2022, <https://www.rt.com/russia/553242-bucha-un-security-council/>, accessed on June 18, 2023; Scott Ritter, "The truth about Bucha is out there, but perhaps too inconvenient to be discovered," RT, April 4, 2022, <https://www.rt.com/russia/553293-bucha-war-crimes-truth/>, accessed on June 18, 2023.

destruction of the dam if international public opinion would converge on the alleged attribution of it to Russia. This would surely render major Western media to portray the country as uncompromisable evil to be defeated in the south Ukraine theater of operations by completely evicting Russian invasion forces from the occupied territories, potentially including the Crimea. Such evolutionary developments would prolong the armed conflict, rather than put an end to it.

Ceteris paribus, however, Ukraine's armed conflict with Russia is hardly winnable due to their marked unfavorable imbalance of total military power. Thus, conflict protraction will bring Ukraine to bay through attrition of manpower, munition, and logistics. This strategic equation can be reversed only if with sufficient arms transfer and other military assistance from the U.S.-led West. In fact, such Western support is a prime lifeline of Ukraine's war policy.

However, the lifeline was then in jeopardy because the West's arms production capacity¹¹⁰⁾ and willingness¹¹¹⁾ for support had considerably declined since the outbreak in February 2022 of the warfare in Ukraine, with strong prospect of further decline thereof. The West's extensive economic sanctions against Russia have backfired by causing prices surges of fossil fuels and other commodities, aggravating inflation and popular

110) James Stavridis, "Ukraine is running out of ammo. So is the U.S.," *Japan Times*, May 3, 2023, <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/opinion/2023/05/03/commentary/world-commentary/u-s-ukraine-ammo/>, accessed on June 18, 2023; Jon Jackson, "Is the U.S. Running Out of Weapons to Send Ukraine?" *Newsweek*, January 20, 2023, <https://www.newsweek.com/us-running-out-weapons-send-ukraine-1775408>, accessed on June 18, 2023; Natasha Turak, "The U.S. and Europe are running out of weapons to send to Ukraine," CNBC, September 28, 2022, <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/09/28/the-us-and-europe-are-running-out-of-weapons-to-send-to-ukraine.html>, accessed on June 18, 2023.

111) Masahiro Matsumura, "The West must get real and seize chance for Ukraine settlement," *Nikkei Asia*, June 6, 2023, <https://asia.nikkei.com/Opinion/The-West-must-get-real-and-seize-chance-for-Ukraine-settlement>, accessed on June 18, 2023.

economic hardship and causing labor unrest and undermining democratic legitimacy in the West. As a result, intensifying domestic political and economic pressures interacts with public fatigue toward Ukraine aid.¹¹²⁾ Notably, it became increasingly difficult even for the Joe Biden administration to continue its strong Ukraine-aid policy, as the approaching presidential election campaign required it to shift policy priority from foreign to domestic affairs. This was compounded by the intensifying political strife with the Republican-controlled House of Representatives that shares power of the purse with the Senate, with the right to deliberate budget bills first.

Most importantly, it seems that the U.S. military circles became aware of the significant need to put an end to the protracted conflict, which was in sharp discord with the Ukraine policy line of the core Biden administration. The discord is well shown by a RAND Corporation report concluding that “the consequence of a long war – ranging from persistent elevated escalation risks to economic damage – far outweigh the possible benefits.”¹¹³⁾ It also recommends that, “since avoiding a long war is the highest priority after minimizing escalation risks, the United States should take steps that make an end to the conflict over the medium term more likely.”¹¹⁴⁾

Evidently, there was the intensified pulling and hauling between the two camps of conflict continuation vs. discontinuation, or a longer vs. a frozen conflict. It is natural that Ukrainian jingoists and overseas warmongering interventionists, in pursuit of their creedal, ideological and/or material interests, would take advantage of the dam destruction to tip the balance against their prudential realist opponents by making a propaganda drive to

112) *Ibid.*

113) Charap, Samuel and Miranda Priebe, *Avoiding a Long War: U.S. Policy and the Trajectory of the Russia-Ukraine Conflict*, RAND, January 2023, p. 11, <https://www.rand.org/pubs/perspectives/PEA2510-1.html>, accessed on June 18, 2023.

114) *Ibid.*, p. 15.

turn strong moral loathing into reinforcement of the war policy line having resulted in conflict protraction. This understanding does not assume any conspiracy that the former was behind the dam's destruction, while recognizing that the perpetrator cannot be identified at this stage. In addition, records in contemporary international relations show that the abrupt occurrence of a mass atrocity or a destruction incident in protracted armed conflict arose strong mutual abhorrence and nationalist/ethnic feelings and often closed a valuable window of opportunity to put an early end to hostilities through negotiation, as found in recent ethnic conflicts, such as the Foča ethnic cleansing (April 1992-August 1994) and the Srebrenica massacre in 1995 during the former Yugoslav wars and, most recently, the Bucha massacre.

Hence, it is critically important to grasp some major policy idea toward a frozen conflict in Ukraine, prior to the dam destruction.

2. Exploring an alternative approach to Ukraine policy

Evidently, U.S.-led Ukraine war policy had vainly pursued unidimensional military solution and fallen into an intractable impasse in which the West as a whole suffered dire boomerang effects of its various and extensive economic sanctions against Russia. The state of affairs has unexpectedly accelerated U.S. hegemonic decline while reinforcing the emerging dynamics toward a multipolar world order, which may eventually end up with hegemonic debilitation.¹¹⁵⁾ In the meeting in April 2023 with Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing, French President Emmanuel Macron mentioned the need for a European foreign policy independent of the United States and the importance of a political settlement to the armed conflict in Ukraine in coordination with China, and openly expressed strong skepticism against the Biden administration's roadmap toward resolving the conflict.¹¹⁶⁾ While Macron's move was noticeable, such

115) Matsumura, "The West must get real ...," *op.cit.*

116) Nicolas Barré, "Europe Must Not Be America's 'Vassals': The Full Macron

skepticism ran wider and deeper across major Western democracies, as indicated even by the aforementioned RAND report.

In his speech of May 31, 2023, at the Globsec regional security forum in Bratislava, Slovakia, President Macron called for a diplomatic approach to putting a temporary remedy to the armed conflict in Ukraine, with implicit criticism on the U.S.-led Ukraine policy aiming at exclusive military solution, while committed to provide Ukraine with “all means to carry out an effective counter-offensive” against Russian forces.” He expected that Ukraine’s counter-offensives against Russia invasion forces might bring limited operational and tactical achievements and then open a window of opportunity for a “lasting peace” through negotiation.¹¹⁷⁾

In fact, having reflected discussion among U.S. and NATO leaders,¹¹⁸⁾ President Macron suggested offering Ukraine “tangible and credible security guarantee” until the country formally would join NATO as a full member state according to the organization’s founding treaty. NATO cannot grant Ukraine membership because the country is now a party to the armed conflict, the accession of which will automatically lead the organization to extend collective self-defense action to the country. This will inevitably drag NATO into a war with Russia, at worst a

Interview After His China Visit,” *Worldcrunch*, April 11, 2023, <https://worldcrunch.com/world-affairs/full-macron-interview-china-us>, accessed on June 18, 2023.

117) “Macron calls on West to offer ‘tangible’ security guarantees to Ukraine,” *Le Monde*, May 31, 2023, https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2023/05/31/macron-calls-on-west-to-offer-tangible-security-guarantees-to-ukraine_6028631_4.html, accessed on June 18, 2023.

118) Sharon Weinberger, Thomas Grove, Drew Hinshaw and Bojan Pancevski, “To Aid Ukraine in Fight Against Russia, Allies Look to Security Model Like Israel’s,” *Wall Street Journal*, May 22, 2023, <https://www.wsj.com/amp/articles/to-aid-ukraine-in-fight-against-russia-allies-look-to-security-model-like-israels-8a05f0e5>, accessed on June 18, 2023; “NATO Discussing Security Model for Ukraine like Israel’s – WSJ,” *European Pravda*, May 22, 2023, <https://www.eurointegration.com.ua/eng/news/2023/05/22/7162181/>, accessed on June 18, 2023.

thermonuclear one.

More specifically, the French president referred to “something between the security provided to Israel and full-fledged membership.”¹¹⁹⁾ The United States has had a special relationship with Israel as its sole de facto security guarantor, but the relationship is not treaty-based but only based on a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on security¹²⁰⁾ and an MoU on military assistance thereunder to be renewed every ten years.¹²¹⁾ The former provides specific arrangements for “a comprehensive framework for continued consultation and cooperation” in security, particularly on security and economic assistance, while the latter guarantees specific and sizable military aids to Israel. Evidently, there are no mutual security obligations between the two countries but merely a state-to-state administrative compact that involves U.S. ambiguous but seemingly substantial commitment to the security of Israel.

However, details of the discussion on such a compact were then unknown,¹²²⁾ at least in terms of open-source information, while it is sure that the security guarantee to Ukraine under consideration would be more than that to Israel and less than that to a full-fledged NATO member.

3. Concluding remarks

The above exploration of an alternative approach to Ukraine policy constituted the low-profile run-up to the NATO summit in Lithuanian

119) “Macron calls on West ...,” *op. cit.*

120) <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/u-s-israel-memorandum-of-agreement-on-security-cooperation-april-1988>, accessed on June 18, 2023.

121) U.S. Embassy in Israel, Ten-Year Memorandum of Understanding Between the United States and Israel, October 1, 2018, <https://il.usembassy.gov/ten-year-memorandum-of-understanding-between-the-united-states-and-israel/>, accessed on June 18, 2023.

122) Pete Shmigel, “Ukraine ‘Israel-Style’ Security Agreement Instead of NATO Membership?” *Kyiv Post*, ay 23, 2023, <https://www.kyivpost.com/post/17398>, accessed on June 18, 2023.

capital, Vilnius, on July 11-12, 2023. Yet, it then remained to be seen if a security compact with Ukraine would be put on formal agenda, if it would be an effective instrument for or a springboard toward a frozen conflict there, as devils are in detail, and if it will simply guarantee more arms transfer and military training to the country that would end up with a longer conflict there.

There was then growing uncertainty what would and would not happen in the coming NATO summit because major NATO allies were ambivalent about giving Ukraine their “security guarantee” or “security assurance” and vague about their commitments.¹²³⁾ To make the matter worse, the prospect was then further complicated by the dam destruction that aroused strong moral loathing in the West against Russia as the alleged perpetrator and made it far more convincing than ever to conduct a longer war with the country until Ukraine would evict Russian invasion forces from the occupied territories, potentially including Crimea.

The world was entering a crossroads if it would have a frozen or a longer conflict in Ukraine, involving grave implications to the dynamics of the already weakened world order.

123) Lili Bayer, “The West isn’t ready to give Ukraine the security pledges it wants,” *Politico*, June 8, 2023, <https://www.politico.eu/article/the-west-isnt-ready-to-give-ukraine-the-security-pledges-it-wants-russia-war/>, accessed on June 18, 2023.

Chapter 7

The complete end of China’s “Reform and Open-Door Policy” as a protracted NEP: a warning against optimism

With growing signs of China’s gigantic economic bubble burst, the U.S.-led liberal democratic world has taken breath since it sees China would be unable to keep the dynamic economic powerhouse that has enabled unparalleled arms buildups, aggressive military policy, and coercive diplomacy for the last two decades. Evidently, the Chinese economy is undergoing a sharp decline of consumption, foreign trade, and investment, complicated by anti-market laws and its arbitrary enforcement, as typified by the new Counter-espionage Law. The current circumstances present acute economic aggravation, unemployment and other socio-economic problems. This is ascribable to the policy actions and inactions under the Xi Jinping dictatorship, not directly to the internal systemic dynamics shaped by the interplay of demographic and other endogenous factors.¹²⁴⁾

124) Certainly, few developing economies can continue high growth rates after the catch-up phase of industrialization and development. They often become unable to cope with the “Demographic Onus” and fall into the “Middle-Income Trap.” China has been expected to be an exemplar of such an evolutionary change due to the sustained “One-Child Policy” (1979-2014), setting the irreversible dynamics toward rapid greying and low birth-rate and leading to a peace by default with an internally-oriented geriatric China. Given the country’s demographic pyramids, such a turning point is anticipated around the period from 2025 to 2030. See, Masahiro Matsumura, “China’s demographic onus and its implications for the Japan-U.S. alliance: the increasing need for deterring China’s aggression against the Senkaku Islands,” *Jebat: Malaysian Journal of History, Politics and Strategic Studies*, Vol. 41, No. 2, pp. 3-6, [https://journalarticle.ukm.my/8466/1/Masahiro__Matsumura_41\(2\)_\(December_2014\).pdf](https://journalarticle.ukm.my/8466/1/Masahiro__Matsumura_41(2)_(December_2014).pdf), accessed on May 10, 2024.

1. China repeated a NEP

To grasp the nature of these developments, it is critically important to put them in the context of the start and end of Deng Xiaoping's development strategy, known as "Reform and Open-Door Policy," from a bird's-eye perspective of the People's Republic of China's overall approach to national development over time. The strategy in Chinese is "*Gaige Kaifang Zhengce*" (改革開放政策), but the established English translation of it is misleading due to its positive ideological connotation associated with U.S. Secretary of State John Hay's Open-Door Note of 1899. This has to be reminded because impoverished China, with little primitive accumulation right after the Cultural Revolution (1966-1976), desperately needed foreign capital and technology transfer from the U.S.-led West and putting the national economy on the sustainable trajectory of socio-economic rehabilitation and reconstruction toward full development.¹²⁵⁾

Given Beijing's communist regime and its intellectual-ideological emulation after the early Soviet Union, it makes great sense to comprehend Deng's strategy as the Chinese version of the Soviet's New Economic Policy (NEP) from 1921 to 1928.

The early Soviet regime had suffered a depleted and war-ravaged economy due to the protracted instability of wars and revolutions, including the 1905 Russian Revolution, Russia's entry into the First World War, the 1917 Russian Revolution, and the Russian Civil War (1918-1922), together with the Allied armed intervention to the country. To weather the

125) The change of "One Belt, One Road" (*Yitai Yilu*) to "Belt and Road Initiatives (BRI)" is a most recent example. See, Masahiro Matsumura, "A Realist Approach to Japan's Free and Open Indo-Pacific Strategy vs. China's Belt and Road Initiative: A Propaganda Rivalry," *International Journal of China Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 2, December 2019, pp. 146-147, <https://ics.um.edu.my/img/files/IJCSV10N2/V10N2%20MATSUMURA.pdf>, accessed on May 10, 2024.

total breakdown of the national economy, the regime had to tackle mass impoverishment by expediently making a temporary retreat from extreme centralization and doctrinaire socialism to partial introduction of capitalism (1921-1928): New Economic Policy (NEP). The regime adopted tax-in-kind for agricultural products and free market trade of the remaining products after tax, while controlling not only the banking and foreign trade sectors but also other large state-owned enterprises in key heavy industries. The regime reimposed state control over all industry and commerce in the country by 1931.¹²⁶⁾

Intriguingly enough, there is a strong parallel between the Soviet and Chinese cases. Yet, the latter spans for more than 60 years of persistent instability characterized by wars and revolutions from the early Republic of China to the end of the People's Republic China's Cultural Revolution, followed by some 40 years of an extended NEP to overcome similar mass impoverishment and industrial divestment in pursuit of rehabilitation, reconstruction, and development. Also, China has also followed a mixed economy under the robust political control exercised by the communist regime, with partial but extensive introduction of market mechanism. This heteromorphic market system is self-contradictorily dubbed as the "socialist market economy". With substantial foreign capital and technology transfer, China had long continued high growth rates until recently, turning itself to the primary "World Factory" for subcontract manufacturing and becoming the second largest economy after the United States.

2. Strategic Goals

From a hindsight perspective, it is obvious the United States and China had long "slept in the same bed but had different dreams" (同床異夢: *tong chuang yi meng*), manifested by their different understandings on the nature of "Reform and Open-Door Policy". It is well known that the

126) "New Economic Policy," *Britannica Money*, no date, <https://www.britannica.com/money/New-Economic-Policy-Soviet-history>, accessed on May 10, 2024.

United States initially aimed to utilize China as a strategic counter-weight against the Soviet Union, by taking advantage of the Sino-Soviet split caused by their doctrinal and geostrategic divergences. To keep incentivizing China's geostrategic alignment with the United States as well as out of their economic self-interests, the U.S.-led West had provided China with ample capital, technology transfer, and access to the U.S. and other major liberal democracies' markets, to enable its industrialization and development. This has been done with the wishful thinking that China would become a "responsible stakeholder" and eventually a newly democratizing country, if not a full-fledged democracy.¹²⁷⁾ Sure enough, the expectation has been thoroughly betrayed, even leading to a hasty generalization from a core member of the established U.S. policy circle, Michael Pillsbury, that China had been strategically engaged in a "hundred-year marathon."¹²⁸⁾ (The current author of this study sees that such a "marathon" is untenable as a manifestation of instrumental-purposive rationality, consistently in pursuit of strategic goals over three different political systems -- the Qing dynasty, the ROC, and the PRC-- for a hundred years. Rather, such a behavior pattern can be construed as a reflection of the Chinese collective unconsciousness with Sino-centrism at its core.)

On the other hand, Deng had de-emphatically but steadily followed the strategy of "hide your strength, bide your time (韜光養晦; *tao guang yang hui*)".¹²⁹⁾ This hide-and-bide strategy implies Beijing's latently hostile

127) Robert Zoellick "Whither China?: From Membership to Responsibility," Deputy Secretary of State's Remarks to National Committee on U.S.-China Relations, September 21, 2005, <https://2001-2009.state.gov/s/d/former/zoellick/rem/53682.htm>, accessed on May 10, 2024; Michael R. Pompeo, "Communist China and the Free World's Future," Secretary of State's speech at the Richard Nixon Presidential Library, July 23, 2020, <https://2017-2021.state.gov/communist-china-and-the-free-worlds-future-2/>, accessed on May 10, 2024.

128) Michael Pillsbury, *The Hundred-Year Marathon: China's Secret Strategy to Replace America as the Global Superpower*, St. Martin Griffin, 2016.

129) The phrase reads: "observe calmly, secure our position, cope with affairs calmly, hide our capacities and bide our time, be good at maintaining a low

intent: it will keep low profile to avoid confronting with the powerful U.S.-led West while enhancing its total national power, and that, once it sufficiently surpasses the opponent, it will challenge all at once. In fact, during the period of “Reform and Open-Door Policy”, Beijing long focused on growth and development, while striving to keep good and stable relations with the U.S.-led West for trade and investment and making it off guard. More specifically, Deng established collective leadership after Mao Zetong’s one man’s rule, given that the communist regime cannot carry out a self-destructive liberal democratic reform. Also, Jiang Zemin and Hu Qingdao, who were hand-picked by Deng as his succeeding top leaders, even introduced experimental local/village elections.¹³⁰⁾ In other words, such limited decentralization and liberalization were necessary for Beijing to grasp economic opportunities under the U.S.-led international system.

Based on the “hide-and-bide strategy”, Beijing will naturally make a shift from a low- to high-profile approach to world affairs once the condition of it is met. Obviously, Beijing became increasingly confident in its enhanced national power, especially after China alone played a role as the world’s engine of growth in coping with the international financial crisis consequent on the bankruptcy of Lehman Brother in 2008. Also, Beijing has gradually intensified high-profile coercive diplomacy, or “Wolf

profile, and never claim leadership” (冷靜觀察，穩住陣腳，沈着应付，韜光養晦，善於守拙，決不當頭)。” See, Huang Youyi, “Context, not history, matters for Deng’s famous phrase,” *Global Times*, June 15, 2011, <https://www.globaltimes.cn/content/661734.shtml>, accessed on May 10, 2024.

- 130) Kevin J. O’Brien and Lianjiang Li, “Accommodating ‘Democracy’ in a One-Party State: Introducing Village Elections in China,” *China Quarterly*, No. 162, 2000; Monica Martinez-Bravo, *et.al.*, “The Rise and Fall of Local Elections in China,” *American Economic Review*, Vol. 112, No. 9, 2022, <https://pubs.aeaweb.org/doi/pdfplus/10.1257/aer.20181249>, accessed on May 10, 2024.
- 131) Fergus Hunter et al., *Countering China’s coercive diplomacy: Prioritising economic security, sovereignty and the rules-based order*; Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Policy Brief, No. 68, 2023, https://ad-aspi.s3.ap-southeast-2.amazonaws.com/2023-02/Countering%20Chinas%20coercive%20diplomacy_1.pdf?VersionId=HZDwezgnFY5eitQqtEMEU7WuFci8S75z, accessed on May 10,

Warrior Diplomacy”, and more increasingly so since the late 2010s.¹³¹⁾ Beijing’s judgement about the timing of the move may be wrong since it should have waited until it overmatches the United States.

3. Strategic Implications

The eventual success or failure of the “Reform and Open-Door Policy” as a Chinese version of NEP according to the hide-and-bide strategy” remains to be seen. Certainly, it can be inferred that, *ceteris paribus*, the Chinese economy would inevitably collapse by looking at its ongoing gigantic bubble burst within the socialist system through the mirror image of those historical and recent cases in major modern capitalist economies. But the Chinese bubble is bursting at the time when the United States faces its far more gigantic economic bubble, the burst of which will inescapably lead to accelerating debilitation of the U.S. hegemony toward a multipolar world.¹³²⁾

A bubble burst in a socialist system has no historical precedent in which little practical knowledge about its mechanism and process is available. It has to be noted that there are effectively no major bankruptcy cases in communist China because the communist regime does not accept applying its bankruptcy law to major too-big-to-fail cases for liquidation. Such a case is well demonstrated by the already severely insolvent China Evergrande Group, the country’s second largest property developer,¹³³⁾ which the

2024; Shaoyu Yuan, “Tracing China’s diplomatic transition to wolf warrior diplomacy and its implications,” *Humanities & Social Sciences Communications*, No. 10, 2023, file:///C:/Users/%E6%9D%BE%E6%9D%91%E6%98%8C%E5%B%A3/Downloads/s41599-023-02367-6.pdf, accessed on May 10, 2024.

132) *Global Trends 2030: Alternative Worlds*, U.S. National Intelligence Council, December 2012, <https://www.files.ethz.ch/isn/159368/global-trends-2030-nic-lo.pdf>, accessed on May 10, 2024.

133) Kanis Leung and Zen Soo, “China Evergrande has been ordered to liquidate. The real estate giant owes over \$300 billion,” AP News, January 29, 2024, <https://apnews.com/article/china-evergrande-property-liquidation-order-7965ab1ec2f0208c53f9298daf8b9fd0>, accessed on May10, 2024.

regime has prolonged its existence like a zombie. In addition, the regime exercises tight control over transactions in the domestic stock markets, precluding a crush of them.¹³⁴⁾ This means that a gigantic economic bubble burst would lead to a total breakdown of the Chinese economy but, with bailouts from the regime, not to a total collapse of it, precluding a fresh start of new business and only resulting in a total systemic meltdown. Thus, even if a standard view of China's eventual collapse should hold, it might take much longer time to be realized than expected.

Notably, regardless of what has triggered China's ongoing bubble burst, either intentional or not, the communist regime would benefit much more from a burst now rather than later, because, given the strong Sino-U.S. interdependence, the Chinese economy would surely suffer far more disastrous impact from another burst of the historically unprecedented super-size U.S. economic bubble. It is well known that Beijing has studied the case of the Japanese bubble burst in the early 1990s, as reflected in numerous Chinese academic writings. More importantly, the Bank of Japan has gradually developed their official cooperative relations with the Bank of China since 1972, through which to share Japan's policy experience with the BoC, including the bubble formation and burst.¹³⁵⁾ Thus, it is exceedingly difficult to imagine that the communist regime has been totally ignorant of what to do with a bubble, though the top leadership

134) For example, see, Arthur R. Kroeber, "Making sense of China's stock market mess," Brookings commentary, July 13, 2015, <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/making-sense-of-chinas-stock-market-mess/>, accessed on May 10, 2024; Nargia Salidjanova, "China's Stock Market Collapse and Government's Response," U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, Policy Brief, July 13, 2015, <https://www.uscc.gov/sites/default/files/Research/China%E2%80%99s%20Stock%20Market%20Collapse%20and%20Government%E2%80%99s%20Response.pdf>, accessed on May 10, 2024.

135) Sakuya Fujiwara, "NiChu-Chuo-Ginkokan Kyoryoku no Shorai-Zo (日中中央銀行間協力の将来像: A vision for cooperation between Japan and China central banks)," a lecture by Bank of Japan's Vice Governor Fujiwara, December 9, 2002, https://www2.boj.or.jp/archive/announcements/press/koen_2002/ko0212b.htm, accessed on May 10, 2024.

might not have adequately heeded BoC and other policy makers' advice. Rather, there is some good possibility that the regime dared to have triggered bubble bursting prior to the United States, though now confronting the unexpected magnitude and speed of its shock.

Last not least, amid the accelerated decline of U.S. hegemony toward a multipolar international order, the world is apparently entering a semi-wartime, neither a Third World War nor a second Cold War as yet, in which the U.S.-led West geo-politically confronts the Sino-Russia alignment, with the Global South unsupportive with the West and rather opportunistically dealing with China, Russia or their alignment to their own parochial interests. This is well demonstrated by the protracted war in Ukraine as a de facto surrogate war between the U.S.-led West and Russia, the Gaza conflict that could evolve into a region-wide war in the Middle East, and a plausible war over the Taiwan Strait between the U.S.-led coalition and China that would easily turn into a Third World War. Under the evolving realities, it makes sense for China to make a transition to wartime economy, particularly because it has already obtained sufficient manufacturing and technological power while securing sufficient access to markets, foods, and natural resources & raw materials in Russia and major Global South countries. Notably, the newly revised Counter-espionage Law of 2023 and a series of other anti-market legislations makes some sense if Xi Jinping's dictatorship should prepare to enter a war economy that demands stronger social control, destitution and mobilization.

On the other hand, the U.S.-led West only retains the precarious financial hegemony ridden with the growing structural vulnerabilities consequent on latent ultra-excessive insolvency after the financial crisis ensuing the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers in 2008. Also, the insolvency would be worsened because, given the interdependence with China, its bubble burst will exert severe adverse impacts on China's imports from the U.S.-led West. In addition, U.S. financial power would at least be significantly reduced because the United States as a primary "World

Investment Bank” would no longer be able to earn huge profits accrued from intermediation of capital flows to satisfy Chinese needs for foreign capital that constitutes the dollar’s imperial circulation.

4. Conclusion

Hitherto, this essay has inquired into the geopolitical and geoeconomic significance of China’s ongoing economic bubble burst in the context of the start and end of “Reform and Open-Door Policy.” The study has presented a bird-eye’s perspective on the policy as the Chinese version of NEP, as Mark Twain once said that “history doesn’t repeat itself, but it rhymes.” Then, it may be comprehended that, as the Soviet Union under Stalin entered a war economy after the brief NEP, communist China under Xi has followed an extended NEP under the “hide-and-bide strategy”, plausibly, as the prolonged prelude to a war economy. Such an understanding is highly arguable on the ground that a new socialist/communist country comes into existence as an enclave in the predominantly global capitalist system, involving the ups and downs of the visible hostility between the two according to the relative power relations. In this sense, such a country would enter a war economy, when it finds itself to have satisfied necessary conditions, especially economic power and technological capabilities.

The world now faces growing uncertainty about the impact of China’s ongoing bubble burst on the evolving global international relations. First, the optimistic scenario is that the burst will overall be isolated in the world economy only to lead to the collapse of communist China. The scenario entails the international security problem that the U.S.-led West might have to deter and, if necessary, defeat China’s aggression aimed to divert socio-economic contradictions and popular discontent against the communist regime. Second, the pessimistic scenario is that, given the Sino-U.S. interdependence, the burst will lead not only to the collapse of communist China but also to concurrent debilitation of the U.S. hegemon,

which may accompany a protracted transition from a G-Zero to a stable multipolar order. Third, the scenario in-between is that the post-burst world order will settle on a protracted Cold War between the declined U.S.-led West and the reinforced Sino-Russia alignment with which major Global South countries expediently make deals with according to their own national interests.

It is high time that the West prepare itself to face the above worse and worst scenarios.

Chapter 8

The War in Ukraine as an inevitable manifestation of globalism vs. nationalism

Since its outbreak in February 2022, the war in Ukraine has turned out to be arguably the most significant event in contemporary international relations. Although its warfare is limited to the geographic areas centered on eastern and southeastern parts of the country, the War has involved global political and economic confrontation between Russia and the U.S.-led West. Evidently, with the BRICS and major Global South countries having taken non-U.S., if not anti-U.S., stances, the War is rapidly transforming the already severely declined U.S. hegemony into an embryonic multipolar world order.

It is now of great importance to comprehend the essential nature of the war from a macro-historical perspective on modern and contemporary international relations. Such an approach will likely enable going beyond conventional current event commentary, policy analysis, and regular IR/comparative analysis.

This chapter is particularly interested in the Jewish question as a vantage point from which to look at the interplay of historical, geopolitical, and ethno-political factors in historic and today's Ukraine and to grasp the cross-national dynamics of national security and foreign policy lines, specially across the United States, the Soviet Union/Russia, and Ukraine. The approach is based on the understanding that the Judeo-Christian Western history and the Jewish question¹³⁶⁾ are the head and tail

136) As a classical work, Karl Marx, "On the Jewish Question," 1844, <https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1844/jewish-question/>, accessed on August 3, 2024.

of the same coin. This necessarily manifests as the struggle between, on one hand, the politico-economic confinement and socio-economic marginalization of the Jewish peoples within the framework of the Western nation-state and, on the other hand, the total emancipation of them from the state through market liberalization and globalization: nationalism vs. globalism.

Based on such an approach, this study aims to hold the understanding that the war in Ukraine is an inevitable manifestation of the heightened struggle between nationalist Russia and the globalist United States. It is hoped that the understanding will be instrumental to explore an exit out of the current predicament of world politics.

1. Historic Ukraine and the Ashkenazi Jewish

Historically, Ukraine is a troublesome border area located between Europe and Eurasia, involving the contest for control between the two sides. In other words, defining the domain of Ukraine involves demarcating the boundary of the two, and constitutes a highly conflictual and occasionally confrontational international political act that affects regional and international power balance. This also means that Ukraine can be a strategic buffer and a factor of stability, should there exist power equilibrium between the two.

Already in the early modern times, the overall pattern of the contest was conspicuous, with the spheres of influence in the western parts of Ukraine by European powers, the eastern and southeastern parts by Eurasian powers, and the areas in-between where the two sides struggled for dominance but often faced dynamic gradation of their spheres. More specifically, the triune Russian nation – White, Little and Great Russians (respectively, Belarussians, Ukrainians, Russians) – has shared their linguistic origin in the Old East Slavic, the Russian Orthodox Church, and the overall political culture based on them, with a notable exception of the

Eastern Catholic population in the western Ukraine centered in Galicia which used to a part of the Polish – Lithuanian Commonwealth (1569-1795), the Austrian Empire (1804-1864), and the Austro-Hungary Empire (1867-1918). Consequently, Ukraine as a whole long lacked a solid national identity among its total population and suffered the great built-in potential for extensive ethnic conflicts.¹³⁷⁾

To make the matter more complicated, there was a large Ashkenazi¹³⁸⁾ Jewish population as a highly heterogeneous element in Ukraine that had suffered “pogroms.”¹³⁹⁾ According to *Encyclopedia Britannica* online, the term means ‘devastation’ or ‘riot’ in Russian, or a mob attack either approved or condoned by authorities, against the persons and property of a religious, racial, or national minority. It is usually applied to attacks on Jews in the Russian Empire in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Notably, as a result of the pogroms of 1881 and policies under both Alexander III and his successor, Nicholas II, there is a significant population in the United States that has been descended from Ukrainian Jewish immigrants.¹⁴⁰⁾ This works as a preliminary in analyzing the current

137) Masahiro Matsumura, “Handling the Ukraine Crisis: A Geopolitical Perspective,” *IFIMES Research*, February 22, 2022, <https://www.ifimes.org/en/researches/handling-the-ukraine-crisis-a-geopolitical-perspective/4998>, accessed on August 3, 2024.

138) According to *Encyclopedia Britannica* online, the Jews are divided into two groups: Ashkenazi and Sephardi. The former means “member of the Jews who lived in the Rhineland valley and in neighboring France before their migration eastward to Slavic lands (e.g., Poland, Lithuania, Russia) after the Crusades (11th–13th century) and their descendants”. The latter is “Sephardi, member or descendant of the Jews who lived in Spain and Portugal from at least the later centuries of the Roman Empire until their persecution and mass expulsion from those countries in the last decades of the 15th century”.

For the history of Jews in Ukraine, see, “Ukraine,” European Jewish Congress, no date, <https://eurojewcong.org/communities/ukraine/>, accessed on August 3, 2024; “History of Ukraine,” Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, no date, <https://www.jewishportland.org/history-of-ukraine>, accessed on August 3, 2024.

139) A pogrom is well depicted in an American musical, “The Fedler on the Roof.”

140) “History of Ukraine”, *op. cit.*

globalist U.S. policy toward Ukraine as discussed later in this study.

Shortly before the Russian October Revolution of 1917, a Jewish revolutionary leader, Vladimir Lenin returned from exile in Switzerland to the then-capital of the Russian Empire, Saint Petersburg¹⁴¹⁾, and led the revolution to seize power and establish the new Bolshevik regime in 1918. The power nucleus of it was predominantly Jewish revolutionaries, as Russian President Vladimir Putin once mentioned that “at least 80 percent of the members of the first Soviet government was Jewish.”¹⁴²⁾ To further discuss about the current U.S.-Russia confrontation over the war in Ukraine, however, it is adequate to only acknowledge the Jewish factor, with no need to enter mazes of controversies about the imperial German conspiracy behind the sealed train¹⁴³⁾ and the antisemitic and anti-communist conspiracy theory of Jewish Bolshevism.¹⁴⁴⁾

2. The birth of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic

After the Revolution, Bolsheviks and pro-European forces set up several political entities side by side in Ukraine, largely corresponding to the aforementioned historic spheres of influence between European and Eurasian/Russian powers. Bolsheviks formed the Ukrainian People’s Republic of Soviets (December 12, 1917-1918), the Odessa Soviet Republic (January-March 1918), and the Donetsk – Krivoy Rog Soviet Republic

141) Ted Widmer, “Lenin and the Russian Spark,” *New Yorker*, April 20, 2017, <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/lenin-and-the-russian-spark>, accessed on August 3, 2024.

142) “Putin: First Soviet government was mostly Jewish,” *The Time of Israel*, June 20, 2013, <https://www.timesofisrael.com/putin-first-soviet-government-was-mostly-jewish/>, accessed on August 3, 2024.

143) Sean Mcmeekin, “Was Lenin a German Agent?” *New York Times*, June 19, 2017, <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/06/19/opinion/was-lenin-a-german-agent.html>, accessed on August 3, 2024.

144) Victor de Kayville, *Downfall of Russia: Bolshevism and Judaism*, pamphlet. 1934, <https://digital-collections.csun.edu/digital/collection/InOurOwnBackyard/id/7/>, accessed on August 3, 2024.

(1918), which were later merged into the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic (March 1918-1991). The pro-European side built the West Ukrainian National Republic (November 1918 - July 1919) that controlled historic Eastern Galicia. With the Bolshevik success in the October Revolution, its revolutionary regime prevailed across the former Russian Empire. After the collapse of the West Ukrainian National Republic, the Ukrainian SSR controlled the whole of Ukraine that later became as an integral part of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR).

Deeply entrenched in this reunification process, there was obviously a strategic calculation of the Lenin-led regime on how to create a pro-Soviet Ukrainian state with multi-ethnic populations (Ukrainians, Poles, Jews, and other East European minorities as well as Russians) that involved the historico-political divide between pro-European and pro-Russian political forces. This means that, from a Soviet point of view, the key lay in how to include or exclude individual multi-ethnic regions in a new state and then how to retain a significant presence of pro-Russian populations in it, preventing the birth of a pro-European state. In fact, this had largely been achieved prior to the collapse of the West Ukrainian National Republic through the merger of the aforementioned two regional Soviet republics, roughly equal to the domain of historic Novorossiia, into the Ukrainian SSR.¹⁴⁵⁾

As seen in the above circumstances, the birth of the Ukrainian SSR was a compromise imposed by the Lenin-led regime between its Greater Russia policy and Ukrainian nationalism, particularly strong in Western Ukraine.¹⁴⁶⁾ This case is a prime example of the institutional expression of

145) Ironically, this merger process was completed by Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev (1953-1964), a Ukrainian himself, willy-nilly incorporated the Crimea Peninsula into Ukraine despite the significant modern and current historical ties with Russia and ethnic Russians as an overwhelming majority of local population, on the no-longer tenable assumption that the Soviet Union shall exist forever.

146) Serhii Plokhii, "Casus Belli: Did Lenin Create Modern Ukraine?" Harvard

Greater Russia with national SSRs under the aegis of the USSR. Also, the Ukraine SSR is a leading case in which powerful nationalism had been contained and kept latent, involving the great potential for ethnic conflict. In this sense, the endogenous root cause of the current war in Ukraine is ascribable to the forcible formation of the Ukraine SSR in the early post-revolution period.

3. Trotsky's struggle against Stalin: communist internationalism vs. nationalism

Lenin is well known as a prime advocate of the international communist movement and one of the founders of the Communist International that was set up in 1919 and controlled by the Lenin-led USSR Communist Party. The movement aimed to promote world revolution by overthrowing the international bourgeoisie and creating an international soviet republic as a transitional stage to the complete abolition of the state. The form of internationalism is highly acceptable for Lenin, Leon Trosky, and other Jewish revolutionary leaders to emancipate the Jewish diasporas across the world which have been confined and oppressed within the framework of the nation-state under the inter-state system.

After Lenin's death, Joseph Stalin and Trotsky faced multifaceted political and policy conflicts and struggled for supreme political power under the Soviet regime. Notably, Stalin won the struggle and advocated one-state socialism in the Soviet Union over communist internationalism. Stalin put priority on first securing and strengthening the Soviet Union as the base from which to later export revolution, rather than immediately accelerating the international communist movement. The differences between the two approaches are conceptually the matter of path selection to the same political goal but also practically that of great strategic

University Ukrainian Research Institute, February 22, 2023, <https://huri.harvard.edu/news/serhii-plokhii-casus-belli-did-lenin-create-modern-ukraine>, accessed on August 3, 2024; Roman Szporluk, "Lenin, 'Great Russia', and Ukraine," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies*, Vol. 28, No. 1/4, 2006.

importance. Consequently, the Stalin-led regime purged and eventually assassinated Trotsky, and then wiped Trotskyists out from the Soviet regime.

This means that, by having shifted from international communism to one-state socialism, Stalin, a Georgian revolutionary leader, in fact kept confining the Jewish population within the framework of the Soviet state, although having taken failed remedial measures to establish the Jewish Autonomous Oblast in the Russian Far East in 1934. To seek political emancipation of the Jews, Trotskyists have died hard since then, and survived in the West, especially the United States and the United Kingdom, or the current and former hegemons in international politics. Given the total population of the Jewish diasporas in the world very limited and dispersed, it is natural for Trotskyists at the brink of defeat to strive for revival and rise by penetrating into major Western civil societies and states.

4. The emergence and rise of neoconservatism

Trotskyists found a new place of belonging in the emerging movement of neoconservatism¹⁴⁷⁾ during the protracted Vietnam War. It was a reaction to increasing war-weariness and pacifism to the Democratic Party in the United States, the New Left in Western Europe, and counterculture of the 1960 across the West. The hawks in foreign and security policy across the political spectrum from the right to the left became increasingly disenchanted with this political atmosphere. In particular, the liberal hawks pursued hardline policy lines and even armed intervention toward global democratic enlargement, ultimately a global empire of democracy, at least at the ideational level. Thus, there is strong affinity between an international soviet republic and an empire of democracy, or between

147) The term was coined by Edward M. Harrington, an American democratic socialist who published many articles in *Commentary* as well as other major leftists journals.

international communism and neoconservatism in the sense that the Jewish diasporas across the world would surely enjoy total emancipation in the framework of a new world order that transcends the nation-state and the inter-state system, regardless the ideological confrontation of communism vs. capitalism and the political one of communist dictatorship vs. liberal democracy. It is no wonder that Trotskyists found a golden opportunity in neoconservatism, dubbed as neoconservatives (or neocons).

More specifically, the early neocon movement in the United States had its intellectual roots in the *Commentary*, a Jewish monthly journal of opinion, edited by Norman Podhoretz, a Jewish American, from 1960 to 1995. He is a son of Jewish parents who immigrated from Galicia, then part of Poland, now Ukraine. Leading figures included Irving Kristol, a Jewish American of East European origin and a neocon public intellectual, as well as non-Jewish occasional contributors to the journal, such as Daniel Bell and Daniel Patrick Moynihan. Moynihan served as an adviser to the Republican President Richard Nixon and then as a Democratic Senator. Necon's anti-Soviet hardline line in foreign and security policy, involving implications to the political life of the Jews in the Soviet Union, had strong affinity with the liberal hawks, such as Democratic Senator Henry "Scoop" Jackson, who confronted a majority of pacifist Democratic Senators.

Consequently, anti-Soviet Republican conservative hawks, particularly those in the Republican administration of President Ronald Reagan were approached by the second generation of Jewish neocon thinkers and public intellectuals. They included high-ranking political-appointee officials in foreign and security policy, such as Jeane Duane Kirkpatrick (US ambassador to the U.N., 1981-1985), Richard N. Perle (Assistant Secretary of Defense for Global Strategic Affairs, 1981-1987), Paul Wolfowitz (Director of Policy Planning at the State Department, 1981-1982; Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, 1982-1986). Wolfowitz also served as Undersecretary of Defense for Policy (1989-1993) under the George H. W. Bush Presidency, in the period that covers the

Persian Gulf War (1990-1991) in which the administration followed a prudent realist approach to not overthrow the Saddam Hussein regime and kept the dual containment of Iran and Iraq to maintain the stability of the Middle East. Based on this experience, Wolfowitz formulated the Defense Planning Guidelines in 1992,¹⁴⁸⁾ which put forth the first neocon hardline strategy involving the use of armed intervention toward U.S. unipolarity on which to build the base for formulating the succeeding globalist strategy documents.

Thereafter, neocons played pivotal roles under the Republican administration of President George W. Bush that had taken an exemplary globalist hardline through hyper-active armed intervention in the greater Middle East after the 911 terrorist attacks, including the Afghan and Iraq wars. Notably, William Kristol, a son of Irving Kristol, was the founder and editor-at-large of a political magazine, *The Weekly Standard* (1995-2018), and had played a hub role of neocon individuals, until the magazine was shut down in December 2018. He and Robert Kagan, another neocon of Lithuanian Jewish descent, together with non-Jewish hardline conservatives, founded the Project for a New American Century (PNAC), a non-profit advocacy group, from which to produce top cabinet- and subcabinet-level officials of the G.W. Bush administration. Concretely, in addition to conservative hardliners, such as Vice President Richard Cheney (2001-2009) and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld (2001-2006), there were Jewish neocons, such as Elliott Abrams (United States Deputy National Security Advisor, 2005-2009), Elliot Cohen (Counselor of the State Department, 2008-2009), Scooter Libby (Chief of Staff to the Vice President, 2001-2005), Peter Rodman (Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, 2001-2007), and Paul Wolfowitz (Deputy Secretary of Defense, 2001-2005), among others.

148) U.S. Department of Defense, "Defense Planning Guidelines," April 16, 1992, <https://www.archives.gov/files/declassification/isicap/pdf/2008-003-docs1-12.pdf>, accessed on August 3, 2024.

Given that all of these Jewish neocons served as policy planners or makers in specific issue-areas or geographic regions at the sub-cabinet or lower levels, they were unlikely involved in important grand strategic decision making, with a probable exception of Wolfowitz. Rather, they were effective only when aligned with conservative hardliners at the cabinet- or higher-levels who were buttressed by wider domestic political forces, such as the defense-industrial complex¹⁴⁹⁾ and the Evangelical fundamentalist movements.¹⁵⁰⁾ Jewish neocons, therefore, took the brunt of criticism due to their high visibility, yet with the veiled motive of Jewish emancipation, but were only the spearhead of American globalist hardline forces. This negates the Jewish conspiracy theory.

5. The U.S. globalist policy toward the war in Ukraine

Due to the early alignment of Jewish neocons with Republican Presidencies, they initially lost power footholds in the Democratic administration of President Barack Obama. Yet, it was compelled to take over the continuing global war on terrorism, but faced serious imperial overstretch that required cutting and curbing defense spendings,¹⁵¹⁾ while the liberal hawk Senators and Congressmen continued vigorously pursuing a similar globalist strategy.

Under these constraints, the Obama administration (2009-2017) relied on diplomatic and covert methods to pursue its globalist policy to Ukraine, perhaps, initially reluctantly but later proactively. In fact, Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton (2009-2013), known as a liberal hawk, used

149) T. N. Vance and Walter J. Oakes, *The Permanent War Economy*, Createspace Independent Publishing, 2010.

150) Stephen Spector, *Evangelicals and Israel: The Story of American Christian Zionism*, Oxford University Press, 2008.

151) "America is not the world's policeman: Text of Barack Obama's speech on Syria," NDTV World, September 11, 2013, <https://www.ndtv.com/world-news/america-is-not-the-worlds-policeman-text-of-barack-obamas-speech-on-syria-534239>, accessed on August 3, 2024.

Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Victoria Nuland (2013-2017) to implement globalist diplomacy to Ukraine through interference and intervention, including her own presence on the spot at the occasion of the Euromaidan uprising, which led to a change of Kiev's pro-Russian government to a pro-U.S. one.¹⁵²⁾ Nuland is a career diplomat but known as a neocon who is descendant of East European Jewish immigrants from Bessarabia, contiguous to Ukraine. She is the wife of Robert Kagan, a major neocon public intellectual, who served as an influential member of the Secretary of State's Foreign Policy Advisory Board during a similar period. Most notably, Vice President Joseph Biden (2009-2017) had been in charge of Ukraine policy under the Obama administration. Biden had paid several visits to Kiev and had extensive contacts with Ukrainian political leaders and committed active interference to Ukrainian domestic politics toward the country's constitutional amendments for NATO and EU memberships.¹⁵³⁾

After the Russian invasion in Ukraine in February 2022, the Biden administration continued a hyper-active globalist policy to support Ukraine's war efforts against Russia through military and other aids that required large war chests. Under Secretary of State Anthony Blinken who was national security advisor to then-Vice President Joe Biden (2009 to 2013), Victoria Nuland, Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs (2021 -2024) and Acting Deputy Secretary of State (July 2023-February 2024), had played a leading role in Ukraine War policy. Blinken is known as a globalist who is descended from Jewish immigrants from Eastern Europe and his great-grandfather from Kiev. In addition, it has to be noted that

152) "F*** the EU: Alleged audio of US diplomat Victoria Nuland swearing," On Demand News, no date, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L2XNN0Yt6D8>, accessed on August 3, 2024.

153) Masahiro Matsumura, "Ukraine as Biden's Sacrificed Pawn: A Mismanagement under the Declining U.S. Hegemony," *IFIMES Research*, March 12, 2022, <https://www.ifimes.org/en/researches/ukraine-as-bidens-sacrificed-pawn-a-mismanagement-under-the-declining-us-hegemony/5011>, accessed on August 3, 2024.

the Institute for the Study of War (ISW), a think tank based in Washington DC, had taken a strong anti-Russian policy position and provided detailed War analyses, which resonated well with the Biden administration's globalist strategy and Ukraine War policy. Kimberly Kagan is ISW Founder & President and the Jewish wife of Donald Kagan, a major Jewish neocon, who is the younger brother of Robert Kagan.

Clearly, Jewish neocons had occupied pivotal political appointee positions in foreign and security policy and consistently taken a globalist line across the Republican and Democratic administrations. In other words, their party affiliation is not an effective indicator to grasp the significance of their political action, since their allegiance is based on the creed of globalism.

6. Conclusion

Hitherto, this chapter has explored the essential nature of the war in Ukraine from a macro-historical perspective on modern and contemporary international relations. Its analytical focus has been placed on the seemingly odd continuity of the early Soviet and the globalist U.S. grand strategic approaches, with diasporic Jewish leaders at either political or policy levels as an intervening variable. More specifically, the discussion has centered on the dynamic linkage of ①historic Ukraine and the Ashkenazi Jewish, ②the birth of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, ③Trotsky's struggle against Stalin as communist internationalism vs. nationalism, ④the emergence and rise of neoconservatism, and ⑤U.S. globalist policy toward the war in Ukraine.

The study has found that Jewish neocons as the modern variant of Trotskyists exerted a deadly catalytic effect on the interplay of U.S. and Russian geostrategic interaction. It has to be noted that Trotsky once vainly aspired to accelerate the establishment of an international soviet republic, while both American conservative hardliners and liberal hawks

today like to see a global empire of democracy, if feasible, as built in the creeds of the American Independence Revolution. Evidently, there has been great opportunity for Jewish Trotskyist intellectuals in the United States, now dubbed as neocons, to take advantage of U.S. hegemonic power in pursuing an unrealized dream of their total emancipation from the modern nation-state and the inter-state system. Thus, Russia's head-on collision with the globalist U.S. is inevitable because today's Russia follows a nationalist approach to foreign and security policy as a result of the early Soviet's choice of one-state socialism over international communism that still continues essentially until today. It is well known that the post-Lenin Soviet Union had not accorded top priority to world revolution up to its demise.

Hence, the U.S.-Russia confrontation, especially the war in the Ukraine, should be comprehended in the context of globalism vs. nationalism. The dominant narrative of democracy vs. authoritarianism is off the mark but may be useful war propaganda to enhance solidarity among the U.S.-led West's liberal democracies, but only when Ukrainian armed forces are not inferior to Russia on the battlegrounds. However, Ukraine now is totally inferior as demonstrated by the de facto compelled resignation of U.S. Undersecretary of Defense for Political Affairs Victoria Nuland in March 2022, due to the failed implementation of Ukraine policy that she had led.

Even after a defeat on the Ukrainian battleground, the U.S.-led West could continue its global geopolitical confrontation with Russia, while the Global South refuses to side with the West. This inert approach would only further weaken the U.S.-led West economically and politically as significant symptoms have been widely observed. It is high time that the U.S. make a decisive shift from hyper-globalism to prudent realism in world politics. In this sense, the second-term Trump administration since January 2025 has begun to play an important role in making such a shift.

Chapter 9

Why truce talks now ? The significance of the Trump Revolution

On February 18, 2025, U.S. and Russian negotiation teams had the initial formal truce talks on “the war in Ukraine” in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. Why did the two governments finally agree to sit at a negotiation table although having long refused to do so? This chapter will explore an answer for this dramatic shift.

1. Biden’s vs. Putin’s war objectives

Certainly, Russia and Ukraine have been engaged in protracted warfare since February 24, 2022, primarily in Ukraine and, to a lesser extent, Crimea, the Kursk Oblast of Russia, and some areas in European Russia proper. Yet, the limited warfare may be comprehended as “the final stage of the U.S.-Russia proxy war in Donbas” (2014-2022)¹⁵⁴, in the context of their overall strategic rivalry and, more specifically, in light of the interplay of their continual political interference and direct or indirect armed intervention¹⁵⁵. Now this is shown by the Riyadh truce talks

154) Masahiro Matsumura, “The Russia-Ukraine warfare as the final stage of U.S.-Russia proxy war in Donbas (2014-2022),” *IFIMES Research*, April 6, 2023, <https://www.ifimes.org/en/researches/the-russia-ukraine-warfare-as-the-final-stage-of-us-russia-proxy-war-in-donbas-2014-2022/5156?q>, accessed on March 27, 2025.

155) Masahiro Matsumura, “Handling the Ukraine Crisis: A Geopolitical Perspective,” *IFIMES Research*, February 18, 2022, <https://www.ifimes.org/en/researches/handling-the-ukraine-crisis-a-geopolitical-perspective/4998?q>, accessed on March 27, 2025; Masahiro Matsumura, “Ukraine as Biden’s Sacrificed Pawn: A Mismanagement under the Declining U.S. Hegemony,” *IFIMES Research*, March 12, 2022, <https://www.ifimes.org/en/researches/ukraine-as-bidens-sacrificed-pawn-a-mismanagement-under-the-declining-us->

between the U.S. and Russian governments that excluded Ukrainian participants.

As Carl von Clausewitz says, war is the continuation of politics by other means. This implies that a war is waged due to an irreconcilable conflict of the national interests of different states and is to be settled through victory and defeat or through wartime diplomacy that reflects their relative military superiority or inferiority consequent on actual warfare. For the U.S. and Russian nuclear superpowers, a total war is impracticable. Also, Russia possesses adequate military power and war potential, while the United States is capable to continue providing sufficient military and financial aids to Ukraine, involving significant war protraction. Thus, the conflict will surely go on until at least one of the two great powers runs out of its war resources and/or will power or make a basic change of its war objective.

Obviously, the key is the birth of the second-term Donald Trump administration that has come to power with his strong public pledge to reverse President Joseph Biden's Ukraine policy and put an end to the armed conflict, particularly given Russian President Vladimir Putin's unchanged approach to it. Thus, it is crucially important to examine Biden's and Putin's war objectives and Trump's general foreign and security policy line that encompasses Ukraine policy. On March 26, 2022, about one month after the Russian invasion to Ukraine, President Biden in his major address at Warsaw's Royal Palace said, "Putin cannot remain in power", revealing his war objective of forcing President Putin out of power through political, economic, and military pressures, not direct armed

hegemony/5011?q, accessed on March 27, 2025; Masahiro Matsumura, "Unmasking War Propaganda against Russian Aggression: An Investigative Approach," *IFIMES Research*, April 22, 2020, <https://www.ifimes.org/en/researches/unmasking-war-propaganda-against-russian-aggression-an-investigative-approach/5039?q>, accessed on March 27, 2025; and, Matsumura, "The Russian-Ukraine warfare...", *op. cit.*

intervention, against Russia.¹⁵⁶⁾ On the other hand, in August 2022, President Putin delivered a speech on putting an end to U.S. hegemony as the prime war objective,¹⁵⁷⁾ formalizing the point in an official Russian government document, “Foreign Policy Concept” of March 2023.¹⁵⁸⁾

Thus, it is no wonder that both Biden and Putin had refused any truce talks for the war in Ukraine, and natural that Trump and Putin are now aligning themselves against the longtime U.S. global hegemonic policy that had evolved over Bill Clinton, G.W. Bush, Barack Obama and Joe Biden presidencies, with the interruption of President Trump’s first term. In fact, Trump’s first-term vainly attempted such an anti-globalist strategic alignment with Russia in view of countering China as a primary competitor. Yet, he had only been mired in the so-called “Russiagate,” or the unsubstantiated allegations and failed impeachment inquiry that had been put forth by the globalist establishment on Capitol and amplified by the mainstream media, about Russian interference in the 2016 U.S. elections.

Now it is necessary to comprehend the essential features of the American globalist establishment, the longtime struggle between the top-dog globalists and the underdog anti-globalist, and the decisive reversal of their power positions that involves major shifts of basic U.S. internal and external policy lines. This chapter will begin with the U.S.-U.K. “special relationship” that has been central to the longtime U.S. global hegemonic

156) Jarrett Renshaw and Karol Badohal, “Biden says Putin ‘cannot remain in power’ in fiery speech on Ukraine war,” Reuters, March 27, 2022, <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/biden-call-free-world-stand-against-putin-poland-speech-2022-03-26/>, accessed on March 27, 2025.

157) Vladimir Isachenkov, “Putin condemns U.S. ‘hegemony,’ predicts an end to ‘unipolar’ world,” *Los Angeles Times*, August 16, 2022, <https://www.latimes.com/world-nation/story/2022-08-16/putin-blasts-us-hegemony-ukraine-war>, accessed on March 27, 2025.

158) “The Concept of the Foreign Policy of the Russian Federation,” The Foreign Ministry of the Russian Federation, March 31, 2023, https://mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/fundamental_documents/1860586/, accessed on March 27, 2025.

policy, including the war in Ukraine.

2. Hostile relations between the British Empire and the United States

Since WWII until the start of the second-term Trump administration, the United States and the United Kingdom, the current and previous hegemon, had kept the evolving strong special alliance relationship for hegemonic world policy. Such a relationship has been demonstrated by the two countries' frequent and close cooperation in foreign and security policy and joint military operations in major regional wars, most notably the Gulf, Afghanistan, and Iraq Wars, with the longtime Anglo-American global communication intelligence (COMINT) alliance since the WWII among the United States, the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

Yet, the special relationship is neither natural nor permanent. As is well known, U.S.-U.K. relations had evolved from early hostilities to great-power competition then to conflictual hegemonic transition. In the 17th century, Puritans emigrated from England to North America after having suffered religious persecution by the English absolute monarchy. Then, North American colonists won the Revolutionary War against the British monarchy and declared independence in 1776. Thereafter, the new state won the second de facto War of Independence (1812-1815) against the former suzerain. The United States took advantage of the favorable international balance of power to continue protracted confrontation against the British Empire, while referring to the Monroe Doctrine. Notably in the American Civil War (1861-1865), the Empire followed neutrality favorable to the secessionist Confederacy by recognizing it as a belligerent community under international law, enabling unimpeded commercial trade with it amid the Union's imposition of blockade, and economically supporting the Confederacy against the Union.¹⁵⁹⁾ Toward the end of 19th

159) "British Support During the U.S. Civil War," Lowcountry Digital Library, <https://ldhi.library.cofc.edu/exhibits/show/liverpools-abereromby-square/britain-and-us-civil-war>, accessed on March 27, 2025.

century, the United States steadily became a primary industrial power, involving significant relative decline of the then-British economic hegemony and putting its military hegemony in a great strain without adequate economic power base.

A typical British choice was the Anglo-Japan alliance (1902-1923) in which London employed Tokyo as its surrogate regional military power in East Asia, demonstrated by the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) as a part of the Great Game. The alliance turned out to be a great geostrategic obstacle to the U.S. mega-regional hegemonic aspiration as it marched into the Pacific after it ceded Guam and the Philippines as a result of the victory of the Spanish-American War (1898). Eventually, Washington drove a wedge between London and Tokyo by replacing the alliance with an ineffective collective security framework under the Washington Naval Treaty (1923). It is well known that Washington entertained the War Plan Red against the British Empire and the War Plan Orange against Japan¹⁶⁰. Given that the Plan-Red document was declassified only in 1974, such strategic thinking might have continued well beyond the end of WWII,¹⁶¹ and possibly continues even today.

Obviously, the United States had long had highly competitive relations with the British Empire until WWII when the debilitation of British hegemony and the power transition to U.S. hegemony became irreversible. During the transition, Britain uselessly struggled to retain its hegemonic power and influence at the systemic levels by institutionalizing its permanent member status of the U.N. Security Council, vainly establishing a supranational currency, Bancor, in the postwar international economic system through the Bretton Woods Conference,¹⁶² and reinforcing the

160) For War Plan Red, see, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/war-plan-red.htm>, accessed on March 27, 2025; for War Plan Orange, see, <https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/war-plan-orange.htm>.

161) "Joint Army and Navy Basic War Plan Red," Joint Board 325 - Serial 435, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/16749799>, accessed on March 27, 2025.

162) James Boughton, "Why White, Not Keynes? Inventing the Postwar

British Commonwealth prior to the full postwar decolonization. Instead, as discussed below, Britain explored building the aforementioned special relationship to enjoy a privileged position within the U.S. hegemonic system, positioning itself as a superficial prime supporter and arguably a significant backstage manipulator.

3. The emergence of Anglo-American globalists

Building the special relationship required a long prelude to form the core of trans-Atlantic interpersonal networks at the elite levels that share similar values, worldviews, national interests, and external policy lines, especially in foreign and security affairs. In modern international history, Britain became the first predominant colonial power with genuinely global outreach, with the need of running its own global commerce, trade, financial, transportation, and military systems. To sustain a British-style global hegemonic policy, the history of British democracy shows that effective control over the legislative and executive branches and its central bank is essential because active external political interference and armed intervention require sufficient national fiscal flexibility and financial liquidity to finance such external policy. These three conditions are also crucial to have transformed the United States to a hegemon.

1) The legislative and executive branches

The former British North American colony had an anti-British political culture, government institution, and external policy lines that are built in the U.S. Constitution. In fact, the United States had not made a decisive shift toward building global hegemony until WWII. The country adhered to the anti-globalist policy line according to the Monroe Doctrine that long called at most for regional hegemony in the Western Hemisphere, later expanded to the Pacific after the cession of Guam and the Philippines. This

International Monetary System,” IMF Working Paper, March 2002, WP/02/52, <https://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/wp/2002/wp0252.pdf>, accessed on March 27, 2025.

is well exemplified by the Senate's rejection to accede to the Covenant of the League of Nations and strong reluctance at both elite and public levels to intervene in European and global international relations prior to Japan's attack against Pearl Harbor, while, until then, the Franklin Roosevelt administration was only authorized to provide arms and equipment to Allied powers according to the Lend-Lease Act of 1941.

Also, the globalist shifts in U.S. external policy lines needed major domestic political transformation involving power shifts from state to federal government. More specifically, this transformation required significantly strengthening bureaucracies in foreign and security policy, the military and armed forces, and intelligence apparatuses, which had to await a big bang during the Cold War.

2) The central bank

The United States had long lacked a modern central bank, despite the First Bank of the United States (1791-1811) and the Second Bank of the United States (1817-1841), both for fiscal management during and after the War of 1812. They did not set monetary policy, regulate private banks, hold their excess reserves, or act as a lender of last resort. This precluded a prerequisite to sufficient financial liquidity for globalist foreign and security policy, which would be fully made possible by leaving a gold standard system to freely issue non-convertible paper money and national bonds.

Importantly, only in 1913, the Federal Reserve Act was enacted to establish the unique central banking system, which is governed by the Presidentially-appointed board of governors -- the Federal Reserve Board -- but consisted of 12 District Federal Reserve Banks (FRBs) as collective goods of privately-owned commercial banks and other financial companies in individual districts. To be noted, as of July 23, 1983, the FRB-New York, arguably most influential as it serves for the nation's financial center, was, according to its stock list, "heavily influenced by banks controlled by 'the

London Connection', that is, the Rothschild-controlled Bank of England."¹⁶³ In fact, the original plan for such a system was made in a closed manner by a small exclusive group of those who had "the London connection", and the establishment bill was passed when a significant portion of objecting legislators were absent for Christmas holidays.¹⁶⁴ Obviously, adherents and promoters of the system contrived a plot for enactment through following legal but law-evading procedures.

3) The interpersonal networks

To develop cross-Atlantic interpersonal networks, especially after WWI when a hegemonic transition from the British Empire to the United States would be considered inevitable sooner or later, independent think tanks were designed by Anglo-American political leaders, policy makers, practitioners and academics for policy research and discussion in foreign and security affairs, facilitating possible policy coordination and cooperation. The design led to the establishment of two sister think tanks, or the Royal Institute of International Affairs (RIIA) in London in 1920 and the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) in New York in 1921, both of which have since been highly influential intellectually and in providing political appointee and policy advisor candidates.¹⁶⁵ These nonpartisan think tanks have included diverse members, both globalists and anti-globalists, but have been instrumental to strengthen sharing common

163) Eustace Mullins, *the Secrets of the Federal Reserve Bank: The London Connection*, Carson City, NV: Bridger House Publishers, 1991, pp. 179-180. This is also consistent with: "Bank's Stock List Full of Surprises", *New York Times*, September 23, 1914.

164) Mullins, *op. cit.*, pp. 1-39.

165) Hiroaki Shiozaki, *Shin-Kokusai-Chitsujyo wo Mezashite: RIIA, CFR, IPR no Keii to Ryo-Taisen-Kan no Renkei-Kannkei* (Toward a New World Order: the Circumstances of RIIA, CFR, and IPR and their Coordination Relations during the Inter-war Period), Kyushu University Press, 1998. Inderjeet Parmar, *Think Tanks and Power in Foreign Policy Think Tanks and Power in Foreign Policy: A Comparative Study of the Role and Influence of the Council on Foreign Relations and the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1939-1945*, Palgrave Macmillan, London, 2004.

values, worldviews, national interests, and external policy lines and to form general or specific mainstream views, if not consensus. Earlier, the CFR played a primary hub role in the U.S. revolving door between the government, Wall Street & big business, intelligence, media, and academia, which has undergone relative decline through the significant expansion of the think tank sector.

Yet, even toward the end of the WWII, the U.N Charter stipulated the functions and powers of the Security Council, especially the five permanent member states with veto power —the United States, the Soviet Union, Britain, France, and the Republic of China—, constituting a new variant of the multipolar balance of power system among the P5 with each possessing its own de facto sphere of influence. Signed in June 1945, the Charter took an anti-globalist and anti-hegemonic approach to the postwar world order in the early formative years. At this stage, the United States did not adopt a global hegemonic approach as mainstream policy line.

4. The rise of Anglo-American globalists

The U.N. Security Council was incapable of coping with the postwar Soviet expansion due to its ideological and military hyper-aggressiveness. Consequently, the Council's functions had considerably been hollowed out through the all-out U.S.-Soviet exchanges of vetoes until the Cold War ended, which had set world politics adrift.

Yet, there was a decisive shift in U.S. domestic opinion, at both elite and public levels, toward a liberal international order under U.S. global hegemony and with formation of the so-called national security state. In 1946, the then-immediate past British Prime Minister Winston Churchill delivered “Iron Curtain Speech” at Westminster College, Fulton, Missouri. It constituted a turning point to building the U.S. global hegemonic system, including the world's strongest armed forces with predominant

power projection capability, the network of global bases and facilities, and forward deployment, as well as extensive intelligence apparatus, such as the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), military intelligence agencies, and the homeland counter-intelligence organs of the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

The United Kingdom has supported U.S. hegemony as a prime ally with its intelligence power that is built on the British Empire's experience, legacy assets and networks across the world, and with limited yet significant military power that is used for joint military action with the United States to enhance its international legitimacy. Recently, intelligence cooperation has gained increasing importance in the special relationship because the United Kingdom has undergone conspicuous relative economic and military decline, making it almost impossible to be a self-reliant global power.¹⁶⁶⁾ The effectiveness of U.K. military power considerably depends on the predominant U.S. military system, particularly its war-fighting capability and national technical means for intelligence. Yet, the country possesses marked comparative advantage in human intelligence capability and public diplomacy, supplemented by the influence of the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and other major media. Due to the substantial soft power in contrast to the dwindling hard power, the U.K. special relationship with the U.S. hegemonic system, therefore, is concurrently symbiotic and parasitic.

Unsurprisingly, the British globalists have been able to wield such soft power effectively on American counterparts through the aforementioned interpersonal networks at the elite levels and also over the public indirectly through government and media. As a result, they have played a backstage manipulator role in influencing and sometimes shaping U.S.

166) Michael Moran, "The United Kingdom Finally Acknowledges Its Hard-Power Limits," *Foreign Policy*, April 21, 2021, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/04/16/the-united-kingdom-finally-acknowledges-its-hard-power-limits/>, accessed on March 27, 2025.

global-hegemony policy from within.

More importantly, the predominance of Anglo-American globalists has been reinforced by the U.S. national security state that gives them large funds, power and influence. It is well known that U.S. intelligence agencies, especially CIA, have employed extensive overt and covert operations prior to the use of armed forces. Normally, these operations are subjected to regular and stringent Congressional oversight, but, under the Cold War and similarly tense international relations, it became imperfect and often loose so that the agencies enjoyed virtual discretion, involving high risks of misuse and abuse as typified by the Iran-Contra Affairs (1985-1987). To manipulate international affairs according to globalist policy lines, therefore, these operations are often geared to controlled instability, rather than stability and security, in which opportunities to manipulate abound.

Certainly, with the Cold War over, the U.S. intelligence sector was once substantially downsized to realize a peace dividend, involving large budget cuts.¹⁶⁷⁾ The slashed intelligence functions and personnel were not only absorbed into front organizations and private intelligence companies, but also, for example, into the foreign aid programs under the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)¹⁶⁸⁾ and the democracy promotion programs under the government-funded National Endowment for Democracy.¹⁶⁹⁾ Yet, by taking advantage of such a camouflaging approach, the sector has expanded and thrived due to a sharp increase of intelligence

167) Craig Eisendrath. ed., *National Insecurity: U.S. Intelligence After the Cold War*; 2000, Temple University Press.

168) Catherine A. Traywick, "'Cuban Twitter' and Other Times USAID Pretended To Be an Intelligence Agency," *Foreign Policy*, April 3, 2014, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2014/04/03/cuban-twitter-and-other-times-usaid-pretended-to-be-an-intelligence-agency/>, accessed on March 27, 2025.

169) Kristin Christman, "The National Endowment for 'Democracy': A Second CIA," Counter Currents Org, May 30, 2022, <https://countercurrents.org/2022/05/the-national-endowment-for-democracy-a-second-cia/>, accessed on March 27, 2025.

activities and operations over the global war on terrorism (2001-2021), with the inertia until the second-term Trump administration.¹⁷⁰⁾

Early in the 21st century, the Anglo-American globalists already gained predominant domestic and international clout through the U.S. national security state. They combined political interference and armed intervention, occasionally with self-righteous manipulation of “freedom and democracy” in individual cases and under the banner of the U.S.-led international liberal order, while such symbol manipulation may stand well if with due restraint and prudence.

5. The Trump Revolution and the fall of Anglo-American globalists

During the 2010s, the Anglo-American hegemonic policy began stumbling amid serious relative U.S. economic and military decline. This resulted from the significant protraction of the Global War on Terrorism, particularly in occupied Iraq and Afghanistan, and the financial crisis ensued after the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers, an American global financial firm. The United States and its major liberal democratic allies have undergone serious industrial hollow-out effects and socio-economic bipolarization that have been brought about by hyper-globalization during the post-Cold War U.S. unipolar moment.

The evolving realities were only favorable for the Anglo-American globalists and their supporters at the sacrifice of the anti-globalists and the seriously impoverished American ex-middle class. Donald Trump led the latter’s political movement against the former and won the presidential election of 2016. Yet, his first-term administration faced fierce opposition and resistance from the former, only having been entrapped into one scandal after another that impeded his struggle against the globalist

170) Tim Shorrock, “The Corporate Takeover of U.S. Intelligence,” Sharrock Files, June 1, 2007, <https://timshorrock.com/the-corporate-takeover-of-us-intelligence/>, accessed on March 27, 2025.

establishment and its policy lines.

Backed by all the much stronger anti-globalist forces, Trump made a landslide victory in the 2024 presidential election, and, once in office in January 2025, his second-term administration has begun launching policy change measures all at once against the globalist establishment, with a major focus on the intelligence community. With the creation of the U.S. DOGE (Department of Government Efficiency) Service in January 20, 2025, the administration has tried to make major cuts in civilian employees at the Defense Department and CIA, with wholesale encouragement of early retirement to all the CIA employees. Also, the administration announced shutdowns of USAID and Department-of-Education programs and, with necessary legislation, abolition of them. Most importantly, the administration terminated providing necessary administrative and policy funds from the Department of Treasury to the intelligence agencies by promptly discharging Acting Secretary Treasury David Lebryk who had long served for globalist policies and programs for more than a decade.¹⁷¹⁾

Thus, the essential feature of the ongoing Trump Revolution lies in thorough dismantlement of the Anglo-American globalist power base within the federal government, especially the security and state apparatus, and elimination, or at least decisive weakening of the globalist establishment. Surprisingly, the revolution necessarily constitutes a de facto third American War of Independence, after the first and second ones against the British Empire (1775-1783 and 1812-1815).

From this perspective, it remains to be seen how long it takes for Presidents Trump and Putin to reach a truce agreement for the war in Ukraine due to their different national interests. The two sides now sit at a negotiation table because they share the common goal to put an end to

171) Tyler Durden, "10 Days That Shook The World," ZeroHedge, February 7, 2025, <https://www.zerohedge.com/political/10-days-shook-world>, accessed on March 27, 2025.

the war but may find it difficult to reconcile their differences. Yet, more importantly, they might agree to have a protracted negotiation because they need more time to corner the Anglo-American globalists and their supporters in other major Western, especially European, societies who would be forced to struggle a harder military and economic war of attrition that would weaken their political base decisively to lose the reins of government. The world now has to stay tuned on the interplay of the Trump Revolution and the truce negotiation.

Chapter 10

Tariffs as Weapons in Trump’s Partisan Strife: Political and Economic Logics in a New Era of American Nationalism

The resurgence of Donald J. Trump as U.S. President in 2025 has once again thrust the use of tariffs to the forefront of American policy debate. The imposition of new tariffs on not only strategic rivals, such as China, but also traditional allies, from Europe to East Asia, has triggered familiar economic alarms. Analysts warn of lost efficiency, global trade friction, and higher prices for American consumers.¹⁷²⁾ Yet, to view these tariffs purely in terms of their economic consequences is to fundamentally misunderstand their role. Trump’s tariffs are not best understood as calibrated interventions to correct trade imbalances or nurture industries. Rather, they are deeply political acts – deliberately confrontational, heavy-handed, and intended to foster an insurgent challenge to the post-1980s American consensus forged primarily by the entrenched globalist establishment.

Increasingly, it is apparent that Trump’s economic nationalism challenges not merely existing trade relationships but also the institutional architecture of American power: the monetary system, the balance between government and financial capital, and, not least, the very

172) Pablo D. Fajgelbaum, Pinelopi K Goldberg, Patrick J Kennedy, Amit K Khandelwal, “The Return to Protectionism,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, February 2020, Vol. 135, No.1, pp. 1-55. Joseph E. Stiglitz, *Globalization and Its Discontents Revisited: Anti-Globalization in the Era of Trump*, W.W. Norton, 2018. Warwick J. McKibbin, “Trump’s tariffs damage the US economy more if they drive investors away from American assets,” Peterson Institute for International Economics, June 25, 2025, <https://www.piie.com/blogs/realtime-economics/2025/trumps-tariffs-damage-us-economy-more-if-they-drive-investors-away>, accessed on July 29, 2025.

legitimacy of the postwar international order. This chapter will argue that tariffs – far from being archaic or irrational – are central to Trump’s effort to realign the American state, providing both fiscal revenue and political symbolism needed to mobilize his political base and wage war against entrenched elites. Through this lens, tariffs emerge as a weapon in Trump’s ongoing partisan strife, with ripple effects extending far beyond the numerical calculations of economists.

1. From Free Trade to Tariff Nationalism: Historical Antecedents

To appreciate the strategic novelty of Trump’s renewed tariffs, one must first situate them in their historical context. For much of American history, tariffs were not a deviation but the norm – a primary means of state finance and protection of a young manufacturing sector. From 1789 when the federal government started functioning according to the Constitution until the passage of the Sixteenth Amendment in 1913, tariffs supplied the majority of federal revenue, underwriting the infrastructure, military, and diplomatic capacity of the new republic.¹⁷³⁾

Tariff policy was fiercely contested even then, dividing North and South, industrialists and agrarians, nationalists and cosmopolitans. The 19th-century Republican Party, in particular, forged an enduring coalition around protectionist policies – a coalition that facilitated rapid industrialization, westward expansion, and an increasing projection of American power abroad.¹⁷⁴⁾ It was only with the twin shocks of the Great Depression and the Second World War that free trade became orthodoxy, embodied in institutions such as GATT, the IMF, and, later, the WTO.¹⁷⁵⁾

173) Douglas A. Irwin, *Clashing over Commerce: A History of US Trade Policy*, University of Chicago Press, 2017.

174) Daniel Walker Howe, *What Hath God Wrought: The Transformation of America, 1815-1848*, Oxford University Press, 2007. Joseph E. Stiglitz, *Globalization and Its Discontents Revisited: Anti-Globalization in the Era of Trump*, W.W. Norton, 2018.

175) Thomas Oatley, *International Political Economy*, 6th Edition, Routledge, 2019.

The post-Cold War period witnessed the apotheosis of this consensus. Trade liberalization, deregulation, and global integration – sometimes called “neoliberalism” – became the guiding tenets of U.S. domestic and foreign policy, promoted as an unalloyed good for growth, peace, and prosperity. However, this consensus was never uncontested. Critics from both the left and right decried the offshoring of jobs, deindustrialization of heartland communities, and the growing dominance of Wall Street over Main Street.¹⁷⁶⁾ By the 2010s, these undercurrents burst into the mainstream, culminating in the anti-establishment protests that propelled Trump’s political career.

Trump’s return to aggressive tariff policy is thus both a rupture and a reconstruction: a break with the immediate past, but also an invocation of a much older tradition of statecraft, one rooted in tariffs as central to both revenue and national identity.

2. Tariffs as Political, Not Merely Economic, Instruments

Most contemporary commentary on tariffs remains constrained by an “economistic” frame. Will tariffs reduce America’s trade deficit? Will they restore lost manufacturing jobs? Will they provoke retaliation or higher prices? While such questions are relevant, they are insufficient to explain Trump’s persistent commitment to tariffs in the face of elite consensus.¹⁷⁷⁾

The central insight of Trump’s approach is its subordination of narrow economic concerns to broader political logic. Tariffs, for Trump and his

176) Dani Rodrik, *Straight Talk on Trade: Ideas for a Sane World Economy*, Princeton University Press, 2018. Joseph E. Stiglitz, *Globalization and Its Discontents Revisited: Anti-Globalization in the Era of Trump*, W.W. Norton, 2018.

177) David H. Autor and David Dorn, and Gordon H. Hanson, “The China Shock: Learning from Labor Market Adjustment to Large Changes in Trade,” National Bureau of Economic Research, Working Paper, January 2016, <https://www.nber.org/papers/w21906>, accessed on July 28, 2025.

allies, serve as a tool of insurgency against the “globalist” establishment – a term encompassing not only Democrats and international organizations, but also Republicans, financial elites, and transnational corporations seen as complicit in offshoring and deindustrialization.¹⁷⁸⁾ This strategy is neither accidental nor incoherent. By linking tariffs to themes of sovereignty, national greatness, and working-class revival, Trump transforms a technical fiscal tool into a populist rallying cry.

Furthermore, by foregrounding tariffs, Trump directly challenges two cornerstones of the post-1945 order: the independence of central monetary authority (i.e., the Federal Reserve) and the government’s reliance on debt and financial capital for public finance. As discussed below, this confrontation has profound implications for the balance of power within the American state.

3. The Political-Economic Architecture of the Federal Reserve System

Central to Trump’s current tariff strategy is an attempt to reorganize the financial foundations of government. Since the establishment of the Federal Reserve in 1913, U.S. public finance has increasingly relied on debt issuance – Treasury bonds – for government spending. These bonds, in turn, are purchased by both domestic and foreign actors and play a critical role in the Fed’s management of monetary policy and credit conditions.¹⁷⁹⁾

The Federal Reserve is an unusual institution: its regional banks, including the influential New York Fed, are technically owned by private banks, which receive a statutory dividend – currently 6% – on their paid-in capital, in pursuance to the Federal Reserve Act, Section 7(a)(1). The vast

178) Mark Blyth, *Austerity: The History of a Dangerous Idea*, Oxford University Press, 2013.

179) Barry Eichengreen, *Exorbitant Privilege: The Rise and Fall of the Dollar and the Future of the International Monetary System*, Oxford University Press, 2011.

majority of the Fed's profits, however, are remitted to the federal Treasury.¹⁸⁰⁾ The significance of the dividend is largely symbolic; but for critics such as Trump, it would embody the enduring influence of Wall Street and the “deep state” over national monetary policy.

By shifting revenue generation from bond sales (which expand the Fed's balance sheet and fuel financial sector profits) toward tariffs (a direct tax on imported goods), Trump aims to reduce government dependence on the financial sector. In doing so, he seeks not only to reshape fiscal priorities, but also to sever—or at least loosen—the grip of the financial establishment on national governance. Such a move harks back to Andrew Jackson's 1830s “war on the bank,” but with the enemy redefined as modern global finance.¹⁸¹⁾

4. Tariffs as a Wedge Issue: Populist Mobilization and Institutional Disruption

If tariff revenue is unlikely to offset the costs of reindustrialization—given the massive scale of offshoring and technological displacement—then the enduring utility of tariffs lies elsewhere: as a tool of political mobilization. For Trump, tariffs serve as a “wedge issue,” galvanizing supporters against perceived enemies at home and abroad. The symbolism is powerful: tariffs punish the “globalist elite,” reward domestic producers (at least rhetorically), and dramatize a break from the well-worn scripts of bipartisanship and internationalism.¹⁸²⁾

180) Federal Reserve System, Federal Reserve Banks Combined Financial Statements As of and for the Years Ended December 31, 2024 and 2023 and Independent Auditors' Report, March 12, 2025, <https://www.federalreserve.gov/aboutthefed/files/combinedfinstmt2024.pdf>, accessed on July 29, 2025.

181) Robert V. Remini, *Andrew Jackson and the Bank War*; Norton, 1967.

182) Justin Gest, *The New Minority: White Working Class Politics in an Age of Immigration and Inequality*, Oxford University Press, 2016. Liesbet Hooghe and Gary Marks, “Cleavage Theory Meets Europe's Crises: Lipset, Rokkan, and the Transnational Cleavage,” *Journal of European Public Policy*, Vol. 25, No. 1, 2018, pp. 109-135.

This process is fundamentally about realignment. Trump’s political base, composed of working-class whites, social conservatives, and nationalist entrepreneurs, is linked by a shared sense of betrayal—by politicians, parties, and economic policy-makers who, over the past four decades, prioritized efficiency and global integration over stability, equity, and national coherence. Tariffs, in this sense, are not so much effective levers of economic revival as they are badges of political identity, providing evidence of a willingness to confront the “administrative state” on behalf of ordinary Americans. This strategy follows a classic playbook of populist politics: mobilize an aggrieved coalition by identifying corrupt elites, dramatizing conflict, and promising a bold—and restorative—departure from prevailing norms.¹⁸³⁾

5. Critics’ Arguments: Economic and International Risks

The mainstream critique of Trumpian tariffs is by now familiar. Most economists argue that high tariffs are a blunt, ineffective instrument, raising costs for American consumers, provoking retaliation by trading partners, and disrupting complex global supply chains. They warn that America lacks both the skilled labor force and the physical capital to regain lost industries, given decades of offshoring, automation, and de-unionization.¹⁸⁴⁾ Some project that tariffs will reduce growth, increase inflation, and undermine relations with allies, all for limited (or negative) economic gains.¹⁸⁵⁾

183) Cas Mudde and Cristóbal Rovira Kaltwasser, *Populism: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford University Press, 2017.

184) Arnaud Costinot, Jonathan Vogel and Su Wang, “Global Supply Chains and Wage Inequality”, *American Economic Review*, Vol. 102, No. 3, May 2012, pp. 396–401.

185) Warwick J. McKibbin, “The US revenue implications of President Trump’s 2025 tariffs,” PIIE Briefing 25-2, Peterson Institute for International Economics, April 2025, <https://www.piie.com/publications/piie-briefings/2025/us-revenue-implications-president-trumps-2025-tariffs>, accessed on July 28, 2025.

While such criticisms are compelling in narrow economic terms, they miss the political logic of Trump’s approach. Economic efficiency – and even long-term prosperity – may be willingly sacrificed for political leverage and symbolic power. This trade-off is explicit: Trump and his inner circle are less interested in GDP maximization than in reconstructing the domestic political economy along nationalist lines, even at significant short-term cost.¹⁸⁶⁾

6. Tariffs as Sovereignty and National Identity

A critical, but often overlooked, aspect of Trump’s tariff policy is its role in the ongoing debate over sovereignty and national identity. The post-Cold War era is notable not only for economic integration, but also for the emergence of transnational institutions – the WTO, IMF, World Bank, and others – whose rules, critics argue, have eroded the policy autonomy of national governments.¹⁸⁷⁾ Trump’s tariffs, and his open contempt for multilateral frameworks, form part of a broader effort to reclaim what he portrays as America’s “lost sovereignty.”

This impulse is not merely rhetorical. It connects directly with a longer tradition of American exceptionalism: the belief that the United States must be free to chart its own course, unconstrained by foreign powers or supranational agreements.¹⁸⁸⁾ By invoking tariffs as a primary tool of statecraft, Trump taps not only into protectionist sentiment but into a deeply rooted suspicion of international entanglements.

186) Adriano Cozzolino, “Trumpism as nationalist neoliberalism. A critical enquiry into Donald Trump’s political economy,” *Interdisciplinary Political Studies*, Vol. 4, No. 1, 2018. Bastiaan Apeldoorn, *Trump and the remaking of American grand strategy : the shift from open door globalism to economic nationalism*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2023.

187) John Gerard Ruggie, “International Regimes, Transactions, and Change: Embedded Liberalism in the Postwar Economic Order,” *International Organization*, Vol. 36, No. 2, 1982, pp. 379–415.

188) Godfrey Hodgson, *The Myth of American Exceptionalism*, Yale University Press, 2010.

This theme resonates across parts of the American electorate that feel left behind by globalization – not only material “losers,” but also those whose sense of identity is tied to national strength and independence. The effectiveness of tariffs, then, is not just a function of their economic impact, but of their ability to affirm and dramatize an embattled vision of American nationhood.

7. Confronting the Federal Reserve: Institutional Conflict and the Limits of Populist Economics

One of the most audacious implications of Trump’s strategy is its challenge to the institutional autonomy of the Federal Reserve – an institution designed to operate above the immediate pressures of quotidian party politics.¹⁸⁹⁾ By advocating for a mix of fiscal and monetary policy that reduces reliance on central bank bond purchases, Trump seeks to undercut the power of the “technocratic” reserve system.

There are historical echoes here. Since its founding, the Federal Reserve has been a perennial target of populist ire – seen as unaccountable, cosmopolitan, and disproportionately serving the interests of financial capital.¹⁹⁰⁾ However, never before has a president so directly sought to supplant its central role in economic governance by relocating fiscal authority through the imposition of large-scale tariffs.

This confrontation has several dimensions:

Policy Autonomy: The Fed’s credibility depends on its perceived independence from short-term political cycles. Trump’s overt pressure threatens this autonomy, risking inflation expectations, financial stability,

189) Peter Conti-Brown, *The Power and Independence of the Federal Reserve*, Princeton University Press, 2016.

190) Elmus Wicker, *The Great Debate on Banking Reform: Nelson Aldrich and the Origins of the Fed*, Ohio State University Press, 2005.

and the dollar's status as a global reserve currency.¹⁹¹⁾

Public Finance: By displacing debt issuance with tariff revenue, the Trump administration seeks to marginalize financial intermediaries. However, the capacity for tariffs to replace the enormous volume of Treasury borrowing is limited, and the economic costs of higher tariffs may, in the long run, undermine fiscal stability.

Legitimacy: Trump's critique of the Fed resonates with a segment of voters distrustful of all "establishment" institutions. By redefining the central bank not as a neutral administrator but as an obstacle to national renewal, Trump risks politicizing monetary policy to an unprecedented degree.¹⁹²⁾

Whether or not Trump succeeds in "taming" the Fed, the institutional consequences are likely to reverberate far beyond his own administration.

8. Tariff Nationalism and Global Order: Comparative Perspectives

The use of tariffs as a mechanism for state-building, economic development, and national mobilization has deep roots in world history. Britain's Navigation Acts, Bismarck's German tariffs, Japan's Meiji-era protectionism, and the American Tariff Acts of the 19th century all sought to harness trade instruments for domestic consolidation and international leverage.¹⁹³⁾

191) Ben Bernanke, *The Federal Reserve and the Financial Crisis*, Princeton University Press, 2015.

192) John Cassidy, "Donald Trump's War with Jerome Powell and the Fed Is Far from Over," *New Yorker*, July 28, 2025, https://www.newyorker.com/news/the-financial-page/donald-trumps-war-with-jerome-powell-and-the-fed-is-far-from-over?utm_source=chatgpt.com, accessed on July 28, 2025.

193) Ha-Joon Chang, *Kicking Away the Ladder: Development Strategy in Historical Perspective*, Anthem Press, 2002. Ronald Findlay and Kevin H.

Trump’s policies, however, unfold in a different epoch – one marked by unprecedented supply chain interdependence, instantaneous capital flows, and the hegemonic power of the U.S. dollar. The risk is not merely economic retaliation, but deeper fragmentation of the international system, as allies and rivals respond in kind and the multilateral architecture frays.¹⁹⁴⁾

Comparing Trump’s tariff regime to past episodes clarifies both its ambition and its limitations. Earlier protectionism coincided with industrial takeoff and expanding domestic markets. In the contemporary United States, however, the labor market is more rigid, environmental constraints more acute, and the technological frontier less dependent on tariffs than on innovation policy and human capital investment.

9. Tariffs as a Vehicle for Realignment: The Future of the American State

Whether or not tariffs succeed in reviving manufacturing, they are likely to endure as political instruments – especially in a polarized political climate. For Trump, the ultimate goal is not GDP growth or trade balance per se, but structural transformation: the replacement of the neoliberal regime with a new nationalist, state-centered order.

The fate of this project is uncertain. The obstacles to reindustrialization are real, and the global system is more complex than the world of Andrew Jackson or William McKinley. Yet, as many great powers have done, the United States now faces a series of strategic choices about how to secure its economic base, manage the demands of an angry electorate, and sustain

O’Rourke, *Power and Plenty: Trade, War, and the World Economy in the Second Millennium*, Princeton University Press, 2007. Tetsuya Kuratani, “U.S. Tariff Act of 1789,” *Bulletin of Shikoku University*, No. 55, pp. 1-24, <https://shikoku-u.repo.nii.ac.jp/record/542/files/紀要A55号1-24p.pdf>, accessed on July 29, 2025.

194) Ada Tooze, *Crashed: How a Decade of Financial Crises Changed the World*, Viking, 2018.

its geopolitical role.

If Trump's experiment fails, the costs may be high—in lost growth, diminished alliances, and unstable institutions. If it succeeds, it could inaugurate a new era of American governance, centered on an explicit rejection of financial globalization and a renewed emphasis on state power and economic sovereignty.

10. Conclusion: Evaluating the Weaponization of Tariffs

In the final analysis, the question is not simply whether Trump's tariffs are economically sound—whether they “work” in traditional cost–benefit terms. Rather, the core issue is their role as weapons in an ongoing political and institutional struggle, one that pits a resurgent nationalism against the entrenched legacies of globalism and technocracy.

The ultimate verdict on Trump's strategy will depend not just on trade figures or manufacturing statistics, but on the extent to which tariffs succeed in reshaping the political economy of the United States. As a wedge issue, a fiscal tool, and a symbol of nationalist resistance, tariffs are likely to remain central to the contest over America's future.

The stakes are high. At risk are not only economic efficiency or diplomatic goodwill, but the foundational principles governing the relationship between the state, markets, and democratic legitimacy. Whether Trump's approach marks a new beginning or a dramatic dead end, it provides a compelling case study in the power—and peril—of fusing economic tools with partisan warfare.

Chapter 11

Trump's Gangster Diplomacy ? – The Political Economy of U.S.-Japan Tariffs under a Hegemonic Security Regime

1. Introduction: A Tariff Deal under Duress

In July 2025, after eight rounds of negotiating talks in Washington, Japan and the United States struck a bilateral deal on tariffs, establishing a flat 15% U.S. tariff on Japanese exports. While this outcome was preferable to the initially floated rates of 34% and 24%, it nonetheless marked a significant deterioration from the long-standing 2.5% rate that governed most Japanese exports under previous trade regimes. At their core are there the principles and practices of Most-Favored-Nation treatment under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade and later World Trade Organization agreements, which are essential for expansion of international trade and prosperity. Instead, the Donald Trump administration invokes domestic legal instruments, such as Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act (1962) and Section 301 of Trade Act (1974) to justify unilateral tariffs. The imposition of this new tariff ceiling will undoubtedly erode Japanese exporters' price competitiveness in U.S. markets, threatening profit margins, investment stability, and long-term viability across sectors deeply integrated into global value chains.

What sets this agreement apart is not only its economic consequences but the method and context in which it was reached. President Donald Trump's unilateralist approach to trade negotiations and the absence of transparency in the deal's final terms reveal a coercive diplomatic style that weaponizes economic asymmetries. While Trump often frames such

agreements as demonstrations of sovereign strength and transactional success, his method resembles a form of “gangster diplomacy”—a practice rooted in exploiting dependency and inducing compliance through veiled threats and overwhelming leverage.

The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the 2025 U.S.-Japan tariff agreement within the broader framework of bilateral security relations and evolving global power dynamics. Far from being an isolated economic episode, the agreement illuminates the structural subordination embedded in Japan’s postwar alliance with the United States. By reframing the tariff issue within the logics of hegemonic security architecture, this study seeks to contextualize Japan’s constrained autonomy and interpret the political functions of economic coercion in U.S. alliance management.

2. Diplomatic Coercion and the Anatomy of an Unequal Agreement

The most striking feature of the tariff deal is the absence of any jointly issued public documentation. Unlike the recent U.S. trade negotiation with the United Kingdom, which culminated in a detailed joint statement or a quasi-legal memorandum,¹⁹⁵⁾ to be soon followed by one with the European Union,¹⁹⁶⁾ the Japan-U.S. deal produced no co-authored communiqué. Instead, conflicting interpretations quickly emerged. U.S. officials framed the agreement as a major victory, citing new Japanese arms purchases, expanded agricultural quotas, and massive investment pledges. Tokyo, however, did not concur on many of these claims, understanding that they

195) USTR [United States Trade Representative], General Terms on for the United States and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Economic Prosperity, May 8, 2025, https://ustr.gov/sites/default/files/files/Press/fs/US%20UK%20EPD_050825_FINAL%20rev%20v2.pdf, accessed on August 7, 2025.

196) Peggy Corlin, Peggy, “The EU and US have shaken hands on a trade deal, but what’s to come?” *Euro News*, July 31, 2025, <https://www.euronews.com/business/2025/07/31/the-eu-and-us-have-shaken-hands-on-a-trade-deal-but-whats-to-come>, accessed August 7, 2025.

either predated the agreement or were exaggerated beyond recognition.¹⁹⁷⁾

Of particular controversy is Washington's assertion that Tokyo has committed \$550 billion in new direct investment in the United States, with 90% of the resulting profits to be allocated to U.S. stakeholders and 10% to Japanese investors. Japanese officials understood that, with the financial commitment consisting of equity investment, loan and loan guarantees, such a profit-sharing arrangement was both procedurally impossible and legally unfounded. The Japanese government cannot dictate private-sector investment decisions, and government-affiliated financial institutions are restricted by statutory mandates and corporate governance rules that preclude preferential treatment of foreign parties in profit distribution.¹⁹⁸⁾

What emerges is a portrait of coercive bargaining, in which ambiguity and asymmetry are not incidental features but strategic tools. Tokyo accepted these nebulous terms not because they served Japan's economic interests, but because they were perceived as the least damaging option in a context of escalating risk. Protracted negotiations could have triggered even higher tariffs or retaliatory measures. Japan's leadership chose ambiguity as a form of defensive concession—a tacit recognition of the structural constraints it faces within the alliance.

197) Moriyasu, Ken and Ryohtaroh Satoh, "US, Japan agree trade deal, lowering threatened Trump tariff to 15%," *Nikkei Asia*, July 23, 2025, <https://asia.nikkei.com/economy/trade-war/trump-tariffs/us-japan-agree-trade-deal-lowering-threatened-trump-tariff-to-15>, accessed on August 8, 2025. Makiko Yamazaki and Tamiyuki Kihara (2025, July 25), "Japan says profits from US investments in trade deal to be shared according to contributions," Reuters, https://www.reuters.com/business/finance/japan-says-profits-us-investments-trade-deal-be-shared-according-contributions-2025-07-25/?utm_source=chatgpt.com, accessed on August 7, 2025. Jun Yamazaki, "US, Japan differ on details of tariff deal, with no clear start date," *Nikkei Asia*, July 25, 2025, <https://asia.nikkei.com/economy/trade-war/trump-tariffs/us-japan-differ-on-details-of-tariff-deal-with-no-clear-start-date>, accessed on August 7, 2025.

198) *Ibid.*

3. Historical Parallels and the Specter of Semi-Sovereignty

The uneven and opaque nature of the tariffs deal evokes historical memories of “unequal treaties” imposed on Japan during the late Tokugawa period. In the mid-19th century, Western imperial powers, exploiting Japan’s military and legal inferiority, secured concessions that stripped Japan of tariff autonomy and legal sovereignty. The Meiji government made it a national priority to revise these treaties, achieving formal equality under international law only after four decades of diplomacy and domestic reform.

The fact that recent senior Japanese political leaders, particularly factional bosses in the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, such as former prime ministers Taro Aso, Yoshihide Suga, and Fumio Kishida, have acquiesced a deal so structurally ambiguous and susceptible to unilateral reinterpretation invites scrutiny. Why do the successors of Meiji-era statesmen, once obsessed with sovereign equality, now reluctantly live with a negotiation framework that echoes past subordination?

The answer lies not in domestic weakness per se, but in the systemic dynamics of alliance politics under U.S. hegemony. In a world where economic decisions are increasingly subordinated to strategic imperatives, and where trade can be used as a blunt instrument of discipline within alliances, the appearance of sovereignty often masks profound dependency.

4. The Security Substructure: Revisiting the Mutual Defense Assistance Agreement

A deeper understanding of Japan’s constrained behavior in trade talks requires revisiting the post-W.W.II security architecture that shapes its foreign policy. Specifically, the 1954 Mutual Defense Assistance (MDA) Agreement,¹⁹⁹⁾ which is subsidiary to the 1952 U.S.-Japan Security

199) MOFA [Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs], U.S.-Japan Mutual Defense

Treaty²⁰⁰⁾ and superseded by the 1960 U.S.-Japan Mutual Security Treaty,²⁰¹⁾ remains pivotal. The MDA Agreement institutionalizes Japan's role as a subordinate security partner, obligated to align its economic and military resources with U.S. strategic objectives. This reflects the asymmetric power relationship between the occupying United States and occupied Japan, since demilitarized Japan immediately after its re-independence in 1952 could not but rely on the sole U.S. security guarantor, the basic structure of which has essentially continued until today.

Article 8 of the MDA Agreement mandates that Japan make the fullest possible contribution to the collective defense of the “free world,” calibrated to its national capabilities. Surprisingly, the significance of the security regime has been almost always overlooked and de-emphasized in politico-economic analysis, including trade and tariff issues. In the facade of equal footing and reciprocity, the Agreement sets asymmetrical power relationship in which Tokyo shall serve Washington security needs, while Washington can provide Tokyo with arms and military technologies at its discretion. This provision underpins a wide range of economic commitments: Japan's exceptional Host Nation Support (HNS) expenditures, its strategic Official Development Assistance (ODA) flows, and its financial contributions to post-conflict reconstruction in alignment with U.S. foreign policy.

Japan's financial support for U.S. forces far exceeds that of any other ally. As early as 2002, Japan was covering 75% of U.S. basing costs on its territory – nearly three times the contribution made by Germany, the

Assistance Agreement, n.d., [https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/treaty/pdfs/A-S38\(3\)-251.pdf](https://www.mofa.go.jp/mofaj/gaiko/treaty/pdfs/A-S38(3)-251.pdf), accessed on August 7, 2025.

200) MOFA, U.S.-Japan Security Treaty of 1953, https://avalon.law.yale.edu/20th_century/japan001.asp, accessed on August 7, 2025.

201) MOFA, U.S.-Japan Mutual Security Treaty of 1960, n.d., <https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/n-america/us/q&a/ref/1.html>, accessed on August 7, 2025.

second-largest host nation.²⁰²⁾ During the Cold War, Tokyo used ODA to support Washington’s global posture, often directing aid to strategically critical but politically unstable partners, including Egypt and Pakistan.²⁰³⁾ In the aftermath of the Gulf War, Japan imposed a special domestic tax to fund a \$13 billion contribution to Kuwaiti reconstruction, due to its constitutional limitations on military deployment.²⁰⁴⁾

These examples are not anomalies; they reflect a long-standing pattern of economic compliance rooted in the alliance framework. The 2025 tariff agreement is but the latest expression of this structural reality. Japan’s trade policy, far from being an autonomous domain, remains embedded in a broader architecture of security-dependent governance. This is because Japan relies on U.S. extended nuclear deterrence and because Japan, as a non-nuclear state facing existential threats from China and North Korea, cannot realistically decouple from U.S. security umbrella. This dependency grants Washington immense leverage in non-security negotiation, as any resistance on trade or economic issues risks triggering latent security anxieties.

5. Tariffs as Strategic Instruments in Partisan Geopolitics

While the asymmetry of the alliance explains much of Japan’s constrained behavior, it does not fully account for the peculiar nature of the Trump administration’s tariff diplomacy. The imposition of the 15%

202) Sankei Shimbun, “‘Anpo Tada-Nori-Ron wa’ honto? Churyu-Keihi-Futan, Jitsu wa Sekai demo Totsushutsu. Beigunjinn wo Nihon no Youheini ni Suru kinanoka (安保ただ乗り論)は本当? 駐留費負担,実は世界でも突出...米軍人を日本の傭兵にする気なのか),” May 25, 2016, <https://www.sankei.com/article/20160525-QIXWXC3MKVIK5PCOKCT6BXLQHU/>, accessed on August 7, 2025.

203) Robert Orr, *The Emergence of Japan’s Foreign Aid Power*; New York: Columbia University Press, 1990. Dennis T. Yasumoto, *The Manner of Giving: Strategic Aid and Japanese Foreign Policy*, Lexington Books, 1986.

204) Hiroshi Nakanishi, “The Gulf War and Japanese Diplomacy,” *Nippon.Com*, December 6, 2011, <https://www.nippon.com/en/features/c00202/>, accessed on August 7, 2025.

tariff must also be read through the lens of domestic U.S. politics. Trump’s use of tariffs is not merely about correcting trade imbalances; it is part of a broader ideological campaign against globalism.²⁰⁵⁾

Trump has consistently framed tariffs as weapons in a larger political war against globalism—a posture that pits nationalist “America First” priorities against multilateral commitments. In this schema, allies such as Japan become collateral damage in a domestic struggle for ideological supremacy. The tariff, then, is a disciplinary tool aimed not only at foreign economies but at globalist elites, both at home and abroad.²⁰⁶⁾

This dynamic has intensified since the inauguration of Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba, whose administration reinforced the globalist trajectory charted by his predecessor, Fumio Kishida. Both leaders have championed value-based diplomacy, robust support for Ukraine, and alignment with the liberal international order championed by the Biden administration. In contrast, Trump’s second term has been marked by a strategic reassertion of anti-globalist rhetoric, protectionist economic policies, and transactional diplomacy.²⁰⁷⁾

Seen in this light, the tariff talks with Japan served a dual function: they allowed Trump to reinforce his domestic anti-globalist credentials while reminding foreign allies of the costs of ideological nonalignment. Japan’s

205) Masahiro Matsumura, “Tariffs as Weapons in Trump’s Partisan Strife,” *World Geostategic Insights*, July 9, 2025, <https://www.wgi.world/tariffs-as-weapons-in-trumps-partisan-strife/>, accessed on August 7, 2025.

206) *Ibid.*

207) *Ibid.* Mashihiro Matsumura, “Japan at the Crossroads: Rethinking Value-Based Diplomacy in a Fracturing World Order,” *World Geostategic Insights*, May 23, 2025, <https://www.wgi.world/japan-at-the-crossroads-rethinking-value-based-diplomacy-in-a-fracturing-world-order/>, accessed on August 7, 2025. Masahiro Matsumura, “Japan’s Ukraine Policy at a Crossroads: Time for a Strategic Reset,” *World Geostategic Insights*, May 25, 2025, <https://www.wgi.world/japans-ukraine-policy-at-a-crossroads-time-for-a-strategic-reset/>, accessed on August 7, 2025.

geostrategic indispensability means it cannot be punished militarily, but it can be pressured economically. The tariff thus becomes a calibrated instrument of alliance discipline – painful but not fatal.

6. Japan as the Last Globalist Bastion? Strategic Implications

Japan's unique position among U.S. allies further explains why it has become a key target in Trump's tariff offensive. Amid the economic stagnation and political fragmentation afflicting Europe – exacerbated by Ukraine war expenditures, the boomerang effects of sanctions on Russia, and global inflation driven by energy and commodity prices – Japan has emerged as perhaps the last coherent bastion of liberal internationalism.

Whereas the European project has lost much of its integrative momentum, and NATO cohesion has come under strain, Japan continues to present itself as a reliable, value-driven, pro-globalist actor. This makes Tokyo both a vital ally and an ideological outlier in Trump's worldview. The tariff pressure on Japan, therefore, serves not only economic and political objectives but also symbolic ones: it signals the limits of globalism's durability even among America's most committed allies.

By leveraging economic pressure without disrupting security cooperation, Trump has managed to discipline Japan's globalist orientation while preserving its strategic utility. This delicate balancing act underscores the evolving nature of alliance politics in an era of ideological retrenchment and hegemonic realignment.

7. Conclusion: Gangster Diplomacy or Structural Realism?

While President Trump's negotiation style may appear brutish, even gangster-like in its tactics, its underlying rationale is neither irrational nor unprecedented. What appears as "gangster diplomacy" is better understood as a form of structurally conditioned statecraft – one that

exploits asymmetrical dependencies within a hierarchical alliance system.

The 2025 tariff deal between Japan and the United States is emblematic of a larger transformation in global politics: the reassertion of hard power, the erosion of multilateral norms, and the resurgence of coercive diplomacy among allies. Japan's acquiescence reveals the strong inertia and, perhaps, enduring relevance of the post-W.W.II security regime and the political costs of strategic dependency.

As Zbigniew Brzezinski once observed, Japan remains a de facto “security protectorate” of the United States,²⁰⁸⁾ despite having regained formal sovereignty in 1952 through the conclusion of the San Francisco Peace Treaty and being the world's fourth largest economy. The recent tariff talks underscore the contemporary validity of that characterization. In an age of intensified great-power rivalry and ideological fragmentation, the short-term challenge for Japan is how to navigate its complex role as both a cornerstone of U.S. hegemony and a residual champion of globalism and liberal internationalism – without being crushed in the crossfire. As the evolving world order clearly heads from the declining U.S. hegemony to a multipolar balance-of-power system, the mid- and long-term challenge for the country is how to make a gradual transition after hegemony and liberate itself from being an American security protectorate.

208) Brzezinski, Zbigniew, *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy And its Geostrategic Imperatives*, New Yorks: Basic Books, 1997, p. 173.

Chapter 12

The Israel-Iran Confrontation: A Calculated Struggle Toward a Cold Peace?

1. Introduction: A New Calculus of Confrontation

The Middle East, a perpetual crucible of geopolitical tension, has once again become the focal point of global attention. The surprise, wide-ranging Israeli strikes against Iranian nuclear facilities and military command structures, commencing on June 13, 2025, represent a critical inflection point in the decades-long shadow war between the two regional adversaries. These attacks, unprecedented in their directness and scale, have triggered a dangerous yet, thus far, seemingly contained, response from Tehran. The prevailing narrative in many international circles paints a grim picture of impending regional war or even a wider global conflict. However, a closer examination, grounded in the tenets of realist international relations theory, suggests an alternative, more complex outcome: a calibrated escalation that, far from spiraling out of control, might be a deliberate, albeit perilous, path towards a new form of “Cold Peace” in the Middle East.

The concept of “Cold Peace,” distinct from a “Cold War,” implies a state of relative tranquility characterized by a cessation of direct, large-scale hostilities, yet underpinned by deep-seated mistrust, fundamental ideological divergences, and persistent low-level antagonism. Unlike a Cold War, where proxy conflicts are a defining feature of ideological competition, a Cold Peace might see a reduction in such proxy engagements, or at least a more controlled and limited manifestation of them, due to a mutual recognition of the prohibitive costs of open warfare.

This chapter argues that the current Israeli-Iranian confrontation, while marked by significant kinetic action, exhibits characteristics that align with a calculated struggle to establish new, albeit fragile, boundaries of influence and deterrence, rather than an unchecked pursuit of total victory.

This analysis will proceed by first detailing the immediate triggers for Israel's preemptive action, focusing on the nuclear dimension and Israel's long-standing security doctrine. Subsequently, it will delve into the factors that have, to date, contained the escalation, examining the limitations of both parties' military capabilities, the degradation of Iran's regional proxy networks, Tehran's cautious retaliatory posture, and the evolving pragmatic alignments within the Arab world. The study will then explore the broader global geopolitical shifts, particularly the retrenchment of U.S. hegemony and the rise of a multipolar order, as crucial elements shaping the strategic calculus of both Israel and Iran. Finally, it will discuss the implications of America's divided foreign policy stance and conclude by advocating for the "Cold Peace" hypothesis as the most plausible, albeit inherently precarious, outcome of this latest and most intense phase of the Israel-Iran confrontation.

2. The Trigger: Nuclear Fears and the Doctrine of Preventive Action

The immediate catalyst for Israel's audacious offensive was Iran's accelerating progress towards weapons-grade uranium enrichment. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)'s near-ultimatum issued on June 12, demanding full compliance with inspections amid mounting evidence of Iran's proximity to a nuclear weapons threshold, served as a critical decision point.²⁰⁹⁾ While diplomatic avenues, perhaps involving a framework that acknowledged Iran's sovereign right to peaceful nuclear

209) Francois Murphy, "IAEA board declares Iran in breach of non-proliferation obligations," Reuters, June 2, 2025, https://www.reuters.com/world/china/iaea-board-declares-iran-breach-non-proliferation-duties-diplomats-say-2025-06-12/?utm_source=chatgpt.com, accessed on July 23, 2025.

energy with stringent oversight, might still have been theoretically available, Israel evidently concluded that the window for such a resolution had closed.

Israel's decision to launch preemptive strikes is deeply embedded in its strategic doctrine, which prioritizes the prevention of hostile states in its immediate and broader neighborhood from acquiring nuclear weapons capabilities. This doctrine, often referred to as the "Begin Doctrine" after the 1981 strike on Iraq's Osirak reactor, views such capabilities as an existential threat. Historically, Israel has demonstrated a consistent willingness to employ military force to neutralize perceived nuclear dangers, as evidenced by its actions in Iraq (1981) and Syria (2007). The June 2025 operation against Iran represents the most extensive application of this doctrine to date, targeting not only suspected nuclear sites but also critical military infrastructure and leadership deemed essential to Iran's nuclear program and its ability to project power. The firm siding of the United States, under President Trump, with Israel's actions further underscored the strategic legitimacy, from Israel's perspective, of this preemptive move, effectively tilting the regional balance of power and potentially offering a crucial political and logistical buffer for Israel's operations. This alignment signals a departure from previous U.S. administrations that, while committed to preventing Iranian nuclearization, often emphasized diplomatic solutions and multilateral engagement.

3. Contained Escalation: Factors Limiting All-Out War

Despite the dramatic nature of the Israeli strikes and the predictable Iranian reprisals, the conflict remarkably remained largely contained, eschewing the full-scale regional war that many analysts initially feared. Several interconnected factors contribute to this observed restraint, suggesting a calculated approach by both sides.

Firstly, a critical limiting factor for both Israel and Iran is the absence

of full-spectrum capabilities for a decisive total victory. While Israel possesses advanced airpower and precision strike capabilities, its capacity for sustained, large-scale ground operations deep within Iranian territory is inherently limited by geographic distance, logistical challenges, and the political costs of a prolonged occupation. Similarly, Iran, despite its large military and formidable missile arsenal, lacks the conventional air superiority and logistical reach required to project decisive power across the entire breadth of the Middle East and inflict a crippling blow on Israel. Its strategy has historically relied on asymmetric warfare and the leveraging of proxy forces, which, as discussed below, have been significantly degraded. This mutual limitation in achieving a decisive military victory creates a strong disincentive for all-out conflict, as neither side can realistically expect to achieve its maximum objectives without incurring disproportionate costs.

Secondly, a significant factor in containing Iranian retaliation has been the severe diminution of its regional surrogate networks. Over the past year, Israel has systematically and effectively targeted Hezbollah's command and control structures and military assets in Lebanon and Syria. The December 2024 strikes against Hezbollah were particularly devastating, reportedly crippling the organization's offensive capabilities and prompting a quiet, albeit politically delicate, pivot by the Lebanese government towards a more neutral stance, thereby reducing Hezbollah's operational freedom.²¹⁰⁾ Concurrently, the Houthis in Yemen, once a major disruptor of Red Sea shipping lanes and a direct threat to Saudi interests, have been significantly degraded by sustained American airstrikes in May 2024.²¹¹⁾ This sustained pressure on Iranian proxies has curtailed their

210) Ronny Reynes, "IDF hits Hezbollah weapons depots in Syria after rockets kill 7 in Israel," *New York Post*, October 31, 2024, https://nypost.com/2024/10/31/world-news/idf-hits-hezbollah-weapons-depots-in-syria-after-rockets-kill-7-in-israel/?utm_source=chatgpt.com, accessed on July 23, 2025. ISW (2024, December 26), "Iran Update," https://understandingwar.org/background/iran-update-december-26-2024?utm_source=chatgpt.com, accessed on July 23, 2025.

211) Idrees Ali and Phil Stewart, "U.S. bombing dents but doesn't destroy Houthi

ability to act as effective second fronts or to exert meaningful retaliatory pressure on Israel, thereby denying Iran its primary asymmetric tool for projecting power and complicating its strategy of deterrence by denial.

Thirdly, Iran has displayed a notable reluctance to intervene directly in defense of its proxies, indicating a strategic caution to avoid opening a wider, direct military confrontation with a U.S.-backed Israel. Tehran's muted military response to previous Israeli "decapitation strikes," including the targeted killings of senior Hamas, Hezbollah, and Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) leaders in Tehran October 2024, underscores this cautious approach.²¹²⁾ The retaliatory salvo of approximately 200 missiles against Israeli targets, while seemingly substantial, was largely symbolic.²¹³⁾ It was sufficient to project an image of strength for domestic consumption and to "save face" within its "Axis of Resistance," yet carefully calibrated to avoid crossing the threshold into full-blown war that would invite more severe and direct American and Israeli retaliation. This measured response reflects a strategic calculation to preserve its core assets and avoid a costly direct military engagement that it cannot win decisively.

Fourthly, the emerging posture of key Arab nations has significantly contributed to the containment of the conflict. Saudi Arabia and other Gulf

threat in Yemen," Reuters, May 8, 2025, https://www.reuters.com/world/us-bombing-dents-doesnt-destroy-houthi-threat-yemen-2025-05-07/?utm_source=chatgpt.com, accessed on July 23, 2025. Paulo Aguiar, "Houthis Emerge from Red Sea Crisis Unscathed," *Geopolitical Monitor*; February 19, 2025, https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/houthis-emerge-from-red-sea-shipping-crisis-unscathed/?utm_source=chatgpt.com, accessed on July 23, 2025.

212) Arman Mahmoudian, "Why Iran Struck Israel Despite the Risks," Commentary, Stimson Center, October 4, 2024, https://www.stimson.org/2024/why-iran-struck-israel-despite-the-risks/?utm_source=chatgpt.com, accessed on July 23, 2025.

213) House of Common Library, U.K. Parliament, "Israel-Iran October 2024," Research Briefing, October 1, 2024, https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-10113/?utm_source=chatgpt.com, accessed on July 23, 2025.

states have adopted a stance of what can be termed “hyper-realism.” While maintaining rhetorical support for Palestinian causes, their regional policies have quietly, and often pragmatically, aligned closer to Israel’s strategic vision, particularly concerning the shared threat perception of Iran.²¹⁴⁾ The evolving landscape for Abraham Accords has further solidified this silent cooperation. Such normalization agreements would foster direct and indirect channels of communication and security cooperation between Israel and several Arab states, making a broad Arab coalition against Israel, a historical feature of previous regional conflicts, increasingly unlikely. This shifts the regional dynamic, isolating Iran and reinforcing Israel’s strategic position, thereby reducing the incentives for a wider regional conflagration driven by Arab solidarity with Iran or its proxies.

4. The Emerging Global Context: Multipolarity and U.S. Retrenchment

Beneath these regional calculations, a more profound tectonic shift in global geopolitics is influencing the Israel-Iran confrontation: the slow but perceptible retrenchment of U.S. hegemony and the corresponding rise of a more multipolar international system. This global shift, exacerbated by American overreach in protracted conflicts like Ukraine and previous military interventions in Iraq and Afghanistan, has emboldened alternative power alignments and recalibrated the strategic calculations of various actors.

Iran’s increasingly formalized ties with Russia and China exemplify this changing landscape. Tehran’s comprehensive strategic partnership with

214) Mehran Haghiriyan, “Walking a Tightrope: How Gulf States are Navigating the Iran-Israel Conflict,” Commentary, Stimson Center, October 11, 2024, https://www.stimson.org/2024/walking-a-tightrope-how-gulf-states-are-navigating-the-iran-israel-conflict/?utm_source=chatgpt.com, accessed on July 23, 2025. Paul M Esber, “Changing Plans? Saudi Regionalism After Gaza,” *Global Policy*, November 28, 2023, https://www.globalpolicyjournal.com/blog/28/11/2023/changing-plans-saudi-regionalism-after-gaza?utm_source=chatgpt.com, accessed on July 23, 2025.

Moscow, formalized in January 2025, and its 25-year cooperation accord with Beijing, signed earlier, signal a clear pivot towards the China-Russia bloc. This “Eastward Look” is a strategic response to persistent Western pressure and sanctions, aiming to secure diplomatic backing, economic lifelines, and military technology from powers willing to challenge the prevailing U.S.-led international order. These partnerships provide Iran with a degree of diplomatic and economic resilience, softening the impact of Western sanctions and offering alternative markets for its energy resources.

However, it is crucial to note that while these partnerships offer significant support, they fall short of providing the kind of direct military backing that would fundamentally alter the regional balance of power in favor of Iran against a U.S.-backed Israel. Russia’s and China’s stakes in the Middle East, while growing, remain tempered by their broader global calculations. Neither Moscow nor Beijing appears willing, at this juncture, to risk an outright military confrontation with Washington on Iran’s behalf. Their support is primarily aimed at weakening U.S. influence, fostering a multipolar order, and securing economic interests, rather than actively participating in direct military conflict. This strategic restraint from Iran’s major allies further incentivizes Tehran to exercise caution and avoid actions that could draw its partners into a conflict they are not prepared to fully commit to.

5. Israel’s Strategic Imperative: Securing Deterrence in an Uncertain World

Faced with the prospect of an eroding U.S. security umbrella, whether due to deliberate policy shifts or the increasing constraints on American power projection, Israel finds itself under mounting pressure to secure its long-term strategic position independently. A segment of Zionist hardliners and strategic thinkers perceives this moment as a critical window of opportunity to establish a robust and sustainable “Greater Israel” capable of enduring in a more multipolar and uncertain world. This perspective

helps explain the urgency and scale behind the June 2025 attacks: a perceived necessity to neutralize Iran’s nuclear ambitions and significantly degrade its regional military capabilities before U.S. disengagement, or a perceived weakening of its commitment, reaches an irreversible stage. The objective is not necessarily to permanently dismantle the Iranian regime, but to severely cripple its capacity to pose an existential threat and to re-establish a credible deterrence posture.

This aggressive posture, however, carries its own internal logic towards a potential “Cold Peace.” Once Israel achieves what it deems a sustainable security margin – that is, demonstrably crippling its rival’s strategic forces and establishing an undeniable regional deterrence – it is highly probable that its posture will shift from offensive to a more defensive consolidation. In this interpretation, today’s offensive operations are not an end in themselves but a means to an end: to enforce a new, albeit tense, equilibrium where the costs of open warfare become prohibitively high for all parties involved. This suggests a strategic design to create a new status quo, characterized by mutual deterrence and a de-escalation of large-scale kinetic action once specific strategic objectives related to Iranian capabilities are met. This would mark a significant shift from the previous “shadow war” of covert operations to a more overt, yet still contained, strategic standoff.

6 . America’s Divided Position: A Brake on Unchecked War

The United States, meanwhile, remains deeply conflicted in its approach to the Middle East, a factor that adds another layer of unpredictability but also inadvertently serves as a brake on a full-scale regional war. President Trump’s foreign policy stance continues to oscillate unpredictably between interventionism and isolationism, reflecting internal divisions within his administration and a broader fatigue among the American populace.

While influential factions within his administration, often associated with

a hawkish foreign policy, remain committed to robust engagement and the projection of American power, a growing chorus of advisors, exemplified by figures like Vice President J.D. Vance and Undersecretary of Defense for Policy Elbridge Colby, are advocating for a more restrained, “America First,” and prioritization-based approach to global security. This latter view emphasizes focusing U.S. resources on great power competition, particularly with China, and reducing costly foreign entanglements.²¹⁵⁾ The American public, exhausted by decades of military interventions in Iraq, Afghanistan, and the ongoing financial and human costs of supporting Ukraine, is increasingly sympathetic to this isolationist or “offshore balancing” turn. This domestic political reality significantly constrains the U.S. Executive’s ability to commit to prolonged or open-ended military engagements abroad.

Washington’s uncertain posture means that neither Israel nor Iran was able to count on unlimited American military engagement in the event of a wider conflict. This strategic ambiguity, while potentially frustrating to allies, paradoxically incentivized both sides to limit the escalation of hostilities. For Israel, it meant a need to achieve its objectives relatively quickly and decisively, without relying on indefinite U.S. military backing. For Iran, it signaled that while it might receive political and economic support from Russia and China, direct military intervention on its behalf was unlikely, thus reinforcing its cautious approach to direct confrontation with Israel and the United States. This dynamic pushed both regional powers to calibrate their actions carefully, understanding the limits of external intervention and the potential for a self-sustaining, but contained, conflict.

215) Ken Moriyasu, “Restrainers’ propose slashing US troop numbers in South Korea, Okinawa,” *Nikkei Asia*, July 9, 2025 <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Indo-Pacific/Restrainers-propose-slashing-US-troop-numbers-in-South-Korea-Okinawa>, accessed on July 23, 2025.

7. A Fragile Balance and the Prospect of Cold Peace

History, with its myriad examples of miscalculation and unintended escalation, constantly warns against overconfidence in rational actors. The outbreak of World War I, fueled by a cascade of diplomatic missteps and rigid alliance structures, and Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor, driven by strategic desperation, serve as sobering reminders that cold realist logic does not always prevail over the volatile currents of human emotion and political pressure. Nevertheless, in the specific case of the Israel-Iran confrontation today, the prevailing dynamics suggest that cold realist calculations are, at least for now, holding sway.

The key to understanding this trajectory lies in recognizing that both Israel and Iran, despite their deep-seated animosities and ideological differences, share a fundamental interest in regime survival and the avoidance of a catastrophic, all-out war that neither can definitively win. Israel seeks to ensure its long-term security by neutralizing existential threats, particularly nuclear, and establishing unquestionable deterrence. Iran, while pursuing regional influence and strategic depth, also prioritizes the survival of its regime and the preservation of its core military and nuclear capabilities.

The current conflict, therefore, may ultimately follow the pattern of other prolonged Cold War-style confrontations: protracted hostility punctuated by limited flare-ups, but ultimately contained by a mutual recognition of the devastating risks of unrestricted warfare. This "Cold Peace" would be characterized by:

Deterrence by Punishment and Denial: Both sides possess sufficient capabilities to inflict unacceptable damage on the other, deterring large-scale aggression. Israel's June 2025 strikes aim to re-establish deterrence by denial (preventing nuclear breakout) and punishment

(inflicting high costs on Iranian assets).

Reduced Proxy Warfare: As Iranian proxies have been degraded and Arab states become more pragmatic, the utility and effectiveness of proxy warfare for Iran might diminish, leading to fewer active fronts.

Managed Crises: Future escalations are likely to be carefully managed through tacit or indirect communication channels, with both sides seeking to avoid an uncontrolled spiral.

Persistent Strategic Competition: While direct military conflict may recede, the underlying strategic competition for regional influence, technological advantage, and diplomatic leverage will continue.

No Formal Peace: Crucially, a “Cold Peace” does not imply formal diplomatic recognition or a resolution of fundamental grievances. It is a pragmatic, de facto arrangement based on shared fear of escalation, rather than shared interests in peace.

In this emerging regional order, a tense but sustainable “Cold Peace” may well be the most likely, and arguably, the most desirable outcome given the alternatives. It acknowledges the deep animosities and irreconcilable differences, but posits a future where the cost-benefit analysis of open warfare strongly favors restraint. While the possibility of miscalculation always looms large, the rational calculus of self-preservation, coupled with the systemic constraints observed, suggests that both Israel and Iran are, perhaps unwittingly, struggling towards a new, fragile equilibrium – a cold peace built not on trust, but on the chilling logic of mutual deterrence. This is not peace in the traditional sense, but a precarious stability born out of exhaustion and fear, a defining feature of a rapidly evolving and increasingly multipolar Middle East.

Chapter 13

U.S. Bombing of Iran and the Transition to a New International Legal Order

In the wake of intensifying international suspicion regarding Iran's nuclear ambitions, in June 2025 United States conducted a series of precision bombings against three of Iran's key uranium enrichment and related facilities. Employing the GBU-57 Massive Ordnance Penetrator, the most destructive bunker buster in its arsenal, the United States targeted facilities that had previously survived extensive Israeli air raids due to their deep underground fortification. The operation, while likely to delay Tehran's nuclear program for several years,²¹⁶⁾ if not indefinitely, has raised fundamental questions about the evolving nature of international law and order.

The U.S. strikes were undertaken unilaterally, constituting a quintessential example of the unprovoked use of armed force against another sovereign state. In principle, such action is prohibited under customary international law and, more specifically, contravenes Article 2(4) of the United Nations Charter, which states: "All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state." Yet, the context is complicated by Iran's persistent refusal to allow on-site International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) inspections, thereby violating its obligations under both the IAEA Statute and the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT).

216) BBC, "CIA says intelligence indicates Iran nuclear programme 'severely damaged,'" June 25, 2025, <https://www.bbc.com/news/live/c20xel1e97gt>, accessed on July 14, 2025.

Israel, perceiving an existential threat from Iran’s nuclearization – given Tehran’s longstanding hostility and history of direct and indirect attacks – initiated limited but substantial strikes based on its inherent right of self-defense under customary international law and Article 51 of the U.N. Charter. When these failed to neutralize the threat, the United States intervened directly, arguing that the necessity of self-defense justified its actions.²¹⁷⁾

This chapter does not seek to adjudicate the legal culpability of either the United States or Iran. Instead, it investigates why two foundational legal principles – the prohibition of the unprovoked use of force and the right of self-defense – have come into almost irreconcilable conflict in contemporary international politics. The analysis explores the international political impact of the U.S. operation on the existing legal order and considers the prospects for future developments in the international political-legal system.

1 . The Classical Anarchical World and the Imperative for Self-Help

The international system, as currently constituted, is fundamentally anarchical. States operate in an environment devoid of any permanent, centralized authority capable of systematically enforcing legal rules. There is no international police force or universally competent court with the power to adjudicate disputes and enforce judgments. As a result, states are compelled to interpret international law for themselves, determining what constitutes a violation and what remedial measures are appropriate. This decentralized, horizontal structure means that the enforcement of

217) Jonathan Landay, Gram Slattery, Idrees Ali and Phil Stewart, “US strikes may have set back Iran nuclear program only months, sources say,” Reuters, June25, 2025, <https://www.reuters.com/world/us-strikes-may-have-set-back-iran-nuclear-program-only-months-sources-say-2025-06-24/>, accessed on July 14, 2025.

international law is largely left to the discretion of individual states or coalitions.

International law itself is an unorganized amalgam of legal principles and partial arrangements designed to regulate specific regional or functional areas of international relations. While there are codified treaties and unwritten customary norms, these do not yet form a coherent, hierarchical legal system capable of consistent reasoning or authoritative interpretation. The result is a proliferation of opportunities for divergent, and sometimes contradictory, interpretations. In such an environment, self-help remains the only feasible recourse for a state seeking to ensure its survival or protect its vital interests when other states are either unwilling or unable to assist. This imperative for self-help is especially pronounced in situations involving the threat or use of force, where the stakes are existential and the margin for error is vanishingly small.

For unilateral uses of force, such as those undertaken by the United States and Israel against Iran, to be permissible under international law, they must be framed as acts of “anticipatory self-defense.” This doctrine, which emerged from the 19th-century Caroline incident, allows for preemptive action in the face of an imminent threat. The conditions are stringent: the necessity for self-defense must be “instant, overwhelming, leaving no choice of means, and no moment for deliberation,” and the response must be proportional to the threat.

The distinction between anticipatory self-defense and preventive war is critical. Anticipatory self-defense responds to an imminent attack, while preventive war seeks to forestall a potential, but not immediate, threat. The latter is generally considered unlawful under contemporary international law, as it lacks the requisite imminence and necessity. In the case of the U.S. strikes on Iran, the justification of anticipatory self-defense is highly contested. While the United States argued that Iran’s nuclear program posed an imminent threat, available intelligence

suggested that Iran was not on the verge of acquiring a nuclear weapon.²¹⁸⁾ Diplomatic and economic alternatives had not been exhausted, and the immediacy of the threat was not universally recognized. Thus, the action arguably failed to meet the strict criteria established by customary international law.

Moreover, the United States acted unilaterally, without seeking authorization from the U.N. Security Council or attempting to build a broad international coalition. This approach left the legal quality of the action uncertain, subject to post factum confirmation or rejection by the international community. Unilateral uses of force carry the risk of abuse, as states may invoke self-defense to advance their own interests rather than uphold widely accepted community values. Such practices, if unchecked, threaten the stability and legitimacy of the international legal order. Yet, the appeal of unilateral action persists, especially when collective mechanisms prove ineffective or unresponsive.

The decentralized nature of international law means that enforcement is often selective and inconsistent. While the U.N. Charter and other instruments provide for collective security and the peaceful resolution of disputes, the reality is that powerful states retain significant latitude to interpret and apply the law as they see fit. The lack of a universally competent enforcement mechanism means that violations often go unpunished, especially when perpetrated by major powers. This structural limitation is not merely a theoretical concern; it has profound practical implications. The inability of the international community to respond effectively to violations undermines the credibility of the legal order and encourages further breaches. In the case of the U.S. strikes on Iran, the absence of meaningful collective action or accountability mechanisms has left the legal status of the operation ambiguous, with potentially far-

218) Kelsey Davenport, "Israel and U.S. Strike Iran's Nuclear Program," *Arms Control Today*, July/August 2025, <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2025-07/news/israel-and-us-strike-irans-nuclear-program>, accessed on July 14, 2025.

reaching consequences for the evolution of customary international law.

2. The Rise and Fall of the U.N. Collective Security System

The United Nations Charter, adopted in 1945, was designed to address the deficiencies of the interwar system and prevent the recurrence of catastrophic conflict. Article 2(4) prohibits the threat or use of force except in cases of self-defense or with the explicit authorization of the Security Council. The Council, composed of five permanent members (P5)—the United States, China, Russia, the United Kingdom, and France—and ten non-permanent members, was intended to provide a mechanism for collective security.

The effectiveness of the collective security system depends on the convergence of interests among P5. The veto power held by each permanent member ensures that the Council can act only when none of them objects. While this arrangement was designed to prevent unilateral action by any one power, it also means that the system is prone to paralysis when the interests of P5 diverge. The Council is fundamentally a political, rather than a judicial, body. Its decisions reflect the balance of power among the major states, and its legitimacy derives from the participation and acquiescence of its members. When the Council acts with the support or at least the abstention of P5, its decisions carry significant weight. When it is deadlocked, the system's legitimacy and effectiveness are called into question.

The history of the Security Council is marked by periods of both effectiveness and dysfunction. During the Cold War, superpower rivalry often resulted in mutual vetoes and inaction. In the immediate post-Cold War period, U.S. predominance allowed for more frequent Council action, as Russia and China often acquiesced to U.S.-led initiatives. However, the resurgence of great power competition in the 21st century has rendered the Council increasingly dysfunctional. Russia's annexation of Crimea in

2014 and its invasion of Ukraine in 2022, coupled with the growing alignment between Russia and China, have deepened divisions within the Council. The rise of the Global South and the increasing assertiveness of regional powers have further complicated the Council's ability to act as an effective collective security mechanism.

Against this backdrop, the United States, under the Trump administration, opted for unilateral action against Iran, bypassing the Security Council and forgoing the formation of a "coalition of the willing." The U.S. military possessed the unique capability to penetrate Iran's fortified nuclear sites, but the operation entailed significant risks to international legitimacy and the integrity of the legal order. The failure of the Security Council to address major crises undermines its legitimacy and the broader international legal order. When powerful states act unilaterally, citing the ineffectiveness or paralysis of collective mechanisms, they set precedents that may be invoked by others in the future. The cumulative effect is the gradual erosion of the norm against the unilateral use of force and the weakening of the collective security system envisioned by the U.N. Charter.

The international legal assessment of the U.S. strikes on Iran remains unsettled, reflecting the enduring tension between the prohibition of the unprovoked use of force and the right of self-defense. The muted response of the international community suggests a degree of resignation, if not acceptance, of the new realities of power politics.

3. The Transition from U.S. Hegemony to a Global Balance-of-Power System

The post-World War II era was characterized by U.S. preponderance across economic, military, and ideological domains. The United States played a central role in constructing a liberal international order, anchored by institutions such as the United Nations, the World Bank, and the International Monetary Fund. This order incorporated an international

legal system that sought to constrain the use of force and promote the peaceful resolution of disputes. The U.S. enforcement capacity lent credibility to the notion of an international rule of law, deterring potential challengers and conferring legitimacy on U.S.-led initiatives. The liberal international order pressed potential challengers to refrain from resorting to force, enabling the United States to manage global politics at relatively low cost.

Over the past two decades, the United States has experienced significant relative decline. The rise of China, the resurgence of Russia, and the increasing assertiveness of regional powers have eroded U.S. predominance. The “America First” policies of the Trump administration, coupled with growing domestic polarization, have further undermined the U.S. willingness and ability to act as the guarantor of the liberal international order. As U.S. hegemonic power has waned, the legitimacy and stability of the international legal order have come under increasing strain. The U.S. strikes on Iran, conducted without Security Council authorization and amid contested claims of imminence, would once have been unequivocally condemned as unlawful. Today, the absence of authoritative adjudication and the inability to impose sanctions on a permanent Council member leave the legal status of such actions ambiguous.

The current trajectory suggests a transition from U.S.-led unipolarity to a multipolar balance-of-power system. In this emerging order, several great powers – definitely the United States, China, Russia, and probably India, and possibly the European Union and Japan, and potentially a greater Israel – would exercise influence over distinct spheres. The mutual recognition of spheres of influence and the management of inter-civilizational fault lines would become paramount.²¹⁹⁾

219) Masahiro Matsumura, “Peeping into the evolving world order after hegemony: A Copernican Revolution,” *IFIMES Research*, May 22, 2025, <https://www.>

A global balance-of-power system operates through a multipolar check-and-balance mechanism. Each great power controls its own civilizational region, typically comprising smaller states. Despite constant friction along the fault lines, the system can sustain itself as long as the major powers respect each other's essential spheres of influence.²²⁰⁾ The U.S. attack on Iran can thus be seen as both a symptom and an accelerant of this systemic transition, as the established international legal order gives way to new patterns of power politics.

Abrupt transformations of international legal order are not without precedent. In 1918, President Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points, including the principle of national self-determination, led to the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman Empires and ended the Concert of Europe's balance-of-power system. Similarly, the unconditional surrender and retroactive prosecution of war crimes at Nuremberg and Tokyo, championed by Presidents Roosevelt and Truman, transformed the laws of war and established new standards of accountability.²²¹⁾

During the Cold War, the Soviet Union's Brezhnev Doctrine, which justified armed intervention in socialist bloc countries, effectively modified the principle of territorial integrity. The doctrine was not invalidated due to Soviet veto power in the Security Council and the de facto acquiescence of other great powers. These examples illustrate how major shifts in the distribution of power can precipitate fundamental changes in the international legal order.²²²⁾

ifimes.org/en/researches/peeping-into-the-evolving-world-order-after-hegemony-a-copernican-revolution/5514?page=2, accessed on July 14, 2025.

220) *Ibid.*

221) *Ibid.*

222) *Ibid.*

4. Implications for the International Legal Order

The U.S. strikes on Iran's nuclear facilities exemplify the growing tension between the foundational principle of non-aggression and the perceived necessity of preemptive self-defense in an era of proliferating security threats. The operation's unilateral character, the contestable imminence of the threat, and the tepid international response all point to a weakening of the norm against the unprovoked use of force. If such actions become normalized, the international legal order risks reverting to a system in which might makes right, and legal justifications are tailored to fit the exigencies of power politics. The collective security system envisioned by the U.N. Charter may be supplanted by a *de facto* acceptance of unilateral enforcement by major powers.

Customary international law evolves through the practice of states with *opinio juris sive necessitatis* (or opinion of right and necessity). The U.S. operation, and the international community's reaction, may contribute to the emergence of a new norm permitting the use of force to prevent the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by hostile states, even in the absence of clear imminence. This development would mark a significant departure from the post-1945 legal order and raise profound questions about the future of international law and the prospects for global stability.

With an emerging global balance-of-power system, the international community is departing from the principles of the U.N. Charter and collective security and seeing the emergence of a new, less constrained order in which power, rather than law, determines the use of force. This appears irreversible, although the outcome will depend on the willingness of states to defend the existing legal order, the effectiveness of collective mechanisms, and the evolving distribution of power in the international system.

5. Conclusion

The U.S. precision bombing of Iran's nuclear facilities represents a critical juncture in the evolution of the international legal order. The operation highlights the enduring tension between the prohibition of the use of force and the right of self-defense, the limitations of the U.N. collective security system, and the challenges posed by the transition from U.S. hegemony to a multipolar balance-of-power system. While the immediate impact of the strikes may be to delay Iran's nuclear ambitions, the broader consequence may be the erosion of foundational legal norms and the acceleration of systemic change in the world order. The muted international response suggests a growing acceptance of unilateral uses of force by major powers, with potentially far-reaching implications for the future of international law and global governance.

The choices made in response to the U.S. action against Iran will shape the trajectory of the international legal order for years to come, determining whether power, not law, will define the contours of world politics in the 21st century.

Chapter 14

The Evolving New Yalta Regime: Trump and Putin Align Against the European Globalists

1. Introduction

The Anchorage summit of August 15, 2025, which brought together U.S. President Donald Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin, will be remembered less for any immediate breakthrough on the protracted war in Ukraine than for what it symbolized about the shifting structure of world politics. For the first time since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, a Russian leader entered American territory and was received not as a pariah but as a legitimate interlocutor. The sanctions regime that had sought to isolate Moscow for years was quietly subverted in a single act of statecraft. What occurred in Alaska was more than a negotiation over ceasefire terms; it was a visible manifestation of the decline of liberal globalism and the reemergence of classical great-power diplomacy.

The Anchorage meeting echoed a much older precedent. In February 1945, the Yalta Conference convened Roosevelt, Churchill, and Stalin to divide Europe into spheres of influence as World War II neared its end. In both cases, smaller nations were not central participants in shaping their destinies; instead, their futures were negotiated over by victorious great powers. If Yalta inaugurated the Cold War's bipolar division of the world, Anchorage hinted at the birth of a multipolar, transactional order. Unlike Yalta, which was clothed in ideological contestation between democracy and totalitarianism, this new order is ideologically thin. Its essence lies in bargains among great powers rather than in appeals to values.

To understand the Anchorage summit properly, it is necessary to go beyond the immediate headlines and situate the summit in the larger conceptual debates in international relations. The summit revealed a decisive shift away from value-based diplomacy and toward naked realpolitik. It underscored the marginalization of Europe, the repositioning of the United States, and the re-legitimization of Russia. It also cast light on the dilemmas of middle powers such as Japan, whose foreign policy identities have long been tethered to globalist ideals, but who must now adapt to a harsher multipolar world. The Anchorage summit was therefore not simply about Ukraine; it was about the transformation of the very foundations of global order.

2. Trump's Silence as Endorsement

One of the most striking moments of the summit came during the joint press conference.²²³⁾ Putin articulated Russia's longstanding position: Ukraine is a "brotherly nation," indivisible from Russian security interests, and must never be absorbed into NATO. Trump followed him at the podium but offered no objections, caveats, or clarifications. The silence resonated louder than any words. In the grammar of diplomacy, failure to contest such claims amounts to tacit acceptance. Trump effectively endorsed Russia's framing of the conflict, which strikes at the heart of the Western narrative that has underpinned support for Kyiv since 2022.

This approach was fully consistent with Trump's broader rhetoric. Repeatedly he had described the Ukraine war as "Biden's war, not mine."²²⁴⁾ The phrase was more than partisan positioning. It revealed a

223) "Here's the transcript of what Putin and Trump said in Alaska," CBS News, August 5, 2025, <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/transcript-of-what-putin-trump-said-in-alaska/>, accessed on August 19, 2025.

224) "Trump: 'This is Biden's war... I stopped five wars in the last five months,'" WION, August 6, 2025, <https://www.facebook.com/WIONews/videos/trump-this-is-bidens-war-i-stopped-five-wars-in-the-last-five-months/1956453175173237/>, accessed on August 19, 2025.

worldview in which the conflict was not a test of the liberal order, but an unnecessary entanglement generated by the globalist elite. From this vantage point, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky was not a heroic defender of democracy but a proxy in an ideological struggle perpetuated by Washington and Brussels. The very language Trump employed reframed Ukraine from subject to object, from actor to pawn. His refusal to challenge Putin's narrative amounted to a redefinition of the war's meaning: no longer a defense of rules and sovereignty, but a dispute to be settled through negotiation between great powers, or the United States and Russia.

3. Europe's Strategic Marginalization

The Anchorage summit also exposed Europe's diminished role in determining the future of its own continent. Days after the Trump-Putin meeting, leading European figures gathered with Trump. The lineup was impressive on paper: European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte, German Chancellor Friedrich Merz, French President Emmanuel Macron, U.K. Prime Minister Keir Starmer, Italian Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, and Finnish President Alexander Stubb. Yet their collective presence revealed weakness rather than strength.²²⁵⁾ They arrived not as equal partners in a grand negotiation but as supplicants seeking to influence a process already shaped by Washington and Moscow.

The Europeans' lack of leverage was plain. Merz's cautious remarks – condemning Russia's annexations while implicitly conceding their effective control – epitomized the predicament.²²⁶⁾ Macron, long a champion of

225) White House, "President Trump Participates in a Multilateral Meeting with European Leaders," White House, August 19, 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CpsG75j-0hY>, accessed on August 19, 2025.

226) Oleh Velhan, "Ukraine must not be forced to surrender Donbas to Russia in talks, says Merz," *RBC-Ukraine*, August 19, 2025, <https://newsukraine.rbc.ua/news/-1755576812.html>, accessed on August 19, 2025.

“strategic autonomy,” found himself unable to articulate a path forward that did not depend on Trump’s indulgence. Starmer and Meloni, each facing domestic pressures, struck notes of rhetorical toughness but softened in Trump’s presence.²²⁷⁾

The European predicament is structural. The continent’s military power remains fragmented, underfunded, and reliant on American support for logistics, intelligence, and nuclear deterrence. Politically, the European Union is divided between Atlanticist states in the east, integrationists in the west, and skeptics in the south. Conceptually, the continent has been anchored in the globalist assumption that liberal norms and institutions would define the international order. That assumption is now collapsing, leaving Europe both materially weak and ideologically adrift. The Anchorage summit starkly revealed this marginalization.

Europe’s inability to convert economic weight into geopolitical influence is particularly striking. The EU represents one of the world’s largest markets, yet its economic power is undermined by dependence on external energy sources, fragmented fiscal policies, and the lack of a coherent defense-industrial base. When confronted with hard security challenges, trade policy and regulatory strength offer little deterrence. Europe’s experiment in “normative power” – the idea that rules, law, and standards could substitute for hard capabilities – has hit a strategic wall. The Anchorage summit dramatized this failure: economic size alone cannot guarantee strategic relevance when the game is defined by force and bargaining.

227) “President Trump Participates in a Multilateral Meeting with European Leaders,” White House, August 19, 2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CpsG75j-0hY>, accessed n August 19, 2025.

4. The Ambiguity of Security Guarantees

The phrase “security guarantee for Ukraine” became a central focus of post-summit analysis.²²⁸⁾ Yet the phrase carried radically different meanings depending on who invoked it. For Europeans, it suggested a NATO-lite arrangement, perhaps a multinational peacekeeping presence on Ukrainian soil, designed to function as a deterrent tripwire. But such a scheme was impossible without U.S. leadership and, ultimately, American forces. Trump’s refusal to provide such commitments reduced the European vision to wishful thinking.

For Russia, the phrase carried a wholly different resonance.²²⁹⁾ To Moscow, a security guarantee implied recognition of Russia as an institutionalized guarantor of European order, a co-equal partner alongside Washington. Rather than deterring Russia, the guarantee would enshrine its role. If Trump leaned toward this interpretation—and his silence suggests he did—then Ukraine’s hopes for NATO-style protection were misplaced from the outset. The Anchorage summit revealed that the phrase “security guarantee” was less a concrete policy than a contested concept, one whose meaning would be determined by power rather than consensus.

5. Beyond Ukraine: A Wider Bargain

The makeup of the delegations pointed to a wider agenda than Ukraine alone. Trump was accompanied by Secretary of State Marco Rubio and

228) Seungjin Choi, no title, *Mail Business Newspaper*; August 18, 2025, <https://www.mk.co.kr/en/world/11396678>, accessed on August 19, 2025.

229) Ketrin Johecová, “Russia wants ... Russia to have veto over Western security guarantees for Ukraine,” *Politico*, August 20, 2025, <https://www.politico.eu/article/kremlin-russia-want-veto-security-guarantee-ukraine-sergey-lavrov/>, accessed on August 19, 2025.

Middle East envoy Steven Witkoff, while his Ukraine envoy, retired General Keith Kellogg, was conspicuously absent. Putin arrived with Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Senior Advisor Yuri Ushakov, both veterans of global strategy. These choices suggested that the summit addressed not only the European balance but also the Middle East and potentially the Indo-Pacific.

Russia's coordination with Beijing and New Delhi before and after the Anchorage summit reinforced this impression.²³⁰⁾ The Anchorage summit was not simply a bilateral conversation about ceasefire lines in Donbas. It was the tentative beginning of a larger negotiation over multipolar order. Moscow positioned itself not merely as Europe's antagonist but as an indispensable interlocutor in a system increasingly defined by the interactions of Washington, Moscow, Beijing, and New Delhi. Europe was peripheral. Smaller states, including Ukraine itself, were relegated to the margins. The very choreography of the summit revealed the contours of a world reorganizing along great-power lines.

6. The Decline of Value-Based Diplomacy

Perhaps the most consequential implication of the Anchorage summit was the burial of value-based foreign policy. Since the end of the Cold War, successive U.S. administrations had, with varying degrees of emphasis, invoked democracy, human rights, and international law as guiding principles. Even when realism dictated practice, the rhetoric of liberalism provided legitimacy. Trump abandoned this pretense. His diplomacy is

230) "Telephone conversation with President of the People's Republic of China Xi Jinping," Kremlin, August 8, 2025, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/77738>, accessed on August 19, 2025. "Telephone conversation with Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi," Kremlin, August 8, 2025, <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/77741>. Press release on Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov's upcoming talks with Foreign Minister of India Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Russia, August 20, 2025, https://mid.ru/en/foreign_policy/news/2042103/, accessed on August 19, 2025.

openly transactional, anchored in power rather than principle, in bargains rather than rules.

This reorientation cannot be overstated. The liberal order was predicated on the assumption that American power and liberal values were intertwined, that military might would be harnessed to defend a rules-based system. The Anchorage summit exposed the uncoupling of power from value. The United States still wields immense strength, but it no longer promises to deploy that strength on behalf of universal ideals. For Europe, this is existential. Its globalist identity depends on American support for liberal norms. Without it, Europe finds itself normatively unmoored and strategically vulnerable.

7. Japan and the Asian Dilemma

The Anchorage summit reverberated across Asia, where Japan faced renewed pressure to assume a greater role in defending liberal values. Europe, sensing its own weakness, has courted Tokyo through initiatives such as the Japan-Germany Strategic Dialogue.²³¹ The hope has been that Japan might step into some substantial part of the void left by an increasingly transactional United States.

Yet Japan faces constraints of its own. Its security environment is dominated by immediate threats from China, North Korea, and a militarizing Russia. Its strategic priority remains the U.S. – Japan alliance and the reinforcement of deterrence in the Indo-Pacific. Overextending itself into European security risks diluting resources and exposing vulnerabilities at home.

The Anchorage summit thus underscored for Tokyo the need for

231) “1st Japan-Germany Foreign Ministerial Strategic Dialogue,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, August 18, 2025, https://www.mofa.go.jp/press/release/pressite_000001_01551.html, accessed on August 19, 2025.

recalibration. Rather than investing heavily in value-based diplomacy designed to align with globalist Europe, Japan will likely pivot toward pragmatic realism. This does not mean abandoning the rhetoric of liberal values entirely, but it does mean subordinating them to concrete security imperatives. The lesson of the summit is that values, however rhetorically potent, cannot substitute for hard power in an emerging multipolar world.

Japan's dilemma is shared by other Asian actors. South Korea, heavily reliant on U.S. security guarantees, is cautious about being drawn into European affairs, given its own North Korea problem. India, meanwhile, embraces multipolarity more openly, using U.S.-Russia rivalry to enhance its own leverage while avoiding full alignment with either camp. ASEAN states, too, have watched the Anchorage summit carefully: for them, the summit confirms the irrelevance of small-state diplomacy when great powers strike bargains. For Asia as a whole, the summit suggests a world in which regional actors must hedge carefully, cultivating multiple ties while recognizing the supremacy of hard bargaining among larger states.

8. The Return of Spheres of Influence

The analogy with Yalta is inescapable. In 1945, the division of Europe into spheres of influence consigned Poland and other smaller nations to fates determined by outsiders. In 2025, Ukraine risks a similar outcome. Its sovereignty, aspirations, and democratic identity may matter less than the bargains struck between Washington and Moscow.

The difference, however, is stark. Yalta was embedded in an ideological struggle between democracy and totalitarianism, each claiming universal validity. Anchorage, by contrast, was stripped of ideology. It was pure realism, a negotiation among great powers with no higher claim to legitimacy than the capacity to enforce outcomes. This ideological vacuum makes the New Yalta even more ruthless than its predecessor. Smaller states cannot appeal to universal principles; they must rely solely on their

strategic utility to larger patrons.

For Trump and Putin, this ideological emptiness is a feature, not a flaw. By eliminating the constraints of values, they open the field for direct transactional negotiation. For Europe's globalists, it is a profound crisis of identity. Their project is built on the fusion of values and power. With that fusion undone, they risk irrelevance.

9. Conceptual and Theoretical Implications

From the standpoint of international relations theory, Anchorage was a vindication of realism. Classical realists such as Hans Morgenthau argued that politics among nations is governed by the pursuit of power and security, not by moral aspirations. Neorealists like John Mearsheimer emphasize the structural constraints of an anarchic system in which states seek survival through balance of power. The summit embodied these insights. Trump's tacit endorsement of Russia's position, his sidelining of Europe, and his preference for bilateral bargains all underscored the primacy of power.

By contrast, liberal institutionalism appeared hollow. The institutions and norms that had sustained the liberal order—NATO, the EU, the United Nations—proved unable to constrain the return of great-power bargaining. Without American commitment to values, these institutions lacked force. Anchorage was thus a paradigmatic moment marking the eclipse of liberal internationalism and the resurgence of realism.

The Anchorage summit also highlighted the transition toward multipolarity. The unipolar moment of the post-Cold War era, in which American dominance seemed unchallengeable, has receded. The world is now shaped by the interplay of several great powers. The United States remains central but no longer seeks universal dominance. Russia, despite economic weakness, secures recognition through strategic leverage. China

emerges as the principal challenger, while India asserts itself as a swing power. Europe, despite its wealth, struggles to convert resources into influence. The summit crystallized this new distribution of power.

This moment also underscored the limits of constructivist optimism. While norms, identities, and values still shape international discourse, they proved insufficient to constrain hard bargaining when great powers perceived existential stakes. The Anchorage summit reaffirmed the realist contention that when the chips are down, material capabilities and strategic interests override normative commitments. The international system, far from progressing linearly toward liberal convergence, remains trapped in cycles of competition, bargaining, and shifting alignments.

10. Conclusion

The Anchorage summit may well be remembered as the symbolic birth of a New Yalta regime. It marked the return of great-power bargaining, the downgrading of liberal values, and the marginalization of Europe. It signaled that Ukraine's fate, like that of Poland in 1945, would be determined not by its own choices but by the bargains of great powers. It forced Japan and other middle powers to reconsider the viability of value-based diplomacy and to adapt to the imperatives of multipolar realism.

What makes this New Yalta distinct is its ideological emptiness. Whereas the original Yalta unfolded in the context of a grand ideological struggle, Anchorage was stripped of such claims. It revealed a world of spheres of influence, where interests triumph over values and where smaller states survive only by accommodating themselves to the deals struck above them.

The Anchorage summit was thus more than a meeting between Trump and Putin. It was a window into the future of global politics: a multipolar order defined by transactional realism, in which the liberal international

order has receded into history. For Europe, this is a profound crisis. For the United States, it is a strategic recalibration. For Russia, it is a long-sought recognition. For smaller nations, it is a sobering reminder that the age of values has ended, and the age of power has returned.

This reality bears consequences not only for Europe and Asia but for the Global South as well. Latin American and African states, long courted by Western rhetoric of democracy and development, may now find themselves subject to the same great-power bargaining logic. Their leverage will lie not in appeals to universal norms but in their strategic resources, geographic positioning, or ability to play patrons against one another. Anchorage foreshadows a global order in which transactionalism is universal and the moral claims of the liberal era recede further into memory.

Chapter 15

Jewish Intelligence Power as a Critical Intervening Factor in Hegemonic Transference

1. Introduction

Behind the accelerating decline of U.S. hegemony is a growing severe division of American elites and society at large, characterized by President Donald Trump's nationalist insurgent political forces against the erstwhile globalist establishment that had long held predominant power for several decades until recently. Since the end of World War II and, more conspicuously, after the end of the Cold War, the globalists had forged and advanced the U.S.-led international security, economic and political systems, including the United Nations and the three Bretton Woods institutions and, as a whole, the liberal international order. The American globalists have already lost power in the Presidency and the Congress, while retaining some residual power and influence in the federal Judiciary and the state-level governments. But there are many globalist governments in major European and other Western democracies, particularly the United Kingdom, France, and Germany, that still oppose Trump's anti-globalist approach, directly and indirectly.

This chapter will inquire about the anatomy of why the ongoing Trump revolution will be hardly irreversible in the dynamics of American hegemonic decline. This involves analyzing hegemonic transference, as the consequence of the domestic and trans-Atlantic realignments of major political forces, from the former British hegemon to the current American hegemon and the latter's accelerating hegemonic decline, with the

analytical focus on the formation, reinforcement, and weakening of Anglo-American globalists at the core. Also, the analysis needs to grasp the domestic political alignment that brought the imperial British hegemony as an initial condition of the historic evolution until today.

From such a perspective, this study will cast light on the critical roles of Jewish intelligence power behind global hegemonic transference, including the evolving regional order in the Middle East after hegemony, with a major focus on the state of Israel. The study will explore the evolving world order by connecting major events in the most recent international affairs, such as the protracted armed conflicts in Ukraine and the Gaza.

2. The marriage of British power-political prowess and Jewish intelligence power

In early modern European history, Britain used to be a minor power located off-shore west of the European continent. The country rose as the first democratic constitutional monarchy through the English Civil Wars involving protracted severe domestic political turmoil. Through this process, the British establishment mastered the essence of the struggle for power as a necessary condition of building a global hegemony.

As a sufficient condition of the rise, it was crucial to develop adequate intelligence power for foreign and security policy. However, the British establishment during the early formative years did not possess meaningful foreign intelligence power without tradition and trained human resources, and specialized state organizations. Such a shortcoming was overcome by absorbing intelligence power of the semi-autonomous commercial and financial sector, known as “the royal chartered City of London Corporation,” into the establishment. It had extensive human intelligence networks across the European continent through Jewish Diaspora and, later, globally across the oversea colonies, territories, and dominions. The networks were crucial to obtaining important business information and vital intelligence for survival through management of financial and other

movable properties toward moneymaking, the magnitude of which is unique to its deracinated and cosmopolitan traits of the Diaspora.

Notably, Diaspora communities in Europe – the Sephardic ones primarily from the Iberia Peninsular and the northern Africa, and the Ashkenazic ones from German-speaking areas and the Eastern Europe – had continually transformed themselves in composition through inter-marriage and crossbred with gentiles and relocated in response to the rise and fall of host countries, especially from one hegemon to another. Noteworthy is major relocations of court Jewish financiers to Habsburg Netherlands after the downfalls of Islamic monarchies in the Iberia. Later, they played a central role in post-independence Netherlands to build and run its world-trade hegemony.²³²⁾ Then a considerable portion of them relocated again to the City of London as Britain became the next hegemon after Netherlands, and, to a lesser extent, to New Amsterdam in the British North American colony (later, renamed as New York) from Netherlands directly or via London.²³³⁾

With adequate material power base, the rise of Britain in the 19th century as a global hegemon was made possible by satisfying combination of the two conditions above: power-political prowess and Jewish intelligence power. Parliamentary democracy, the Bank of England (or the central bank), and the City of London (or the core of the financial sector) together, enabled hegemonic external policy, often accompanying diplomatic interference and/or armed intervention, through issuing and intermediating national and foreign government bonds in which Jewish financial prowess and intelligence power played crucial roles. It has to noted that Nathan Mayer Rothschild almost alone, who was a prime Sephardic financier, had played a crucial role to finance the British war

232) Jonathan Isral, *Dutch Primacy in World Trade, 1585-1740*, Clarendon Press, 1990.

233) Stephen Birmingham, *The Grandees: American's Sephardic Elite*, Syracuse University Press, 1997.

effort against Napoleon's France for the last two years.²³⁴⁾

3. The U.S.-U.K. special relationship and Anglo-American globalists

Already in the early 20th century, the power balance between the British Empire and the United States significantly shifted from the former to the latter, which became far more pronounced after World War I. With the end of World War II, the United States replaced Britain as a global hegemon with military predominance, economic preponderance, and value/ideological preeminence. Over these periods, the U.K.-U.S. relations have undergone substantial transformation from marked hostility between the former suzerain and a newly independent state, to strategic competition between a declining hegemon and a rising great power; then to strategic rivalry between a debilitated hegemon and a would-be hegemon, and finally to "special relationship between a former hegemon and a current hegemon in which both share liberal democratic values and hegemonic interests."²³⁵⁾

Behind the transformation was British approach to building trans-Atlantic epistemic communities in foreign, security and financial affairs that enabled sharing liberal democratic values, national interests, and hegemonic policy lines. More specifically, they include significant participation of London-based international financial capital as major stock holders in the Federal Reserve Bank of New York [established in 1913] and the intellectual exchanges between the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London [established in 1920] and the Council on Foreign Relations in New York [established in 1921].²³⁶⁾

234) Nail Furguson, *The Ascent of Money: A Financial History of the World*, Penguin, 10th edition, 2008, Chapter 2.

235) Masahiro Matsumura, "Why truce talks now? the significance of the Trump revolution," *IFIMES Research*, March 28, 2025, <https://www.ifimes.org/en/researches/why-truce-talks-now-the-significance-of-the-trump-revolution/5480/> accessed on September 30, 2025.

236) *Ibid.*

Consequently, British and American leaders had come to share similar external policy lines through such apparatus and intellectual networks, both formal and informal. British leaders were able to take advantage of influencing American counterparts since they possessed superior knowledge and experience in running hegemony, occasionally shaping American strategic thinking from within to influence and, control U.S. foreign and security policy. The sway of the Anglo-American globalists across the U.S.-led West had been reinforced until the progression of the Trump revolution.

In transferring hegemony to Washington, London strived to retain as much its vested interests and influence as possible, while compelled to considerably rely on U.S. material power that overwhelmed its own. To handle out such asymmetry, London used as leverage its human intelligence capability and other legacy networks power for communication intelligence and military operation (transportation, logistics, and communication), through its relationship with three major former British dominions (Australia, Canada, and New Zealand) and its sovereign control over overseas territories of geostrategic importance, such as Diego Garcia and Gibraltar.²³⁷⁾ This structure of concurrent symbiosis and parasite with the U.S. hegemony has since been all the more reinforced, consequent on the continuous, conspicuous decline of Britain's material power for the last several decades.

4. Dividing the Diaspora to control Jewish intelligence power

Accordingly, London needed embracing Jewish intelligence power as an indispensable factor of running the imperial British hegemony. This required preventing the rise of Jewish nationalism while maintaining the deracinated status of the Jewish²³⁸⁾ to have them aligned to imperial

237) *Ibid.*

238) Masahiro Matsumura, "The war in Ukraine as an inevitable manifestation of globalism vs. nationalism," *IFIMES Research*, August 6, 2024, <https://www.ifimes.org/en/researches/the-war-in-ukraine-as-an-inevitable-manifestation-of-globalism-vs-nationalism/5377>, accessed on September 30, 2025.

Britain's hegemonic lines through their intelligence services. This involves a divide-and-rule approach to the Diaspora, as typified by London's two contradictory commitments to the future of its Mandatory Palestina: the Balfour Declaration of 1917 in support of a Jewish state and the Hussein-McMahon agreement of 1915 in support of an independent Arab, not Jewish, state which would include the Palestinians.

As a result of the duplicitous diplomacy, London took an in-between, ambiguous stance toward U.N. General Assembly Resolution 181, regarding the territorial settlement of a Jewish state vs. a Palestinian state.²³⁹⁾ Thereafter, the newly independent State of Isreal had accumulated fait accompli of effective control over occupied areas through protracted armed conflict, that were not designed to it. London gave a diplomatic recognition to Isreal while criticizing military action and occupation in contravention of the above Resolution and international humanitarian law.

This means that London had come to stand on a moral high ground against Israel's specific military actions in the name of humanitarianism and a rule of international law and manipulate the world discourse on Israel and the Middle East, while sided with Isreal as a matter of political principle. With politically-correct rhetoric, therefore, London could induce Jewish internationalism over Jewish nationalism, involving substantial Jewish intelligence power sided with London. The circumstances had been reinforced by the predominance of the center-left Israeli Labor Party until the conservative-nationalist Likud has become the ruling party since the early 1980s, except the period from 1999 to 2005 when the Labor Party had power. Also, the Israeli intelligence community had undergone strong intellectual influence from the U.K. counterpart through interpersonal connections due to the legacy of Mandatory Palestina and the Zionist independence movement.²⁴⁰⁾ The potential of Israeli intelligence power

239) Micheal J. Cohen, *Britain's Moment in Palestine: Retrospect and Perspectives, 1917-1948*, Princeton University Press, 2014.

240) *op. cit.*

during the post-independence era was largely restrained within a senior-junior dynamic in intelligence ties between the United Kingdom and Israel, since the latter focused on the intelligence needs of the Israeli Jewish, not the wider Diaspora.

5. The rise of Israeli intelligence and its alignment with the American counterpart

The U.S.-U.K. special relationship had been the axis in the U.S.-U.K.-Israel trilateral relations until recently in which the current U.S. hegemon is supported by the former U.K. hegemon that yet exercises significant influence over the former from within of the hegemonic system. As a result, London occasionally shaped the discourse and decision on U.S. hegemonic policy line and/or specific action. Under the structure, Israel remained a minor regional intelligence actor in the U.S. hegemonic system, while attached to the U.K international networks.

This structure began subtly transforming itself toward a U.S.-Israel axis when neoconservatism, particularly Jewish neoconservative public intellectuals and political appointees, became influential in U.S. foreign and security policy. In the early post-Cold War period, this was manifested by then-U.S. Under Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz-drafted “Defense Planning Guidance, FY 1994-1999,” known as the Wolfowitz Doctrine.²⁴¹⁾ U.S. interventionist activism for the first decade and a half in this century across the greater Middle East, including Iraq and Afghanistan, in the name of the global war on terrorism, is a logical progression of the Doctrine. In fact, the hyper-interventionist turn was reinforced because the Israeli lobbies exerted an overwhelming influence in U.S. domestic politics, especially foreign and security policy to the Middle East centered on Israel.²⁴²⁾ The lobbies gradually built a U.S.-Israel axis with the

241) “Defense Planning Guidance, FY 94-99,” National Security Council of the United States, April 16, 1992, <https://www.archives.gov/files/declassification/isecap/pdf/2008-003-docs1-12.pdf>, accessed on September 30, 2025.

242) John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, *The Israel Lobby and US Foreign Policy*, Penguin Books, 2008.

continuous and ample provision of U.S. military, economic and intelligence assistance, enhanced Jewish nationalism, and buttressed Israel to be most powerful state in the Middle East.

The power balance between Britain and Israel under U.S. global hegemony had gradually shifted in favor of Israel because it successfully strengthened its military and intelligence cooperation with the United States over the Iraq war (2003-2011), while enjoying regional peace and security under the U.S. regional hegemony without shouldering substantial military and economic costs. In contrast, London could not prevent Washington's unilateralism, as demonstrated by the fact that it made substantial armed intervention in support of Washington through which to influence the hegemon's war policy. Obviously, London failed to control Washington's war decision-making from within domestic policy processes with intelligence and other information inputs.

The circumstances naturally led to a secret strife between the declining British and the rising Israel intelligence power, particularly due to the central strategic importance of the Middle East in U.S. global hegemonic policy. With Washington's project of the Iraqi regime change wrecked due to unabated insurgency, the United States finally withdrew its armed forces from there, involving considerable weakening of forwarded U.S. military power in the Middle East. Thus, Israel increasingly needed to build adequate military power of its own for national security. But the country was in stronger necessity than Britain to complement and supplement its limited national power by making active use of U.S. military and intelligence power. To do that, Israel had to form the epistemic communities in foreign, security and financial affairs of Judeo-American nationalists against those of Anglo-American globalists, inescapably constituting the two's frontal clash regarding which side obtained the privileged position under the US hegemony.

6. Jewish intelligence power leaning toward Judeo-American nationalists

The intensified American domestic power struggle of Trump-led nationalists against the longtime globalist Anglo-American establishment has been closely intertwined with U.S. policy orientation toward the Middle East due to the power and influence of Judeo-American nationalists, especially the hyper-active Isreal lobbies for the sake of Israeli security. The birth of President Trump's second-term demonstrates the marked decline of Anglo-American globalists and necessitated the reversal of the Biden's administration's administration's pro-Ukraine policy. Naturally, the growing superiority of Jewish nationalists in the intelligence communities over Jewish internationalists has similarly become prominent, as revealed by a gradual but marked shift in war propaganda/counter-propaganda from naked anti-Russia to reserved pro-Ukraine stances.²⁴³⁾

Obviously, the gravity of the U.S. intelligence community has shifted from working with the U.K counterpart to the Israeli counterpart. Specifically, after Trump won the presidential election in November 2024 and, more conspicuously, after he entered office, in January 2025, the U.S. intelligence community has provided information with media on the protracted Ukraine war of attrition that is disadvantageous to the U.S.-led West. Consequently, the U.K. intelligence community has become less able to manipulate war propaganda/counter-propaganda than before.

From a Judeo-American nationalist perspective, the important agenda left lay in how to pull Jewish elements in the London-centered Jewish

243) Masahiro Matsumura, "Hindered: a frozen conflict in Ukraine," *IFIMES Research*, June 26, 2023, <https://www.ifimes.org/en/researches/hindered-a-frozen-conflict-in-ukraine/5188>, accessed on September 30, 2025. Masahiro Matsumura, "Unmasking War Propaganda against Russian Aggression: An Investigative Approach," *IFIMES Research*, April 20, 2022, <https://www.ifimes.org/en/researches/unmasking-war-propaganda-against-russian-aggression-an-investigative-approach/5039?> accessed on September 30, 2025.

intelligence community from the globalist foreign and security policy line. The agenda is pressing for Trumpian nationalists because they have to completely defeat Anglo-American globalists at the earliest convenience for avoiding a hard clash of the U.S. hegemony, and for Jewish nationalists because Israel's security has to be ensured by making active use of U.S. power prior to its hegemonic debilitation and the complete transition to a multipolar balance-of-power system.

Ironically, Israel's recent militarist policy against Hamas' terrorism in the Gaze makes sense because Jerusalem has increasingly lost international legitimacy due to its genocidal acts against local Gaza population through displacement and starvation as well as collateral damages by Israel Defense Forces (IDF) and Hamas. As a counter-measure, London gave the Palestinian authority formal diplomatic recognition under international law, a blow to Israel's international legal and political standing. This will surely alienate the London-centered Jewish intelligence community and considerably weaken its security-intelligence complex as a major globalist bastion outside the United States.

It is obvious that the President Trump's second term has acquiesced Israel's militarist policy, if not openly supportive of it. Rather, it quietly provided Israel with necessary intelligence through technical means for a series of decapitations of Hezbollah and Iranian military leader to which hostile forces against Israel remain unable to counter with effective military retaliation. Obviously, Trump's implicit but strong support is highly instrumental to build Israel's military dominance across the Middle East, particularly because major Arab states has made only token criticism against Israel while quietly forming strategic alignment with it for their strategic advantage.

7. Conclusion: Jewish Intelligence Power and the Shifting Architecture of Hegemony

This chapter has demonstrated that Jewish intelligence power has long functioned as a decisive but often overlooked intervening variable in the process of hegemonic transference. From the formative years of British ascendancy, when London fused its emerging parliamentary-military machinery with the financial-intelligence capacities of the Jewish Diaspora, to the later transatlantic handover of primacy to Washington, Jewish networks consistently shaped the ways in which hegemonic structures were sustained, adapted, and eventually contested. What was once a symbiotic relationship between Britain and the Jewish intelligence apparatus evolved into a triangular system in which the United States, as the new hegemon, mediated between its “special relationship” with London and the gradually expanding role of Israel.

The analysis highlights that the transition from Jewish internationalism aligned with Anglo-American globalists to Jewish nationalism embodied in the U.S. – Israel axis signals not merely a regional realignment but a fundamental shift in the ideological underpinning of hegemony itself. Israel’s intelligence ascendancy and its deep integration with U.S. security structures have weakened London’s residual leverage, intensifying intra-Jewish competition between globalist and nationalist orientations. The Trump revolution accelerated this trajectory by empowering Judeo-American nationalists, thereby reorienting the gravitational center of U.S. intelligence collaboration from London to Jerusalem.

The broader implication is that the decline of U.S. hegemony cannot be understood solely in terms of material overstretch or domestic polarization; it must also be analyzed through the prism of competing epistemic communities and their ability to mobilize intelligence, legitimacy, and strategic narratives. Whether Israel can consolidate its position as a stabilizing regional hegemon amid international criticism of its militarist

policies, and whether Jewish intelligence power can successfully adapt to an emerging multipolar order, remain open questions. What is certain is that the struggle between globalist and nationalist currents within Jewish intelligence networks will continue to shape the architecture of world politics in the post-American era.

Last not least, Isreal would most likely transform itself into a stabilizing regional hegemon once it achieves a greater Israel as Zionists envision. It would be satiated with a regional status quo under the emerging multipolarity, without any strong need to take an eccentric militarist approach in regional and global affairs.

Chapter 16

A Self-explication on Chapter 15: Reconsidering Epistemic Power in Hegemonic Transition

Introduction

Chapter 15 proposed that a historically evolving constellation of transnational networks – associated with Jewish finance, information, and intelligence institutions – has functioned as a critical intervening variable in the succession of world hegemonies from the early modern era to the present. Its argument positions “Jewish intelligence power” not as an autonomous determinant of global politics but as an intermediate mechanism that mediates interactions between dominant powers and the international order. Through this conceptual innovation, the previous chapter seeks to integrate intelligence studies and epistemic power into the analytical framework of hegemonic stability theory, thereby broadening the ontological scope of International Relations (IR) beyond its conventional state-centrism.

This review chapter makes a self-explication of Chapter 15, with a major focus on its contribution in terms of theoretical originality, analytical architecture, methodological rigor, and normative sensitivity. This is because the length of the previous chapter is not fully sufficient in these regards. This review situates it within the broader landscape of IR scholarship on hegemony, power transition, and epistemic structures. The goal is to assess both its intellectual merits and its limitations as a model for rethinking how non-material, transnational factors shape hegemonic transformation.

1. Theoretical Innovation: Introducing an Epistemic Intervening Variable

The principal theoretical contribution of Chapter 15 lies in introducing the concept of Jewish intelligence power as an intervening variable in hegemonic transition. Traditional hegemonic stability theory (HST), developed by Charles P. Kindleberger and later refined by Robert Gilpin, explains global order primarily through the rise and decline of material capabilities – economic, military, and technological.²⁴⁴ The innovation departs from these paradigms by emphasizing the epistemic dimension of power: the organization, circulation, and strategic deployment of knowledge.

It is argued that Jewish networks – historically dispersed yet functionally cohesive in finance, intelligence, and media – constitute a transnational epistemic structure that has repeatedly facilitated the stabilization or transformation of hegemonic orders. By designating this structure as an intervening variable, the author avoids deterministic causal reductionism. The Jewish factor, in this formulation, does not independently determine the rise or fall of empires; rather, it mediates the efficacy with which emerging or declining hegemonic powers manage the information, finance, and legitimacy necessary for systemic leadership.

In conceptual terms, the author's framework is an ambitious attempt to synthesize classical realism's focus on power with constructivism's emphasis on knowledge and identity. His model posits that the capacity to gather, process, and operationalize information – “intelligence power” – is crucial in the reproduction of hegemony, and that Jewish networks, shaped by historical conditions of diaspora and exclusion, developed comparative advantages in precisely those functions.

244) Charles P. Kindleberger, *The World in Depression, 1929-1939*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973. Robert Gilpin, *War and Change in World Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

This theoretical reconfiguration—treating intelligence as a macro-structural mediator—represents the discussion’s most original and potentially valuable contribution. It invites IR scholars to re-examine the hidden infrastructures of global power, particularly how epistemic communities and transnational networks interact with states in shaping world order.

2. Historical Scope and Macro-Structural Framing

Another notable strength of Matsumura’s essay lies in its macro-historical scope. Spanning from the early modern period to the present, the analysis traces a *longue durée* trajectory of hegemonic succession: from the Dutch Republic to the British Empire, to the United States, and finally to what the author terms the “Israeli-American nexus.” This panoramic view situates Jewish intelligence power within a centuries-long continuum of global political economy.

In the author’s account, Jewish diasporic communities in Europe developed dense financial and informational networks as adaptive mechanisms for survival and mobility under exclusionary conditions. These networks, he argues, later became embedded in and indispensable to successive hegemonic powers. The Dutch relied on Jewish financial intermediaries during their maritime ascendancy; the British incorporated Jewish capital and advisory influence in imperial expansion; and the United States, in turn, became intertwined with Jewish intellectual, financial, and strategic elites, especially in the twentieth century. In the post-Cold War era, the author observes the growing centrality of Israeli intelligence, technological innovation, and the U.S.–Israel strategic partnership as indicators of a shifting hegemonic configuration.

This historical narrative exhibits two analytical merits. First, it aligns the micro-processes of intelligence and finance with the macro-cycles of global order, bridging micro-meso-macro levels of analysis. Second, it

challenges the temporal parochialism of most IR theories by embedding contemporary power shifts in a longer civilizational evolution of epistemic systems.

Yet, the breadth of the narrative also generates potential pitfalls. The *longue durée* framework, while illuminating, can slide into teleological continuity—an implicit suggestion of a trans-historical agency that transcends contextual differentiation. Without careful empirical demarcation between periods, the narrative risks appearing to attribute unbroken intentionality to a diverse set of actors. The historical reach, therefore, both enriches and complicates the argument.

3. Integration of Intelligence Studies and IR Theory

The integration of intelligence studies into IR theory by the author of the previous chapter is particularly noteworthy. Intelligence—defined broadly as the acquisition and strategic use of information—has traditionally been treated as a subfield of security studies or history rather than as a theoretical variable in systemic analysis. By foregrounding “intelligence power,” the author positions informational control as a decisive factor in both the maintenance and transfer of hegemony.

In this respect, the author’s work complements the insights of epistemic power theorists such as Michael Barnett, Peter Haas, and Stefano Guzzini, who explore how knowledge-producing communities shapes international order.²⁴⁵ However, while those scholars generally analyze technocratic epistemic communities (e.g., economists, scientists, policy experts), Matsumura’s focus on ethnically linked intelligence-financial networks

245) Michael Barnett, *Legitimacy, and the Use of Force*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2010; Peter M. Haas, “Epistemic Communities and International Policy Coordination,” *International Organization*, Vol. 46, No. 1, 1992: 1–35; Stefano Guzzini, *Power, Realism and Constructivism*, Routledge, 2013.

introduces a sociological dimension often excluded from such accounts.

His conceptualization of “intelligence power” is expansive, encompassing three interrelated layers:

- ① Information gathering and analysis (the intelligence-agency sense);
- ② Financial intelligence and capital mobility, where informational asymmetry yields structural advantage; and
- ③ Epistemic control, referring to the ability to define legitimate knowledge and shape public discourse.

This tripartite model enhances IR’s analytical repertoire by linking hard intelligence, soft epistemic authority, and financial acumen into a single matrix of power. In the author’s schema, these capacities collectively explain how certain transnational actors sustain hegemonic orders even amid state decline.

Nevertheless, this conceptual breadth introduces ambiguity. The term “intelligence power” oscillates between concrete institutional meaning (intelligence agencies) and abstract epistemic sense (knowledge control). Without a consistent operational definition, the concept risks losing analytical precision. For theoretical robustness, future work would need to delineate subtypes – perhaps distinguishing between strategic intelligence power (operational espionage and analysis) and epistemic intelligence power (control over ideational narratives and legitimacy production).

4. Analytical Organization and Structural Clarity

Structurally, Matsumura’s essay demonstrates clarity and coherence. It proceeds in a chronological sequence, each period illustrating how Jewish networks mediated hegemonic power. The organization into historical

stages – early modern finance, British imperial consolidation, Anglo-American transition, and the contemporary U.S. – Israel symbiosis – allows the reader to follow a consistent analytical thread.

Conceptually, the previous chapter differentiates between Jewish internationalism (associated with cosmopolitan finance and globalism) and Jewish nationalism (associated with Zionism and the U.S. – Israel alliance). This distinction is both novel and politically perceptive, capturing the internal dialectic within Jewish political identity between globalist and nationalist orientations. It also resonates with broader debates in IR between liberal cosmopolitanism and realist nationalism.

However, while the structure is lucid, it occasionally privileges narrative continuity over causal depth. The transitions between stages are asserted rather than demonstrated through explicit mechanisms or empirical verification, due to the space assigned to a short essay. The framework would benefit from schematic causal diagrams or tabular summaries specifying the mediating processes at each stage: what kind of intelligence activity linked the Dutch to the British, or the British to the Americans? Was the mediation financial, technological, or ideational? These clarifications would elevate the work from interpretive history to causal theory.

5. Empirical and Methodological Limitations

The most significant weaknesses of Chapter 15 lie in its empirical and methodological foundations, largely due to the space assigned to it. While its theoretical architecture is ambitious, the supporting evidence remains largely interpretive and narrative. The essay cites historical examples but does not systematically test its propositions through archival data, quantitative analysis, or comparative case studies. Obviously, the author intends to present this central analytical ideas and approach in a relatively short essay, rather than to produce a book with full conceptual elucidation

and empirical evidence.²⁴⁶⁾

Three methodological shortcomings stand out:

Insufficient operationalization of variables

The intervening variable – Jewish intelligence power – is conceptually rich but empirically elusive. The author does not define clear indicators by which it could be measured or observed. For instance, what empirical markers would demonstrate the activation of this variable? Intelligence cooperation agreements? Financial flows? Elite interlocks? Without operational indicators, the argument remains at the level of informed conjecture.

Lack of comparative control cases

Demonstrating causal mediation requires showing both presence and absence effects. The essay does not present counterfactual or negative cases where similar diasporic or epistemic networks existed but did not produce comparable hegemonic influence. Comparative analysis (e.g., Chinese merchant diasporas, Armenian banking houses) would have strengthened causal inference.

Reliance on secondary narratives

The historical discussion draws on well-known episodes but lacks citation of primary sources or specialized intelligence literature. For example, discussions of Anglo-American intelligence cooperation or Israeli strategic innovation could have drawn from declassified archives or scholarly studies, lending empirical rigor.

Methodologically, then, the essay's value lies more in its conceptual provocation than in its evidentiary demonstration. It opens a new line of

²⁴⁶⁾ The essay by Matsumura cites John Mearsheimer and Stephen Walt, *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*, New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007.

inquiry rather than conclusively establishing its thesis.

6. Ethical and Interpretive Sensitivities

A major concern among readers would be the potential for misinterpretation of the author's thesis as ethnically essentialist or conspiratorial. The author repeatedly clarifies that "Jewish intelligence power" is an intervening – not independent – variable and that the essay's intent is analytical, not normative. Nonetheless, the repeated ethnic signifier "Jewish" risks being read as implying a cohesive, collective agency operating across centuries.

This problem is not unique to Matsumura's work. Any analysis that attributes systemic influence to ethnically identified networks faces the challenge of distinguishing between cultural continuity and collective intentionality. In scholarly discourse, such attributions must be handled with exceptional care to avoid reproducing stereotypes or feeding politicized misreadings.

From a sociological standpoint, Jewish communities have always been internally diverse, politically heterogeneous, and geographically dispersed. Their participation in global finance and intelligence structures has varied by context, shaped by state policy, opportunity structures, and individual agency. Without this differentiation, analytical models risk collapsing complexity into essentialism. The author not only denies the monolithic nature of Diaspora communities, as emphasizing at least the bifurcation of Jewish internationalists vs. Jewish nationalists across Britain, the United States, Israel, and the rest of the world, but also emphasizes its central analytical importance in his essay.

A possible resolution, already suggested in subsequent revisions, is to re-frame the variable in terms of transnational epistemic networks historically involving Jewish actors. This formulation retains the analytical

insight – that certain diasporic knowledge systems have mediated hegemonic transitions – while avoiding the impression of an ethnicized collective will. Such reframing would align the concept with contemporary IR’s emphasis on networked agency rather than ethnic agency.

7. Relation to Established IR Theories

While Matsumura’s essay introduces novel variables, its engagement with established IR theories remains limited. A stronger dialogue with existing frameworks would enhance its academic traction.

1) *Hegemonic Stability Theory (HST)*

Robert Gilpin and Charles Kindleberger conceptualized hegemonic order as dependent on a single power’s capacity and willingness to provide public goods. Matsumura’s model supplements this with a cognitive infrastructure that enables the hegemon to coordinate global systems. Jewish intelligence power, in this context, could be interpreted as part of the “knowledge infrastructure” facilitating global governance. The author could further elaborate how such epistemic networks help hegemonic powers overcome information asymmetry and transaction costs, reinforcing leadership.

2) *World-Systems Analysis*

Immanuel Wallerstein’s world-systems theory identifies core-periphery relations and cyclical hegemonic transitions.²⁴⁷ Matsumura’s narrative parallels this cyclicity but adds a mediating layer of epistemic capital. By integrating world-systems’ structural temporalities with epistemic mediation, the model could evolve into a hybrid framework – one that acknowledges both material and ideational mechanisms in global cycles.

247) Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System (I)(II)(III)(IV)*, University of California Press, 2011.

3) *Realism and Neo-Realism*

Matsumura's approach shares realism's concern with power but extends it beyond military and economic assets. In the realist lexicon, "intelligence power" could be considered a sub-dimension of informational capability, affecting state behavior under uncertainty. Explicitly connecting his argument to offensive realism (e.g., John Mearsheimer²⁴⁸) or neoclassical realism would clarify where epistemic intermediaries fit within the distribution of power.

4) *Critical and Constructivist Approaches*

Robert Cox's critical theory and Alexander Wendt's constructivism both highlight the constitutive role of ideas and social structures.²⁴⁹ Matsumura's model could be read as a realist–constructivist synthesis: material hegemony depends on cognitive mediation. Articulating this linkage would situate the essay more firmly within mainstream theoretical debates, transforming a provocative thesis into a theoretically integrated proposition.

8. Speculative Geopolitics and the "Greater Israel" Hypothesis

Chapter 15 concludes with an interpretive projection that the emerging U.S.–Israel partnership may evolve into a "Greater Israel"–centered hegemonic system in the Middle East, replacing or succeeding the declining American global order. While intriguing, this section drifts from analytical argumentation toward speculative geopolitics. It extrapolates trends in technology, military cooperation, and ideological realignment but

248) John Mearsheimer, *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*, W. W. Norton & Co Inc; 2014.

249) Robert W. Cox with Timothy J. Sinclair, *Approaches to World Order*, Cambridge University Press, 1996. Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics*, Cambridge University Press, 1999.

lacks empirical grounding.²⁵⁰⁾

From an IR-theoretical standpoint, such projections require scenario modelling or trend analysis. Without these tools, they risk being perceived as normative or conjectural. Moreover, the term “Greater Israel,” laden with political connotations, may obscure rather than clarify the structural argument about epistemic convergence. A more neutral framing – such as “U.S. – Israel epistemic symbiosis” or “Judeo-American strategic complex” – would retain analytical substance while avoiding politicization.

Nonetheless, the speculative finale does underscore a provocative insight: that hegemony in the 21st century may depend less on territorial or industrial dominance and more on control of intelligence, surveillance, and epistemic infrastructures. In that sense, Matsumura’s projection gestures toward the emerging reality of information-age geopolitics.

9. Reception and Intellectual Courage

Despite – or because of – its controversial framing, Chapter 15 exemplifies intellectual courage. It confronts taboo subjects, refusing the boundaries of political correctness that often constrain academic inquiry into sensitive ethnic or cultural dimensions of power. By doing so, it reopens questions about how transnational identities interact with global order – questions that mainstream IR has often neglected for fear of moral misinterpretation.

At the same time, the discussion illustrates the peril of such engagement: bold hypotheses without sufficient empirical armor invite accusations of bias or essentialism. The challenge for scholars pursuing

250) Masahiro Matsumura, “Isreal-Iran Confrontation: A Calculated Struggle Toward a Cold Peace?” *World Geostrategic Insights*, June 21, 2025, <https://www.wgi.world/the-israel-iran-confrontation-a-calculated-struggle-toward-a-cold-peace>, accessed on June 21, 2025.

similar inquiries is to couple analytical bravery with methodological precision and ethical transparency. Controversy, in itself, does not invalidate scholarship; it compels deeper scrutiny. The author's work thus functions as both a substantive contribution and a case study in the politics of academic discourse.

10. Toward a Framework of Transnational Epistemic Mediation

One constructive way to build on Matsumura's thesis is to abstract from its specific ethnocultural focus and articulate a general model of transnational epistemic mediation. In such a framework, any enduring hegemonic system would rely on intermediary networks that manage flows of information, finance, and legitimacy across borders. These networks could take diverse forms – religious, commercial, technological, or ideological – and their composition would vary historically.

Within this generalized model, the historical role of Jewish diasporic networks would constitute one prominent case among many. Other examples might include the medieval Italian banking families, the Chinese mercantile diaspora, or contemporary Silicon Valley – based transnational tech elites. All represent instances where non-state epistemic actors facilitated hegemonic expansion or transition by providing informational infrastructure.

Reframing the argument in this comparative and theoretical manner would universalize its relevance and mitigate the problem of ethnic particularization. It would also align Matsumura's insight with broader debates about the post-Westphalian diffusion of power and the rise of knowledge-based hegemony.

11. Overall Evaluation

The following summary table synthesizes the evaluation dimensions:

Dimension	Evaluation	Comments
Originality	★★★★★	Introduces a novel intervening variable integrating intelligence, finance, and epistemic power into hegemonic theory.
Analytical Structure	★★★★☆	Clear historical logic and structured argument; would benefit from explicit causal modelling.
Empirical Support	★★☆☆☆	Primarily interpretive; lacks systematic evidence or case comparison.
Academic Rigor	★★★☆☆	Conceptually rich but methodologically underdeveloped.
Political Sensitivity Handling	★★☆☆☆	Needs refined terminology and ethical disclaimers to avoid essentialist readings.
Contribution to IR Discourse	★★★★☆	Stimulates theoretical debate on non-material dimensions of power; expands IR's ontological scope.

This assessment indicates that the essay by this author ranks high in conceptual innovation but moderate to low in empirical robustness. Its significance lies in opening intellectual terrain rather than providing definitive explanation.

12. Implications for Future Research

The author's conceptual provocation invites several research trajectories:

1) *Empirical Studies of Epistemic Mediation in Hegemony*

Scholars could conduct archival or network-analytic research on how specific transnational information and finance networks facilitated

hegemonic functions in different eras. For instance, the Rothschild banking network's role in nineteenth-century British finance or Israeli cybersecurity firms' integration into U.S. defense ecosystems could be studied empirically.

2) Comparative Diaspora Networks

A comparative study of diasporic epistemic powers – Jewish, Chinese, Indian, Armenian, or Lebanese – would test whether similar patterns of mediation obtain across different historical and cultural contexts.

3) Operationalizing Intelligence Power

Future work should define measurable indicators of epistemic/financial/intelligence power, perhaps including elite network mapping, capital mobility flows, strategic intelligence cooperation agreements, media-knowledge production indices, or institutional placements.

4) Scenario Modelling for Knowledge-based Hegemony

Building on the speculative projection of a knowledge-based hegemon (e. g., U.S. – Israel nexus), scholars could develop formal scenario models exploring what conditions would enable an epistemic hegemon to succeed in the 21st century.

5) Normative and Ethical Critique

Given the risks of ethnic essentialism, future research must include reflexive methodological sections on how to study diasporic intelligence/knowledge networks without reinforcing conspiracy or group-agency tropes.

Conclusion

Chapter 15 makes a potentially valuable theoretical contribution by proposing a non-state, transnationally embedded intervening factor in hegemonic change. Yet, largely due to the space assigned to it, the

argument currently suffers from definitional ambiguity, under-developed empirical testing, and significant ethical risks because of the way collective identity is invoked. Careful re-definition, stronger empirical work (including negative cases), explicit engagement with alternative explanations, and an ethical framing will turn a provocative thesis into a robust scholarly contribution without reinforcing harmful stereotypes.

Chapter 17

Policy Prescriptions for Europe and Japan

1. The EU's Special Tribunal: A Triumph of Idealism Over Realism?

The European Union's push in July 2025 to establish a special tribunal to prosecute Russian leaders for the crime of aggression in Ukraine and war crimes committed there is being hailed in Brussels and Strasbourg as a historic milestone for international justice. Yet, beneath the rhetoric of accountability and the rule of law, this initiative exposes the persistent gulf between Europe's legalistic idealism and the hard realities of global power politics. In an era when the liberal international order is in retreat and great power rivalry is resurgent, the EU's move risks being little more than a symbolic gesture, one that may ultimately undermine Europe's relevance and credibility on the world stage.

1) The Limits of Legalism in a World of Power

Europe's faith in law and norms is a product of its own historical experience. The horrors of the 20th century led to the creation of institutions designed to prevent war and promote justice. For decades, this approach brought stability and prosperity to the continent. But the world of 2025 is not the world of 1945. Today, the international system is shaped less by universal norms than by the interests and calculations of powerful states. The United States, China, and Russia, none of which are parties to the International Criminal Court, have demonstrated time and again that legal mechanisms lacking enforcement power are easily ignored by those with sufficient might.

The proposed special tribunal, supported by the EU, the Council of

Europe, and a coalition of like-minded states, is intended to fill a gap left by the ICC's inability to prosecute the crime of aggression against non-signatory states like Russia. Its jurisdiction will be derived from a European agreement, with the backing of several Western governments. Yet, as even its architects admit, the tribunal will face "clear legal, political, and practical obstacles, notably the immunity of sitting heads of state, heads of governments, and foreign ministers ('troika members') and difficulties in obtaining physical custody over potential defendants."²⁵¹ In other words, Vladimir Putin and his top officials will not be brought to trial unless they lose power and fall into the hands of a cooperating state.

2) *Symbolism Without Substance*

From a typical EU perspective, that the tribunal is a "solemn promise to the victims, to history, and to future generations – that justice will be done, and that sustainable peace will be built on truth, accountability, and the rule of law."²⁵² But what does this promise amount to if it cannot be enforced? The reality is that, absent regime change in Moscow, the tribunal's indictments will remain unenforced, and its verdicts will be ignored by those they target. The spectacle of issuing arrest warrants for leaders who remain untouchable risks turning international justice into a theater of impotence.

This is not to deny the moral value of standing up for victims or documenting atrocities. But the central lesson of international relations is that law without power is little more than aspiration. The postwar order was sustained not just by institutions and treaties, but by the willingness

251) "Frequently Asked Questions - Special Tribunal for the Crime of Aggression against Ukraine," Council of Europe, January 26, 2026, <https://www.coe.int/en/web/portal/special-tribunal-for-the-crime-of-aggression-against-ukraine-frequently-asked-questions>, accessed on February, 12, 2026.

252) Jorge Liboreiro, "Ukraine's allies endorse special tribunal to prosecute Putin, with legal limitations," EURONEWS, May 9, 2025, <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2025/05/09/ukraines-allies-endorse-special-tribunal-to-prosecute-putin-with-legal-limitations>, accessed on February 12, 2026.

and ability of the United States and its allies to enforce them. Today, as American focus drifts and military power is increasingly contested, Europe's reliance on legalism appears ever more disconnected from the realities of geopolitical competition.

3) Power Politics Is Back

The invasion of Ukraine itself is the starkest reminder that power politics, not legal norms, determines outcomes in the international system. Russia's actions were not deterred by international law, nor have they been reversed by legal condemnation. Instead, it has been the material support provided to Ukraine – arms, intelligence, and economic aid – that has shaped the course of the conflict. Sanctions, while rooted in national law, derive their force from the economic weight and unity of those imposing them.

The EU's tribunal, by contrast, offers no new tools of coercion. It relies on the voluntary cooperation of states, many of whom are unwilling or unable to challenge Russia directly. Even among Europe's own ranks, unity is fragile: some member states maintain pragmatic ties to Moscow, and others fear the consequences of further escalation. The tribunal's creation may satisfy a moral imperative, but it does little to alter the balance of power that sustains the war.

4) The Risks of Overreach

By pursuing an initiative with little chance of practical success, the EU risks exposing the limits of its own influence. The spectacle of a tribunal that cannot enforce its judgments may reinforce perceptions of European weakness, confirming to adversaries that Europe is more comfortable issuing statements and drafting legal documents than wielding real power. Worse, it may encourage a sense of complacency, distracting from the urgent need to rebuild Europe's own military and economic strength in a dangerous world.

There is also the danger of alienating potential partners. Many countries outside the West view the proliferation of international tribunals with suspicion, seeing them as tools for advancing Western interests under the guise of universal values. The EU's move could deepen the divide between the liberal core and the rest of the world, further eroding the legitimacy of the international system it seeks to uphold.

5) Conclusion: Realism, Not Idealism

Europe's commitment to justice and the rule of law is admirable. But in a world where power is increasingly decisive, the EU must recognize the limits of legalism divorced from enforcement capability. The creation of a special tribunal for Russian aggression may provide moral satisfaction, but it will not bring justice to Ukraine unless backed by real power. If Europe wishes to remain a pole in world politics, it must rediscover the centrality of power politics and realism, strengthening its own capacities, forging pragmatic alliances, and accepting that, in the end, justice is only as strong as the power that stands behind it.

2. Japan at the Crossroads: Rethinking Value-Based Diplomacy in a Fracturing World Order

In the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, Japan, under then-Prime Minister Fumio Kishida, intensified its commitment to value-based diplomacy—championing the liberal international order and aligning itself with the U.S.-led West.

This approach, rooted in Japan's postwar identity as a "middle power," persisted under his successor, Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba.

Yet, as the United States under President Donald Trump signals a decisive retreat from its traditional leadership role, Japan finds itself at a critical juncture, forced to reconsider its diplomatic strategy amid the unraveling of the very order it has relied upon for security and prosperity.

1) The Legacy of Defeat and the Logic of Middle Power Diplomacy

Japan's value-based diplomacy is not an arbitrary choice but a logical extension of its post-World War II trajectory. As a defeated nation stripped of agency in shaping the international order, Japan rebuilt its status through economic prowess, technological innovation, and deft use of soft power. By embedding itself within the liberal order, Japan found a formula that allowed it to regain influence without provoking fears of resurgence among its neighbors or former adversaries.

For decades, this approach seemed to offer a low-cost, high-return strategy. Japan could support Western initiatives—such as imposing sanctions on Russia and providing economic assistance to Ukraine—without direct military entanglement or significant economic sacrifice. Its sanctions on Russia, for example, were largely symbolic given the limited scale of bilateral trade, while continued imports of Russian LNG from Sakhalin were justified as a pragmatic move to prevent Moscow's deeper alignment with China, Japan's as well as U.S. primary regional competitor.

2) The Shadows of History and the Politics of Memory

Japan's constrained agency is not merely a product of its own choices but also of the persistent efforts by regional powers to keep it in a state of permanent defeat. The “history questions”—from the contentious debates over “comfort women” to the issue of forced labor—have been wielded as tools to undermine Japan's legitimacy and forestall its return as a great power. These disputes are not just about historical memory but are deeply entwined with the veiled dynamics of regional power politics.

Even Japan's closest ally, the United States, has been ambivalent about Tokyo's aspirations. While U.S. policy elites are divided between “Weak Japan” and “Strong Japan” schools, even the latter envision Japan as a junior partner—a supplement and/or a complement to, rather than a rival

of, American hegemony. The Barak Obama administration's handling of historical issues exemplified this ambivalence, often prioritizing regional stability over Japan's desire for historical vindication or greater autonomy.

3) The Temptation and Peril of Being a "Victorious Defeated Nation"

History suggests that the only way for a defeated nation to shed its pariah status is to emerge as a victor in a subsequent conflict. Imperial Japan's ascent after World War I, having sided with the victors with minimal military commitment, is a case in point. The postwar order is always shaped by the winners, who monopolize the narrative of international morality and justice, while the defeated are relegated to the status of underdogs.

For postwar Japan, the U.S.-led liberal international order seemed to offer a unique opportunity: by aligning itself with the West in the global contest against Russia, Japan could hope to be counted among the "winners" without direct involvement in the fighting. This strategy echoed its limited but consequential participation in World War I, which elevated its international standing at minimal cost.

4) The Retreat of the Liberal Order and the Return of Power Politics

However, the ground beneath Japan's diplomatic strategy is shifting. The liberal order is in retreat, challenged not only by external adversaries like Russia and China but also by the waning commitment of its chief architect, the United States. As power politics reassert themselves, Japan's reliance on value-based diplomacy – once an asset – now risks becoming a liability.

Multilateralism, minilateralism, and other soft-power approaches will remain important tools in Japan's foreign policy arsenal. Yet, the country is entering a period of profound uncertainty, where the old certainties no

longer hold. The implicit bargain of the postwar era—that Japan could enjoy security and prosperity by aligning itself with a stable, U.S.-led order—is breaking down.

5) Redefining Japan's Geostrategic Posture

Japan now faces a stark choice: cling to a fading order and risk marginalization, or adapt to the new realities of a more fragmented, competitive world. This will require a fundamental reassessment of its geostrategic and diplomatic posture.

Several imperatives stand out:

Strategic Autonomy: Japan must develop greater capacity for independent action, both militarily and diplomatically. This does not mean abandoning alliances, but rather reducing overreliance on any single partner.

Regional Engagement: Tokyo should deepen engagement with regional partners—such as Australia, India, and Southeast Asian nations—who share concerns about China's rise and the erosion of multilateral norms.

Historical Reconciliation: Proactively addressing historical grievances, rather than allowing them to be weaponized by rivals, will be crucial for building trust and legitimacy in the region.

Economic Resilience: As global supply chains become more politicized, Japan must invest in economic resilience, diversifying sources of energy and critical materials.

6) Conclusion: Navigating Uncharted Waters

Japan's value-based diplomacy, forged in the crucible of postwar defeat and nurtured under the umbrella of American power, is at a crossroads. The unraveling of the liberal order exposes the limitations of a strategy

premised on stability and consensus. As the world moves inexorably toward greater uncertainty and competition, Japan must summon the will – and the imagination – to redefine its role, not as a permanently defeated nation, but as a proactive shaper of the new order to come.

The choices Tokyo makes in the coming years will determine whether it remains a bystander to history or reclaims agency as a central actor in the evolving drama of international politics.

3. Japan's Ukraine Policy at a Crossroads: Time for a Strategic Reset

Since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Japan has aligned its foreign policy with the liberal international order, pledging support for Kyiv in the name of international justice and the rule of law.

This value-based diplomacy, driven more by solidarity with the United States than by a dispassionate assessment of Japan's bilateral interests with Ukraine, has defined Tokyo's stance. But as the global order rapidly fractures and U.S. hegemony retreats, Japan must reevaluate whether continuing this path serves its strategic interests or undermines them.

The Kishida administration's proactive Ukraine policy – ranging from imposing sanctions on Russia to committing to reconstruction aid – was predicated on the assumption that the liberal order, led by the United States, would endure. Yet, this order is unraveling. The resurgence of Donald Trump and the broader return of power politics in American foreign policy threaten the very foundations of the system Japan has long depended on. The result is a stark mismatch between Japan's idealistic diplomatic posture and a changing geopolitical reality.

What is often overlooked in Tokyo's discourse is that Ukraine has not been a neutral actor in shaping Japan's security environment – far from it. Ukraine's past decisions have arguably undermined Japan's national

security, especially in the context of its fraught relationship with an increasingly assertive China.

The most prominent example dates back to 1998, when Ukraine sold the incomplete Soviet aircraft carrier, *Varyag*, to a Chinese firm under the pretext of commercial use. In 2002, the ship had reached the Dalian port, and was ultimately transformed into the *Liaoning*—China’s first operational aircraft carrier. This ship became the model for China’s indigenous carrier program and marked the beginning of the PLA Navy’s blue-water ambitions. It is difficult to overstate the regional ramifications: the *Liaoning* now regularly patrol near Taiwan and the East and South China Seas—with follow-up aircraft carriers in the near future—, altering the balance of power in ways detrimental to Japanese security. Ukraine’s role in this transformation— even if not malicious— was at best a grave act of negligence.

Second, there is compelling circumstantial evidence that Ukrainian entities, possibly acting with government consent or indifference, transferred rocket engine technology to North Korea. Such technology, derived from the Soviet-era RD-250 engine, would be instrumental in advancing Pyongyang’s missile capabilities, some of which are now pointed toward Japan. Again, this raises critical questions: Why is Japan lavishing aid on a country that has directly contributed to the proliferation of strategic threats in its own neighborhood?

Third, Ukraine’s strategic alignment with China through the Belt and Road Initiative should not be forgotten. By serving as a gateway for Chinese ambitions into Europe, Ukraine enhanced Beijing’s geopolitical influence, undermining the very same U.S.-led order Japan purports to defend. As China continues to challenge regional stability in the Indo-Pacific, its earlier economic cooperation with Ukraine should be considered a relevant factor in shaping Japan’s policy calculus.

Despite this troubling history, Japan in early 2024 committed to leading Ukraine's postwar economic recovery. The Japan-Ukraine Conference for Promotion of Economic Growth and Reconstruction, hosted by then-Prime Minister Kishida, produced 56 memoranda of cooperation and a symbolic pledge to lead the West in reconstruction efforts. This leadership position made sense when the Biden administration was fully committed to defending liberal values globally. But that world is slipping away.

Donald Trump's return to the White House, coupled with Europe's deepening internal divisions, has cast doubt on the durability of collective support for Ukraine. Japan must not anchor its foreign policy to a fading consensus. Instead, Tokyo should begin a strategic recalibration—one grounded in realism and national interest.

This does not mean abandoning Ukraine entirely. It means tempering expectations, reducing unconditional commitments, and tying future support to a rigorous cost-benefit analysis. Aid should be conditioned on accountability and transparency. Economic cooperation must be aligned with Japanese interests, particularly in technology, infrastructure, and defense-related industries.

Furthermore, Japan should redirect diplomatic energy toward strengthening regional coalitions in the Indo-Pacific. As the world transitions toward a multipolar balance-of-power system, where strategic interests often trump ideological alignment, Japan must adopt a "Japan First" approach. This entails prioritizing bilateral relationships and regional initiatives that enhance deterrence, economic resilience, and strategic autonomy.

The current moment offers Japan an opportunity for foreign policy maturity. The age of uncritical alignment with Western values is over. In its place must emerge a diplomacy that recognizes complexity, historical memory, and the need for strategic flexibility.

Japan's support for Ukraine was never just about Ukraine. It was about standing with the West against aggression and in favor of a rules-based order. But when the guardians of that order begin to waver, it is irresponsible to stay the course blindly. Japan must now chart a path that secures its own future – not one based on outdated assumptions or moral idealism, but on a sober assessment of global realities.

In sum, Japan is at a crossroads. It can continue to invest heavily in a bilateral relationship that has offered little strategic return and, in fact, may have contributed to some of its greatest challenges. Or it can recalibrate, re-prioritize, and reclaim its agency in a world that no longer conforms to the certainties of the past. The choice should be clear.

4. Reviving the Anglo-Japanese Alliance? A Historic Fantasy

The idea of reviving the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, which bound London and Tokyo from 1902 until 1922, is making the rounds in policy circles. The notion has been spurred by Britain's post-Brexit "Global Britain" ambitions and by Japan's search for reliable partners in an era of growing U.S. unpredictability under Donald Trump's second-term presidency. The symbolism is rich: two island nations, maritime powers, once great allies, rediscovering each other as if history might repeat itself. Yet this is less strategy than fantasy. The supposed "revival" of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance reveals more about nostalgia, illusion, and Britain's search for relevance than about Japan's actual security needs.

Tokyo has welcomed London's overtures with enthusiasm. For Japan's foreign policy establishment, the alliance label has a certain cachet: it harkens back to the golden moment when Tokyo, buoyed by victories in the Russo-Japanese War and World War I, first secured recognition as a global power. The partnership with Britain was then a gateway to status, prosperity, and security. Today, Japan finds comfort in the idea that aligning again with Britain complements its alliance with the United

States, especially since Britain remains Washington's closest partner. To Japanese officials, it looks like a safe extension of their decades-long practice of bandwagoning with the U.S. globalist line. But illusions of continuity are dangerous.

Britain is not what it once was. Yes, London still holds a permanent seat on the U.N. Security Council, retains a minimum nuclear deterrent, and wields impressive soft power. Its intelligence services, financial reach, and diplomatic networks – amplified through the Commonwealth and overseas territories – give it more voice than raw force would suggest. Yet this cannot disguise the long decline of British hard power. Through two world wars, the Cold War, and decolonization, Britain steadily shrank from a global hegemon to a mid-sized European power. Today, it must rely heavily on American preponderance to achieve its international aims. The “special relationship” is not a partnership of equals, but Britain's lifeline to influence.

The consequences are obvious in Britain's military posture in Asia. Take the recent visit of the U.K. carrier strike group led by HMS Prince of Wales to Japan in August 2025. On the surface, this looked impressive: a symbol of Britain's global reach. But look closer. The carrier group was padded out with ships from Canada, Spain, Australia, and New Zealand. Its 2021 counterpart, led by HMS Queen Elizabeth II, carried more U.S. Marine F-35Bs on board than Britain's. The country cannot sustain an independent naval presence in East Asia. Its navy, though boasting two large carriers and nuclear submarines, has only about half as many surface and subsurface combatants as Japan's own Maritime Self-Defense Force. It also lacks reliable logistical bases of its own in the region. In blunt terms, these deployments are not deterrence but theater – a 21st-century reprise of gunboat diplomacy. They offer little genuine protection against China, whose navy now dwarfs Britain's and rivals America's. At best, such gestures serve to showcase “collective will” and amplify political pressure on Beijing, but they do not change the military balance.

Tokyo should not fool itself into thinking otherwise. This is not an alliance, nor even an effective quasi-alliance focusing on fighting a major war. At best, it is an entente—a flexible, temporary understanding in which Britain gains more from Japan than the other way around. London leans on Tokyo to magnify its globalist pretensions and to hedge against U.S. unpredictability. Japan, meanwhile, risks diverting attention and resources from its real priority: shoring up the alliance with Washington against an increasingly assertive China.

The defense industrial partnership offers no better case. The Global Combat Air Program, a joint fighter jet project between Japan, Britain, and Italy, has been heralded as proof of a new Anglo-Japanese bond. Yet here too the imbalance is striking. Tokyo lacks the organizational expertise to steer a complex multinational R&D project and has been unable to secure a leading role. Britain and Italy, bound since 2015 by the Tempest program, already share institutional muscle memory and may sideline Japan when decisions matter. Because contributions are split equally, Tokyo cannot buy itself greater influence. The result is likely to be less technology transfer, fewer industrial gains, and less strategic autonomy than Tokyo hopes. In the name of partnership, Japan risks suffering a relative loss.

Why then pursue this mirage? The answer lies in political theater. Britain, suffering economic stagnation and the political fallout of globalist mismanagement—most recently on full display in the Ukraine war—seeks new stages to project relevance. Japan, anxious about Trump’s wavering defense commitments, clutches at additional partners, even if they offer only symbolic reassurance. London emphasizes globalist values, while Trump’s Washington often repudiates them; Tokyo, caught in the middle, indulges Britain as a hedge. Yet this is a hedge made of paper.

The hard truth is that Japan has neither the capacity nor the interest to overextend itself into European disputes, nor to bankroll Britain’s quest

for global stature. Its security environment is overwhelmingly Asian, dominated by China's rise and North Korea's unpredictability. Washington remains the only partner with the hard power to matter in East Asia. Britain's role can be supplemental at best – useful in diplomacy, technology cooperation, and signaling solidarity, but not in delivering actual deterrence.

Sooner rather than later, Japan must strip away the romantic veneer of the “Anglo-Japanese revival” and admit the reality. This is not an alliance; it is a historic fantasy. Tokyo must rigorously evaluate what it gives and what it gets from London, and downgrade its expectations accordingly. Otherwise, Japan risks confusing nostalgia for strategy – and in today's dangerous world, that is a luxury it cannot afford.

この「研究叢書」は、所員の推進する学際的共同研究および個人研究の成果を継続的に刊行することにより、もって、新たな文化の創造と学術の進歩に寄与しようとするものである。

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