

A portrait of Vladimir Putin, the President of Russia, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and a red tie. He is looking slightly to the right of the camera with a neutral expression. The background is dark and out of focus.

From Hegemony to Multipolarity

How Post-Cold War US Foreign Policy Toward Russia
is Creating a Modern Eurasia

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The background: 'the end of history'

Any proper documentation and analysis of the conflict between Russia and Ukraine, as well as the ongoing fissure between Russia and China on the one hand, and the Western world on the other, must begin with the period covering the ending of the ideological Cold War between the United States and the Soviet Union.

The collapse of the Soviet Union, which came with the declaration of independence by some of its constituent soviet republics such as Ukraine, Georgia, and the Baltic States, as well as the de-Sovietisation of Eastern Europe, was bound to create a new global order. Much would depend on the United States, the sole remaining world power, as to how this new state of affairs would take shape. It had as an option recourse to its foundational precepts as a republic, which cautioned against entangling alliances to pursue a course of isolationism. The withering away of

the Soviet Union and prior to that, the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact, opened up the possibility that the U.S.-led North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) would be disbanded and a new security architecture developed on the continent of Europe that included Russia. This fresh, innovated pan-European set up could have developed out of the framework of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and might have included an economic dimension centred on measures aimed at integrating the German economy with that of Russia; a development of *Ostpolitik*.

This did not happen.

Describing the development as “the unipolar moment,” Charles Krauthammer, the late Pulitzer Prize-winning columnist, argued the case for a “serenely dominant” United States that would not withdraw into its hemisphere and, instead, act as one bastion of power in a multipolar world.¹ For some like Francis Fukuyama, a political scientist, the fall of the Soviet Union represented the “end of history.” According to Fukuyama, history was characterised as a struggle between ideologies, and liberal democracy had triumphed over all others.² His views were readily adopted by those who identified with the neoconservative school of thought. These intellectual descendants of Wilsonian idealism and fervent believers in American exceptionalism were already deposed to be promoters of democracy. Thus, in the aftermath of the victory of liberalism and free market capitalism over Marxism, the United States, they argued, should proceed to mould the world in its image.

This line of thinking came to be reflected in the theorising and application of U.S. foreign policy. The idea that America should operate

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¹ Krauthammer, Charles. “The Unipolar Moment,” *Foreign Affairs*, January 1, 1990. <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/1990-01-01/unipolar-moment>.

² Fukuyama, Francis. *The End of History and the Last Man*. Free Press, 1992.

as the sole global hegemon is reflected in the so-called “Wolfowitz Doctrine,” named for Paul Wolfowitz, the U.S. deputy under secretary of defense for policy during the administration led by President George H. Bush.

The overarching objective of the “Defense Planning Guidance” for the 1994–99 fiscal years, published for internal consumption in February 1992 by Wolfowitz and fellow-under secretary Scooter Libby, was that the United States would use the vacuum caused by the breakup of the Soviet Union as an opportunity to prevent the rise of any nation attempting to take up the mantle of a global competitor.³ In seeking to achieve this, it explicitly disavowed being bound by multilateral agreements and envisaged destroying by military action or the application of economic pressure any nation which operated in a way which was inimical to America’s declared political and economic interests.

The influence of adherents to the neoconservative ideology, as well as those promoting the interests of military contractors, has loomed large in American military action, both overtly and covertly in its invasions of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003, NATO’s destruction of Libya in 2011, and the covert attempt to overthrow the Ba’athist government of Syria, which also commenced in 2011. Neoconservatives have also been in the vanguard of calling for the United States to attack Iran.

A classified Pentagon document set out a plan to attack and destroy “seven countries in five years,” starting with Iraq and ending with Iran.

It was to neoconservative ideologues that Wesley Clark, a retired 4-star U.S. Army general and supreme commander of NATO, was referring when in 2008 he spoke of a “policy coup” in the immediate aftermath of the attacks of September 11, 2001, in which a group of “hard-nosed people took control of policy in the United States.”⁴ Clark spoke of a visit that he made to the Pentagon while preparations

³ “Defense Planning Guidance for the 1994–99 Fiscal Years,” February 18, 1992, <https://www.archives.gov/files/decclassification/iscap/pdf/2008-003-docs1-12.pdf>.

⁴ “Wes Clark – America’s Foreign Policy ‘Coup,’” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TY2DKzastu8>.

were afoot for the “police action” that would be taken in Afghanistan. A former colleague had shown him a classified document which set out a plan to attack and destroy “seven countries in five years.” They included Iraq, Libya, and Syria and, as Clark would state, the programme was scheduled to “start with Iraq and end with Iran!”

It is also important to note that while General Clark asserted in 2001 that American foreign policy had been “hijacked,” and that there had been no public debate about the “policy coup,” Jeffrey Sachs, a prominent American economist and academic, considers the current conflict in Ukraine to be the latest in a line of neoconservative-inspired foreign policy disasters.⁵

But it is also clear that forces other than neoconservative ideologues — who have been well-represented in successive administrations — are not alone in perpetuating America’s cycle of endless wars. The military industry and an accompanying “Deep State” establishment is a responsible but unaccountable facet of this continuum of militarism, despite the changes of administration. In 2014 Michael J. Glennon, a professor of international law at Tufts University, offered some explanation in a lengthy journal article-turned-book entitled “National Security and Double Government.”⁶ Borrowing from the writings of 19th-century English constitutionalist Walter Bagehot about a hidden government, educator Glennon posited that the unbending trajectory of U.S. foreign policy came from a powerful but unacknowledged institution that he designated as “Trumanite.” The Trumanite Institutions are composed of ex-military, security officials and other vested interests associated with the military

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⁵ Sachs, Jeffrey D. “Ukraine Is the Latest Neocon Disaster.” <https://www.commondreams.org/views/2022/06/28/ukraine-latest-neocon-disaster>. See also: Makinde, Adeyinka. “The Syrian Tragedy: Western Foreign Policy and its ‘Useful Idiots,’” *Global Research Canada*, October 23, 2016. <https://www.globalresearch.ca/the-syrian-tragedy-western-foreign-policy-and-its-useful-idiots/5552621>.

⁶ Glennon, Michael J. “National Security and Double Government.” *5 Harvard National Security Journal* 1 (2014). https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2376272.

industry and the intelligence services who he argued run national security policies at the expense of the “Madisonian” institutions; that is, the separated organs of state which function to constitutionally check the power of each other and who are accountable to the electorate. The Trumanite network weakens Constitutional safeguards and boundaries in place to check the government, resulting in less democracy.

It would be remiss not to add the influence of Zbigniew Brzeziński, a one-time U.S. national security adviser, on the conduct of American foreign relations. Although not a part of the neoconservative movement, he endorsed the view that no power should be allowed to rise and challenge American supremacy over the globe. A major part of his focus was on Russia. In his book *The Grand Chessboard*, Brzeziński set out his views on how Russia should be militarily intimidated and economically weakened to achieve the goal of breaking it up as a nation or otherwise reducing it to a state of vassalage, with its role being restricted to that of supplying the energy needs of the West.⁷

The pressures applied by successive U.S. administrations on Russia have been three-pronged: military, economic and informational. As the late Professor Stephen Cohen argued, Western pressure has been demonstrably proactive, while Russia’s actions have been largely reactive. These pressures are informed by the policy which germinated in the post-Cold War environment and were applied by many political actors imbued with the neoconservative mindset who are supported by “Trumanite” institutions. These include the burgeoning “military-industrial complex” of which President Dwight D. Eisenhower warned the American people in his farewell address of January 1961.⁸

The military dimension: ‘not one inch eastward’

The first line of military-related pressure applied against Russia is one that lies at the heart of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. This has been the decision to expand

⁷ Brzeziński, Zbigniew *The Grand Chessboard: American Primacy and Its Geostrategic Imperatives*, Basic Books, 1997.

⁸ U.S. National Archives. “President Dwight D. Eisenhower’s Farewell Address (1961),” <https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/president-dwight-d-eisenhowers-farewell-address>.

NATO to Russia's borders. When expansion was first touted by the administration of U.S. President Bill Clinton in the 1990s, it raised protests from the Western-friendly government of Russia's first president, Boris Yeltsin. Yeltsin's successor, President Vladimir Putin whose government assumed a more nationalist posture than that of Yeltsin, made it clear after the incorporation of the Baltic States, Poland and others that further expansion to Ukraine and Georgia would constitute a "red line."

The Russians have contested the enlargement of NATO as presenting not only an existential threat to their country, but also as an abrogation of an agreement reached by the leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union at the end of the Cold War. The substance of this uncodified accord was that in return for allowing the reunification of Germany, which would automatically become a member of the Atlantic Alliance, the United States gave assurances to Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev that NATO would not expand "one inch" eastward. There is an ample trail of evidence in the form of documents and oral histories that confirm a consensus was reached.⁹

The economic dimension: 'Nord Stream must end'

Economic pressures, including outright economic warfare by the punitive tool of sanctions, represent another dimension through which the United States-led West has sought to weaken post-Soviet Russia. Professor Cohen summarised the overall pattern of relations between both as one of proactive conduct on the part of the United States, with Russia being largely reactive. This has meant that Russian reactions to Western provocations, such as the United States-sponsored Maidan coup in Kiev in February 2014, have given the West the opportunity to respond by imposing sanctions. In the case of the Maidan coup, the Russian response of protecting its Black Sea Fleet in Sevastopol consisted of initiating a referendum in Crimea to provide the basis of its annexation in March 2014.¹⁰

⁹ Savranskaya, Svetlana and Blanton, Tom (2017). "NATO Expansion: What Gorbachev Heard," National Security Archive Briefing Book #613, December 12, 2017. <https://nsarchive.gwu.edu/briefing-book/russia-programs/2017-12-12/nato-expansion-what-gorbachev-heard-western-leaders-early>.

¹⁰ "Address by President of the Russian Federation," Kremlin website, March 18, 2014. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/20603>.

Today, German, French, and British leaders conduct a relationship with the United States which is more akin to vassalage than partnership. The lack of strong leadership arguably led to the lack of restraint on the aggressive and disastrous foreign policy adventures undertaken by NATO, as well as the handling of relations with Russia. It meant that the leaders of the German and French governments disingenuously served as guarantors of the Minsk accords — assurances designed

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to bring peace to Ukraine where a civil war had been kickstarted by the United States-sponsored coup in Kiev.

The “shock and awe” sanctions imposed by the United States and its European allies, designed to sink the Russian economy and bring about the overthrow of Vladimir Putin, have proved to be a spectacular failure. As the economist J.K. Galbraith outlined in May 2022, Russia has survived because it is a self-sufficient nation which has developed an industrial base.¹¹

The informational dimension: ‘Putin as the new Hitler’

The economic and military pressures placed on Russia have been supplemented by a campaign using the Western-dominated “soft-power” of the media, which has consistently demonised the Russian leader Vladimir Putin and his country. Putin, whose portrayal is based on that of an oriental-style dictator, is often referred to in the press as an “ex-KGB thug”¹² and as a “new Hitler.”¹³ Speaking in 2017, Cohen felt that American media accounts of Putin were “tabloid, derogatory, libellous” and

¹¹ Galbraith, James K. “The Dollar System in a Multi-Polar World,” Institute for New Economic Thinking, May 5, 2022. <https://www.ineteconomics.org/perspectives/blog/the-dollar-system-in-a-multi-polar-world>.

¹² “John McCain Was Right: Vladimir Putin is a Thug,” McCain Institute, February 12, 2022. <https://www.mccaininstitute.org/resources/in-the-news/john-mccain-was-right-vladimir-putin-is-a-thug/>.

¹³ Rucker, Philip. “Hillary Clinton’s Putin-Hitler comments draw rebukes as she wades into Ukraine conflict,” *The Washington Post*, March 5, 2014. https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/hillary-clintons-putin-hitler-comments-draw-rebukes-as-she-wades-into-ukraine-conflict/2014/03/05/31a748d8-a486-11e3-84d4-e59b1709222c_story.html.

“without context, evidence or balance.”¹⁴ Cohen argued that “falsely demonising” the Russian leader made the new Cold War even more dangerous.¹⁵

Western leaders who meet with Putin have indulged in pseudo-psychological examinations of what they perceived to have “seen” when they looked into his eyes. Although George W. Bush opined a neutral stance by saying that he got a “sense of his soul,”¹⁶ Joe Biden differed and claimed that he told Putin in a 2011 meeting, “I don’t think you have a soul.” Biden found Putin’s eyes to belong to “a killer,”¹⁷ while French President Emmanuel Macron perceived “a sense of resentment,”¹⁸ a condition which some argued made Putin “more aggressive and unpredictable than ever.”¹⁹

The language and tone of these utterances reflect a decline in the standard of political discourse, as well as a diminution of statecraft and the art of diplomacy in recent times. During the ideological Cold War, the leaders of both superpowers sought to reduce tensions. They often turned to diplomacy and were careful in their use of language in the public sphere. The opposite may be averred to be the case now; intemperate language is used to increase tensions.

A summary of the approach of the United States is encapsulated in a paper presented by the RAND Corporation in 2019 which was titled “Overextending and Unbalancing Russia: Assessing the Impact of Cost-Imposing Options.” Under the

¹⁴ “Rethinking Putin: A Talk by Professor Stephen F. Cohen,” *The Nation* YouTube Channel, Delivered on the annual *Nation* cruise, December 2, 2017. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wOH_VF9hWnA.

¹⁵ Cohen, Stephen, “Who Putin Is Not,” *The Nation*, September 20, 2018. <https://www.thenation.com/article/archive/who-putin-is-not/>. Stephen Cohen also forcefully poured scorn over “Russiagate,” stating that Robert Mueller turned up no credible evidence to back up the allegation. Cohen pronounced the two original documents on which the whole “Russiagate” saga relied on as “impotent.”

¹⁶ “User Clip: Bush saw Putin’s soul,” C-SPAN, <https://www.c-span.org/video/?c4718091/user-clip-bush-putins-soul>.

¹⁷ Troianovski, Anton. “Russia Erupts in Fury Over Biden’s Calling Putin a Killer,” *The New York Times*, March 18, 2021. <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/18/world/europe/russia-biden-putin-killer.html>. (Biden comments in an interview with George Stephanopoulos on ABC on March 16, 2021)

¹⁸ Tapper, Jack. “One-to-one with French President Emmanuel Macron,” *CNN*, September 23, 2022. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1BT5nXDhtOo>.

¹⁹ Seddon, Max. “Vladimir Putin, Russia’s resentful leader, takes the world to war,” *The Financial Times*, February 25, 2022. <https://www.ft.com/content/c039db89-7201-4875-b31f-b41a511496f1>.

heading “Ideological and Informational Cost-Imposing Measures,” it outlined a plan of attack which had the objective of diminishing the faith of the Russian people in their electoral system, creating the perception that Putin was pursuing policies not in the public interest, encouraging domestic protests and undermining Russia’s image abroad.²⁰

The road to the Russia-Ukraine war

It is only with insight into the geostrategic thinking of American neoconservatives and the doctrinal philosophy of Zbigniew Brzezinski — who believed that Russia could not be a power without Ukraine — that an assertion that the United States has chosen Ukraine as a battleground with the Russian Federation can be readily appreciated.

Contrary to the narrative provided by Western political leaders that has been faithfully disseminated by Western mainstream media, the war in Ukraine did not begin on February 24, 2022, when President Putin launched what he termed a Special Military Operation (SMO).²¹ It was merely a development in a chronology of events started by NATO threats of expansion to Russia’s border. There followed a struggle for the soul of Ukraine which developed as follows: Set against a backdrop of the Ukrainian government’s mulling over whether to accept economic aid from Russia or the EU, the Maidan protests, a series of manipulated public demonstrations, culminated in an American-orchestrated coup in Kiev in February 2014. The use of certifiable neo-Nazi and ultranationalist groups in the overthrow of the democratically elected government of Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich, who was viewed by the West as pro-Russian, kick-started an internal conflict between the central government and ethnic Russian Ukrainian separatists of the Donbas in the eastern part of the country. The Minsk peace accords followed: the Minsk Protocol of September 2014 and its follow up, Minsk II in February 2015. However, the failure of these accords and the continued build-

²⁰ Dobbins, James, Cohen, Raphael S. et al. “Overextending and Unbalancing Russia: Assessing the Impact of Cost-Imposing Options,” RAND Corporation, 2019. https://www.rand.org/pubs/research_briefs/RB10014.html.

²¹ Address by the President of the Russian Federation, Kremlin website, February 24, 2022. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/67843>.

up of Ukrainian military forces in the Donbas — armed and trained by countries of NATO in a conflict which claimed an estimated 14,000 lives — ultimately led to the Russian intervention.²²

That the exertion of pressure by the West within Ukraine would create the conditions for a civil war was predictable. In his internal memorandum of February 2008, Ambassador William J. Burns had noted the following in Paragraph 5(c):

*Experts tell us that Russia is particularly worried that the strong divisions in Ukraine over NATO membership, with much of the ethnic-Russian community against membership, could lead to a major split, involving violence or at worst, civil war. In that eventuality, Russia would have to decide whether to intervene; a decision Russia does not want to have to face.*²³

A key plank of Russian objectives in launching Putin’s SMO was to effect the “demilitarisation” of the Donbas region and the city of Mariupol where concentrations of well-armed Ukrainian forces in fortified positions were located. The small and ill-equipped Ukrainian Army existing in 2014 was increased in size and began to be trained and armed by NATO.²⁴ The Russians had detected a rising tone of bellicosity on the part of the Ukrainian government, which by 2021 had made the objective of re-taking Crimea official military doctrine.²⁵ Its trained-to-NATO-standards military was also the beneficiary of a marked increase in arms sales from the United States.²⁶ In his speech to the Munich Security Conference in February 2022, President Zelensky revived the threat of joining NATO. He also suggested that Ukraine would abrogate

²² Sachs, Jeffrey. “The Ninth Anniversary of the Ukraine War,” jeffsachs.org, February 28, 2023. <https://www.jeff-sachs.org/newspaper-articles/yjae8gc8hp2p293tmt4dlr4z2dpe2s>.

²³ “Nyet Means Nyet: NATO’s Enlargement Redlines,” Diplomatic cable by William J. Burns, February 1, 2008. https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/o8MOSCOW265_a.html.

²⁴ Michaels, Daniel. “The Secret of Ukraine’s Military Success: Years of NATO Training,” *Wall Street Journal*, April 13, 2022. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/ukraine-military-success-years-of-nato-training-11649861339>.

²⁵ Melanovski, Jason. “Ukraine approves strategy to ‘recover’ Crimea, threatening all-out war with Russia,” World Socialist website, March 19, 2021.

²⁶ Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) Arms Transfers Database, March 2022. https://www.forumarmstrade.org/uploads/1/9/0/8/19082495/screen-shot-2022-03-18-at-2-51-22-pm_orig.png.

its obligations under the Budapest Memorandum of 1994 and pursue a course of re-nuclearisation.²⁷ The issuance of those threats alongside briefings from Russian intelligence of Ukrainian forces being poised to strike the areas of Donbas controlled by the militias of the ethnic Russian secessionists almost certainly signalled the tipping point for the Kremlin.²⁸

Toward multipolarity: Russia's divorce from the West and the dawning of Eurasia

One development emanating from the pressures applied to Russia in the aftermath of the Cold War has been the ignition of a closer state of relations between the Russian Federation and the People's Republic of China. Tentative at first but intensifying in recent years, these two nations are now in a *de facto* alliance against the United States-led West.

In its rawest form, the geostrategic theory postulated by the British geographer and scholar Sir Halford J. Mackinder, provided a theoretical basis upon which the United States acted toward preventing a unification of the contiguous landmass

which encompasses Europe and Asia. In his paper titled "The Geographical Pivot of History," published in 1904, Mackinder postulated what he termed the "Heartland Theory." It divided the globe into three geographical regions. The Americas and Australia were referred to as "outlying islands," and the British Isles and the islands of Japan he labelled "outer islands." The combination of Africa, Europe, and Asia he termed the "world island." And at the centre of the world

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²⁷ "Zeleńsky's full speech at Munich Security Conference," *Kyiv Independent*, February 19, 2022. <https://kyivindependent.com/national/zelenskys-full-speech-at-munich-security-conference>. See also: Herszenhorn, David M.; Lynch, Suzanne and Anderlini, Jamil. "A defiant Zeleńskiy promises Ukraine will defend itself 'with or without' allies," February 19, 2022. <https://www.politico.eu/article/zelenskiy-ukraine-defiant-munich-security-conference-speech-russia-threat/>.

²⁸ "The military operation in Ukraine, including Kiev, is aimed at disarming Ukraine. Russia will not let Ukraine obtain nuclear weapons," Sergey Lavrov. See "Russia will not let Ukraine obtain nuclear weapons — Lavrov," TASS, March 2, 2022. <https://tass.com/politics/1414915>.

island is the “heartland,” which stretches from the Volga River to the Yangtze River and from the Himalayas to the Arctic Ocean.²⁹

He refined his thesis in his book *Democratic Ideals and Reality*, published in 1919. In it, he summarized the essence of his theory as follows: “Who rules East Europe commands the Heartland; who rules the Heartland commands the World-Island; who rules the World-Island commands the world.”³⁰

Mackinder’s explanation of the global power that had rested in the hands, first of the British Empire — an “offshore island” — and later with the United States — an “outlying island” — was that sea power which had enabled the rise of Britain and the United States would give way to land power situated in the heartland of the world island, unless measures were undertaken to ensure that the power

wielded by the heartland could be balanced. The heartland encompassed most of the lands controlled, respectively, by the Russian empire and the Soviet Union. Mackinder suggested that one of the ways through which the power of the heartland could be balanced was by controlling eastern Europe.³¹

Although there have been modifications of Mackinder’s thesis by other theorists, while others have argued that it is outdated and has never been proven in all its component parts, this does not diminish the importance of Russia and China in any calculations related to the

A key tenet of Mackinder’s argument lies in the distribution of global resources and access to where such resources lie.

²⁹ Mackinder, Halford. “The Geographical Pivot of History,” *The Geographical Journal* Vol. 23, No. 4 (April 1904), pp. 421-437. Published by the Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers). <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1775498>.

³⁰ Mackinder, Halford J. *Democratic Ideals and Reality*, Henry Holt, New York 1942.

³¹ *Ibid.*

geopolitical balance of power.³² A key tenet of Mackinder's argument lies in the distribution of global resources and access to where such resources lie. Russia's abundance of natural resources, and the U.S.-led West's objective of controlling these resources, lie at the heart of its policy towards Russia regardless of whether it is ruled by an "autocrat" or by a "democrat."

It is not difficult to appreciate how the Mackinder thesis helped shape and inform U.S. policies geared toward containing the Soviet Union during the Cold War. It is not hard to appreciate its influence in the formulation of the Brzeziński Doctrine as a template for seeking to diminish Russian political and economic sovereignty by prying it apart from Ukraine and by maintaining its hegemony within Eurasia.

A concomitant aspect of U.S. policy toward Russia has been an enduring hostility on the part of the U.S. toward any substantive economic relationship between Germany and Russia. As geopolitical forecaster George Friedman has noted on several occasions, including in his 2010 book *The Next Decade*, collaboration between Europe and Russia has been frowned on by the United States, but Russian-German cooperation in particular needed to be "nipped in the bud." Thus, he concluded, "maintaining a powerful wedge between Germany and Russia is of overwhelming interest to the United States."³³ In a lecture given in 2015, Friedman characterised Germany as "Europe's basic flaw." It was, he asserted,

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³² For modern interpretations of Mackinder's theory see for instance:

Scott, Margaret and Alcenat, Westenley. "Revisiting the Pivot: The Influence of Heartland Theory in Great Power Politics," 2008, https://www.creighton.edu/fileadmin/user/CCAS/departments/PoliticalScience/MVJ/docs/The_Pivot_-_Alcenat_and_Scott.pdf.

Iseri, Emre. "The US Grand Strategy and the Eurasian Heartland in the Twenty-First Century," *Geopolitics*, Volume 14, 2009. <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/14650040802578658>.

³³ Friedman, George. *The Next Decade*, Doubleday, New York, 2010.

a country that is “economically powerful and geopolitically fragile.” If it left the EU, Germany would gravitate eastward and seek cooperation with Russia. This would revive the enduring fear of “German capital and technology” allied to that of “Russian resources and manpower.”³⁴ This backdrop is extremely important in understanding U.S. hostility toward the Nord Stream and earlier gas pipelines and the suspicion that the U.S. was responsible for carrying out the undersea act of pipeline sabotage in September 2022.

The accumulation of pressures on Russia through the implementation of the “shock and awe” sanctions has only served to push Russia towards China, creating a Eurasian economic entity which will likely develop an alternate form of the international payments system and work toward developing trade in Asia and the rest of the world under the aegis of BRICS. Thus, in addition to Brazil, India, and South Africa, Russia, and China will seek to provide an economic umbrella for other countries, several of which have applied to join the organisation.

If BRICS is expanded to include countries such as Iran, Saudi Arabia, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, and Argentina, it would encompass over half the global population, 60 percent of global gas and 45 percent of global oil reserves.³⁵ Moreover, the sale of Russian gas in rubles — and more recently Russia’s increasing use of the Yuan for payment of oil exporters, as well as in facilitating commercial loan transactions and as a preferred currency for household savings — can only hasten the trend of de-dollarisation.³⁶

The status of the American dollar as the global currency is thus under threat. In the early 1970s, the administration led by President Richard Nixon entered into a bargain with the House of Saud which involved the United States guaranteeing the security of the Saudi state in return for the Saudis selling oil in dollars. This

³⁴ Friedman, George. “Europe: Destined for Conflict?” Lecture before the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, February 23, 2015. <https://globalaffairs.org/events/europe-destined-conflict>.

³⁵ Devonshire-Ellis, Chris. “The New Candidate Countries For BRICS Expansion,” Silk Road Briefing, November 9, 2022. <https://www.silkroadbriefing.com/news/2022/11/09/the-new-candidate-countries-for-brics-expansion/>.

³⁶ Dulaney, Chelsey; Gershkovich, Evan and Simanovskaya, Victoria. “Russian Turning to the Chinese Yuan in a Bid to Marginalise the U.S. Dollar,” *The Wall Street Journal*, February 28, 2023. <https://www.wsj.com/articles/russia-turns-to-chinas-yuan-in-effort-to-ditch-the-dollar-a8111457>.

arrangement, which was made possible due to Saudi dominance within the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), ensured the survivability of the U.S. dollar as the *de facto* reserve currency of the world.

There are arguably two pillars on which the dollar's status as the world reserve currency rests. First is the perception that the U.S. has the world's largest economy. While this is presently true in terms of calculations based on Gross Domestic Product (GDP), it is not the case when

based on measuring China's purchasing power parity (PPP).³⁷ The second pillar involves the tradition of conducting oil transactions in U.S. dollars. If the three largest oil producers in the world — Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Russia — trade under an alternative currency, then it will signify the demise of the U.S. dollar as the global reserve currency.

Apart from the expansion of BRICS, there is the threat to the United States of the development of both already-existing institutions and brand-new institutions which would offer an alternative to those created at Bretton Woods in the aftermath of World War II. The New Development Bank (NDB)³⁸ created after the Fortaleza meeting of BRICS in 2014 is one such institution. Apart from BRICS, the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), a Eurasian body that encompasses political, economic, International security and defence functions, as well as the Eurasian Economic Union (EEU), also present an institutional basis for an alternative global economic framework to that which has been dominated by the United States-led West.³⁹

If the three largest oil producers in the world trade under an alternative currency, it will signify the demise of the US dollar as the global reserve currency.

³⁷ Tang, Frank. "China overtakes US as No 1 in buying power, but still clings to developing status," *South China Morning Post*, May 21, 2020.

³⁸ Chin, Gregory T. "The Evolution of the New Development Bank (NDB) at Six and Beyond – A New Commentary Series," *Global Policy Journal*, April 14, 2022.

³⁹ "Russia Rethinks The Eurasian Economic Union," *Russia Briefing News*, March 15th, 2023. <https://www.russia-briefing.com/news/russia-rethinks-the-eurasian-economic-union.html/>. See also: Lehne, Stefane. "After Russia's War Against Ukraine: What Kind of World Order?" *Carnegie Europe* (Carnegie Endowment for International Peace), February 28, 2023.

Assessing the future of the world in terms of a distinct and powerful Eurasian region within a new multipolar order is no longer within the realm of speculation but is in fact now a reality. U.S. foreign policy pressures have led to the conflict in Ukraine and served to create a deep and, at least for the foreseeable future, an unmendable fissure between Russia and the West. Similar pressures have also been applied against China, which is now preparing for a separation from the West.

For Russia, whose leaders, including Vladimir Putin and Sergey Lavrov, had over the years continually referred to “our Western partners,” the breach is now permanent and irreversible. In his speech to the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum in June 2022, President Putin excoriated the United States for operating as an imperialist empire that did not accept the right of other nations to act as politically and economically sovereign states. He included the states of the EU as being subject to this vassalage when accusing the organisation of not being ready to play the role of an “independent, sovereign actor” during the Ukraine crisis. Putin used the occasion of his speech to specifically declare that “the era of the unipolar world is over.”⁴⁰

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Then, one month later, in July Putin made a statement at the Agency for Strategic Initiatives (ASI) forum, a gathering that met under the banner “Strong Ideas for the New Time.” Here, Putin appeared to suggest that a new global economic model was needed to replace what he termed the West’s “Golden Billion” model. That was not all. His added insistence that this model, inherently “racist” and “neo-colonial” in nature, and which “took its positions due to the robbery of other

⁴⁰ Kottasová, Ivana; Pokharel, Sugam and Gigova, Radina. “Putin lambasts the West and declares the end of ‘the era of the unipolar world,’” CNN, June 18, 2022. <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/06/17/europe/russia-president-vladimir-putin-speech-spief-intl/index.html>. The unipolar model was significantly fractured by Putin’s speech to the United Nations General Assembly on September 28th, 2015, shortly after which Russian forces intervened in the Syrian war. See Makinde, Adeyinka. “Vladimir Putin and the Patterns of ‘Global Power,’” November 2, 2015. <https://www.globalresearch.ca/vladimir-putin-and-the-patterns-of-global-power/5486083>.

peoples both in Asia and in Africa,” appeared to be an appeal to the nations of the Global South.⁴¹

China, whose contemporary rivalry with the United States was officially inaugurated by President Obama’s doctrinal “Pivot to Asia,” has been on the receiving end of U.S. economic measures that began to ramp up during the Trump administration.⁴² While accusations of its own bullying of neighbours over the South China Sea are not without foundation, Beijing has been aggrieved by what it claims is the United States’ abrogation of its acceptance of a “One China” policy during the 1970s through a series of agreements which followed President Nixon’s historic visit to China in 1972 and the Taiwan Relations Act of 1979.⁴³ The release by the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs of two policy documents in February 2023, “The Global Security Initiative Concept Paper”⁴⁴ and “US Hegemony and Its Perils,”⁴⁵ confirms that China considers itself to be in an

⁴¹ Kaul, Apoorva. “Russian President Putin Criticizes ‘golden Billion’ Model; Calls It ‘unfair & Racist,’” *Republic World*, July 20, 2022. <https://www.republicworld.com/world-news/russia-ukraine-crisis/russian-president-putin-criticizes-golden-billion-model-calls-it-unfair-and-racist-articleshow.html>. See also: Putin’s speech in October 2022 at the Valdai Discussion Club. He referred to Russia’s desire to rekindle friendships with its Soviet-era allies and “non-Western friends” for creating a new world order. The title of the forum held in Moscow from October 24–27 was “A Post-Hegemonic World: Justice and Security for Everyone.” See: “Valdai International Discussion Club meeting,” Kremlin website, October 27, 2022. <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/69695>. Kibii, Eliud. “A new multipolar world is being born — Russian envoy” (Interview with Dmitry Maksimychev), *The Star*, March 7, 2023. <https://www.the-star.co.ke/news/big-read/2023-03-07-a-new-multipolar-world-is-being-born--russian-envoy/>.

⁴² Tellez, Anthony. “Here Are All The U.S. Sanctions Against China,” *Forbes*, February 8, 2023. <https://www.forbes.com/sites/anthonytellez/2023/02/08/here-are-all-the-us-sanctions-against-china/?sh=68a6774715b4>.

⁴³ Liff, Adam P. and Lin, Dalton. “The ‘One China’ Framework at 50 (1972–2022): The Myth of ‘Consensus’ and Its Evolving Policy Significance,” *The China Quarterly*, Cambridge University Press, Volume 252, September 2022. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/china-quarterly/article/one-china-framework-at-50-19722022-the-myth-of-consensus-and-its-evolving-policy-significance/090825F25AB75868FBB3E6A9C63A9B30>. See also: Echols, Conor. “As Pelosi Taiwan visit looms, Menendez bill would ‘gut’ One China policy,” *Responsible Statecraft*, August 1, 2022, <https://responsiblestatecraft.org/2022/08/01/as-pelosi-taiwan-visit-looms-menendez-bill-would-gut-one-china-policy/>

⁴⁴ Liff, Adam P. and Lin, Dalton. “The ‘One China’ Framework at 50 (1972–2022): The Myth of ‘Consensus’ and Its Evolving Policy Significance,” *The China Quarterly*, Cambridge University Press, Volume 252, September 2022. <https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/china-quarterly/article/one-china-framework-at-50-19722022-the-myth-of-consensus-and-its-evolving-policy-significance/090825F25AB75868FBB3E6A9C63A9B30>. See also: Echols, Conor. “As Pelosi Taiwan visit looms, Menendez bill would ‘gut’ One China policy.” <https://responsiblestatecraft.org/2022/08/01/as-pelosi-taiwan-visit-looms-menendez-bill-would-gut-one-china-policy/> *Responsible Statecraft*, August 1, 2022.

⁴⁵ “US Hegemony and its Perils,” Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the People’s Republic of China, February 20, 2023. https://www.fmprc.gov.cn/mfa_eng/wjbxw/202302/t20230220_11027664.html.

adversarial relationship with the United States.

This means that the U.S.-led West will likely face a military alliance of nations led by Russia and China, in addition to an alternate economic global framework composed of nations transacting in currencies pegged to gold.

Conclusion

The route from the unipolar world bestridden by the United States after the breakup of the Soviet Union to the contemporary situation of a fast-developing state of multipolarity is one which can be strongly argued to have been facilitated by the mismanagement of United States foreign policy. The influence of neoconservative ideologues who espouse a particularly aggressive form of American exceptionalism, as well as those of the National Security State and interests of the military industry, have led the United States from one foreign policy disaster to another.

The era following the ending of the Cold War has been characterised by the conspicuous absence of the employment of sound statecraft of the sort seen in previous generations of leaders. This has created the circumstances in which tensions between Russia and China, both economically and militarily important nations, have been allowed to rise to increasingly intolerable levels. The lack of a genuine application of diplomacy has led to the wholesale dismantling of the nuclear treaty system painstakingly built during the Cold War. It has fed the avoidable creation of a destructive conflict in Ukraine, a conflict noted political scientist and international relations expert John Mearsheimer says has been

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led down the primrose path with the result of its being wrecked.⁴⁶ Lee Smith of *The Tablet* forecasted in an article published the day after the launch of the SMO that by “tying itself to a reckless and dangerous America, the Ukrainians made a blunder that client states will study for years to come.”⁴⁷

The conflict in Ukraine presents the foreseeable possibility of an open confrontation between the West and Russia, just as the mishandling of China’s rise — a case study of the “Thucydides Trap”⁴⁸ — threatens a Pacific War in the near future.

It is symptomatic of the present era that American foreign policy has united the Eurasian landmass against it, whereas during the Cold War era it assiduously strove to maintain the divisions between the Russian-dominated Soviet Union and Red China through the endeavour of reopening trade and diplomacy with the latter. The American empire, it appears, has failed to grasp from its predecessor Anglo-Saxon global power, the British empire, the stratagem of an “economy of enemies” policy.

Equally symptomatic of the times is how U.S. militarism and the weaponization of trade through the use of sanctions has succeeded in alienating large swathes of the world. It has been estimated that as much as a quarter of the global population is placed under some form of sanction. Many nations in the Global South have reacted negatively to American and Western European criticisms of their resistance to joining in the sanctions placed on Russia since the escalation of the war in Ukraine. Members of governments have accused the United States and the EU of hypocrisy in regard to the criteria used for justifying the imposition

⁴⁶ John J. Mearsheimer, in speech “Uncommon Core: The Causes and Consequences of the Ukraine Crisis,” September 2015. Video: “Why is Ukraine the West’s Fault? Featuring John Mearsheimer,” *University of Chicago* YouTube Channel, uploaded September 25, 2015. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JrMiSQAGOS4>.

⁴⁷ Smith, Lee. “Ukraine’s Deadly Gamble,” *The Tablet*, February 25, 2022. <https://www.tabletmag.com/sections/news/articles/ukraines-deadly-gamble>.

⁴⁸ Allison, Graham, “The Thucydides Trap: Are the U.S. and China Headed for War?” *The Atlantic*, September 24, 2015. <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2015/09/united-states-china-war-thucydides-trap/406756/n>.

of sanctions⁴⁹ They are also likely weary of the invention of the “democracies”-versus-“autocracies” rationale for the antagonistic international climate which has been fomented.

The redundancy of the policies pursued are evident in so far as the conflict in Ukraine is concerned: The EU states are facing economic hardship, Germany included, which is grappling with deindustrialisation. The Ukraine war has also shown that Russia is capable of industrial warfare in a manner which the United States, with its diminished industrial base, would find hard to match.⁵⁰ And, as with the case of the lengthy engagement in Afghanistan, the billions spent on shoring up a corrupt state is only serving to facilitate a wealth transfer from U.S. taxpayers to military contractors.⁵¹

The lack of public debate to which General Wesley Clark referred when explaining how neoconservative ideologues had “hijacked” American foreign policy persists, as does the lack of accountability on the part of the National Security State which, in concert with the neoconservative movement, has ensured the diminution of American moral prestige around the globe and the growth of its sovereign debt.

These forces have unwittingly assisted in the creation of a Eurasian-centred New World Order.

⁴⁹ “Jaishankar jibes Europe’s hypocrisy on Russian energy purchase – ‘Only Indian money funding war?’” *Hindustan Times YouTube Channel*. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ogTzJXBZs5E>. In February 2023, Jaishankar also stressed that the world was “rebalancing” and “less Euro-Atlantic.” In his thinly veiled words directed to the West, he noted “there are still people in the world who believe that their definition, their preferences (and) their views must override everything else.” See: “Old, Rich, Opinionated And Dangerous: S. Jaishankar Hits Back At Billionaire George Soros,” *CNBC-TV18*, February 18, 2023. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ds1W0XQJCRC>.

⁵⁰ Vershini, Alex. “The Return of Industrial Warfare,” *Royal United Services Institute (RUSI)*, June 17, 2022. <https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/return-industrial-warfare>. Note: The Russian military complex has demonstrated its ability to ramp up and produce vast quantities of weapons, equipment and ammunition during the Ukraine War (infantry fighting vehicles, missiles, rockets artillery systems). The U.S. does not have the industrial base dedicated to production of military equipment at this scale.

⁵¹ Makinde, Adeyinka. “War Is a Racket: The US War in Afghanistan Validates General Smedley Butler,” *Global Research Canada*, August 24, 2021. <https://www.globalresearch.ca/war-racket-us-war-afghanistan-validates-general-smedley-butler/5753880>.

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