

The Failure of the Twentieth Century European Perpetual Peace Project: The Social Construction of the West Via Opposition to Russia

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ABSTRACT

This paper critiques the de facto equation of Europeanization with submission to American hegemony. It traces the choices that allowed the EU to be equated as one of side of the same coin with NATO. France's 2009 rejoining the NATO command structure encouraged this perception. It comports with the claim that American liberal hegemony made the European integration process feasible. It highlights the consequences for conflict resolution of the Europeanization process being equated with attitudinal orientation towards accepting American hegemony. Ukraine is a case study of this process on the level of indirect conflict between Moscow and Washington each seeking to contain each other. European integration's focus on developing vested economic and bureaucratic interests has tied it to American hegemony. It facilitated the institutionalization of anti-Moscow influence tendencies in European integration. The paper adopts a process tracing methodological approach with a focus on the Cold War and the prevailing views that have emerged around it. The institutionalization of Euro-Atlantic integration includes the internalization of the assumption that the USSR, and later Russia, were imperialist aggressors which the US-led Euro-Atlantic community successfully, and relatively peacefully, contained. Moscow's prevailing view does not share this problematic analysis regarding post-1945 Soviet foreign policy motivation.

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INTRODUCTION

On the eve of the full-scale Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, this writer expected that Russian forces would carry out regime change in Ukraine relatively quickly. This writer was apparently in reputable company; for various reasons, the prevailing view at least in the US intelligence community shared this assessment (Risen and Klippenstein, 2022). The faulty expectation was that Russian military forces would occupy the capital Kyiv in a matter of days. The US government offered to Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelenskiy to assist in his escape, which Zelenskiy famously rejected with the retort, "I need ammunition, not a ride." "So-called "will to fight" is among the most difficult intangibles for intelligence to predict, former officials say, and it has failed time and again: in Vietnam, in Iraq, and now, in Afghanistan and Ukraine" (Lillis and Bertrand, 2022, para. 12).

Several factors contributed to this writer's own miscalculation. In terms of historical analogies, this writer looked to Hitlerian Germany's occupation of the Sudetenland and then occupation of Czechoslovakia. Germany faced little military resistance from Czechoslovak forces. The Biden administration reiterated that the US would not deploy forces to Ukraine to deter a Russian invasion, not to mention actively engage in deadly use of force against them (Gordon, 2021). The Biden administration repeated that it would not initiate violence against Russian forces that would lead to a de facto if not de jure war between them (Biden, 2021). This writer wrongly expected that with these blunt, clear statements from Washington, the Ukrainians would view violent resistance as ultimately futile.

A year later, clearly Ukrainian resistance has been intense, sustained and effective. Iran has emerged as major arms supplier to Russia's invading forces in Ukraine amidst the Moscow's lack of preparedness for apparently unexpected tenacious resistance (Eslami, 2022). Kuzio (2022, para. 1) notes that

“Russian imperial nationalist stereotypes of Ukrainians made them miscalculate.” Kuzio (2022) is particularly interested in highlighting the failed predictions by Western analysts regarding the relative power resistance capability of Ukraine. Casualty rates of dead and wounded now stand at many tens of thousands, on each side. Media reports describe the fighting as the largest land war in Europe since the Second World War. Indigenous Ukrainian military hardware capabilities are drastically less relative to Russia. The so-called West has been willing to allocate several tens of billions of dollars of economic and military aid to support the clearly demonstrated Ukrainian willingness to fight. The US underestimation of the national morale of the Ukrainians may stem from various historical scenarios. The South Vietnamese military relatively abundant supplies and direct support from the US, but South Vietnam collapsed in a matter of months after the American withdrawal. The US client regime in Afghanistan collapsed even before the Americans could withdraw, as the prevailing view emerged that the US would in fact withdraw.

Explanations for the differences with the Afghanistan, South Vietnamese and Ukrainian cases would include noting that the US and its allies did not militarily install the Ukrainian authorities. Moreover, Ukrainian nationalism shared a perceived common foe with the US: Russian nationalism and influence. Given the history of conflict between Ukrainian and Russian nationalism, along with the relative power disparity, an external great power ally of Ukrainian nationalism would be derivatively stereotyped positively (Cottam and Cottam, 2001). This psychological balancing dynamic is a focus in folk wisdom, i.e., the enemy of my enemy is my friend. Militant Ukrainian nationalism’s tendency towards allying with Hitlerian Germany during the latter phase of the Second World War reflected this instrumentalization (“Documenting the Ukrainian Nationalist Movements,” 1981). Concomitantly, Russian nationalism would utilize this mid-twentieth century experience to justify its own tendency to downplay and deny Ukrainian nationalism as a national liberation movement (Apt, 2023). Russian nationalism shares this parallel with Zionist advocates’ reference to the Mufti of Jerusalem, al-Husayni’s collaboration with Hitlerian Germany against British imperial control of Palestine (Mattar, 1988). Afghan territorial community nationalism had established itself firmly in the religious symbolic and ideological base of the Taliban, placing the US as an adversary of Afghan self-determination.

If the Ukrainians could demonstrate the sufficient degree of national morale necessary to persuade the US that this aid would be effective, then Ukrainian would receive much more. The events since February 2022 have demonstrated this assumption to be correct and US-led Western alliance aid has flowed (Vlahos, 2023). The Afghan and South Vietnamese cases imply that the willingness of the US to provide military aid to the Ukrainians would not itself imply the latter’s willingness to resist.

This study examines how did the EU become part of this perceived support system for anti-Russian national social liberation movements. A similar support system did not exist in 1938-39. Of course, Czechoslovak capabilities versus Hitlerian Germany were significantly more diminutive in comparison to the Russia-Ukraine dyad. Ukraine’s national morale had the greater boost despite explicit US statements of non-intervention. Simply by its existence, the so-called West inspired Ukrainian nationalism. Ukrainian nationalists could plausibly, and ultimately, correctly believe that if they had the will to resist with massive deadly force, they would gain Western economic and military supplies. They were correct. From an ontological, constructivist perspective, the West clearly exists in the Ukrainian prevailing view. On the basis of belief in the West, Ukrainian government policy is making existential decisions to determine the fate of the Ukrainian nation.

The paper begins by review some of the foundational literature on geostrategy including status quo, imperial and prestige policies, with the emphasis on the last as applied to Russia. It contrasts prevailing assumptions regarding the nature of the development postwar international system that prevailing in Washington and Moscow. It highlights the consequent divergences in strategy prescriptions including appeasement versus containment and détente. The last applies to a conflict spiral, i.e., an international conflict with mutual misperception of belligerency as rooted in ultimate imperialist aggrandizement intent. It highlights Moscow’s inferred prevailing view that the US utilizes the EU as a vehicle for European subregional American imperialism. Its policy recommendation focuses on developing autonomous EU diplomatic bargaining leverage capabilities by supporting Chinese mediation efforts

in the Russo-Ukraine war. It requires overcoming the likely objections of US administrations and their supporters in the EU.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study offers that the relative decline of Russia is not likely to be easily managed, not only by Russia and its allies, but also by the other major powers. Hans J. Morgenthau developed a foreign policy typology in his great power focused theory of realism. Wadlow (2001, 82-83), summarizes Morgenthau's theory, i.e., "politics as a struggle for power; maintaining, increasing, demonstrating power; politics of status quo, imperialism and prestige. This triptych was at the base of all his analysis." Wadlow quotes from an unaccepted grant application that Morgenthau submitted to the Guggenheim Foundation in 1938: "This aspiration for power can assume three different guises: maintaining the power that has already been acquired, increasing it or demonstrating it.... Foreign policy is nothing but the will to maintain, to increase, or to demonstrate one's power, and these three manifestations... find their basic empirical expressions in a policy of the status quo, a policy of imperialism and a policy of prestige."

The prestige type of foreign policy was comparatively less elaborated by Morgenthau.

"Less well developed was the type of policy likely to be pursued by a state which was declining in terms of relative capability base. Morgenthau advances a third type of policy, that of "prestige", which could have been but inexplicably was not developed to accommodate this situation. Morgenthau turned naturally to psychological concepts to explain state behavior. He could, in the case of a declining power, easily have argued that a policy to maintain the image of the actor at its former capability level for as long as possible would be a natural policy for the declining actor to pursue. Since such policies would likely focus largely on maintaining a previous prestige level, they could well be described as policies of "prestige" (Cottam 1994, chapter 2, 81-82).

The policy of prestige reflects a great power exercising a level of international influence that surpasses their relative aggregate power capabilities. Morgenthau highlights that the relative power capability decline of a great power is not typically reflected immediately in a commensurate decline in relative international influence. Ross notes (2013, 283) "Morgenthau's 'policy of prestige' is subject to special volatility partly because it involved unpredictable emotions, such as trust, love, humiliation, and awe."

Great powers typically do not decline gracefully. Nation states are particularly collectively prone to perceive more intense external challenges and stereotype their source, congruent with intense collective affect that associates with it (Cottam and Cottam, 2001).

"The threat perceived by the actor with a declining relative capability, however, is far less easily falsified, especially in the nationalist era. Examples of once great states that gracefully adjust to irreversible decline are difficult to come by. Still peaceful, if not graceful, acceptance of decline has occurred in this era, and in any case as we have argued, if the "policy of prestige" were developed further, the patterns associating with capability decline would be reasonably well handled by political realism" (Cottam 1994, chapter 2, 91-92).

This paper proposes that the essence of a prestige policy by a declining great power manifests as the instrumental derivation of a perceived opportunity for influence expansion in a third, lesser state. Intervention in Ukraine is an example. This derivative intensity of this perceived opportunity correlates in response to a perceived threat from another great power (e.g., the US) by the declining great power (e.g., Russia). Former colonial and neo-colonial possessions may be more prone to stereotyping as more readily vulnerable to assertive intervention.

By way of comparison, French President Charles de Gaulle emerged amidst postwar France's catastrophic efforts to re-assert its great power status in its former empire. He identified French military

independence as necessary for French national greatness, i.e., “grandeur” which in turn required a French nuclear force amidst the Cold War (Davis, 2008, 663). De Gaulle supposedly personified the nationalist forces that threatened French sovereignty emanating from different sources including European integration (Moravcsik, 2000).

The de Gaulle phenomenon apparently constituted a nationalist response to the downgraded influence of postwar France. France, like the other western European states, witnessed a dramatic downgrading in its level of international political influence. Subsequently, the leadership role of de Gaulle in sum allowed France to exploit the Cold War environment to raise France’s prestige in international affairs. France’s tactical formula included portrayal of itself as a balancer between Washington and Moscow through leading Europe, extending from “the Atlantic to the Urals” (Trachtenberg, 2012, 83). Its continued reliance upon the NATO political alliance and on the US-dominated capitalist global political economy allows the observer to characterize this balancing as soft. Bailey (2017, 255) includes de Gaulle’s public distancing of Paris from Washington as contributing to an international political environment for Cold War détente policies. De Gaulle’s behavior made West German Chancellor Willy Brandt’s *Ostpolitik* more feasible as a strategic initiative. “Changes came from elsewhere too: by the end of the 1950s French leader Charles de Gaulle had taken steps to decouple European integration from the broader US-led Western alliance. He developed an independent French nuclear deterrent in 1960 and by March 1966 had taken France out of NATO’s military structure.”

De Gaulle’s public differentiation of France from the US was more symbolic than substantive. France did withdraw from NATO military command structures and ordered the closure of US military bases. De Gaulle sought to portray France under his leadership as a third, autonomous force in international relations, while remaining within the North Atlantic community. Raymond Aron thus critiqued de Gaulle for recklessly promoting an image of France in the world that was “contrary to reality” (Curtis 2004, 17).

Kenneth Waltz (1954) initially proposed the conceptualization of causation in international relations in terms of three levels of analysis: 1) the foreign policy decision maker level, 2) collective state level and 3) the international systemic level. This study proposes an analysis of relevant trends at the state level. It particularly focuses on Russian nationalism and its relevance for shaping Russian behavior towards its European allies and competitors. It proposes that Ukrainian resistance to Russian nationalist irredentist imperialism receives institutional support through the existence of so-called Euro-Atlantic structures, i.e., the so-called West.

The Cold War: Behavior Patterns and Contrasting Explanations

The US and the USSR engaged in a cold war, defined as intense competition for influence over world affairs which they each saw, at its height, in zero-sum terms. The other side's gain is the counterpart's loss. But they conducted this war in ways which resembled very little the wars of the past: a Cold War. The Cold War contest became a struggle for influence preeminence in states which they regarded as having strategic significance. They were vital potential or real allies in containment of the other. The advent of nuclear weaponry led to a fundamental change in international behavior due to unacceptability of direct use of force against the so-called superpowers. Clear patterns of behavior emerged in the course of this Cold War nuclear-era contest. Two features defined the Cold War's unique kind of competition for influence: 1) Critically important engagements or battles occurred at the non-violent level, 2) The US and the USSR demonstrated a willingness to accept defeat in these engagements to a degree which would have been unthinkable in past wars.

Hybrid warfare is not new. Intense conflict between nuclear powers functionally consists of competitive interference in the internal politics of states (DeDominicis, 2019). The Cold War antagonists conducted their conflict within the domestic political processes of other states, at times lethally within the so-called Third World states. They engaged in “competitive interference” (Cottam, 1967), i.e., 1) they used the domestic politics of third states as the typical arena of engagement, and 2) they struggled for influence preeminence in states which they regarded as having strategic significance. They were vital potential

or real allies in attempted containment of each other. External powers ally with local minorities seeking patronage to achieve self-determination, e.g., Kosovar Albanians, Russophone Ukrainians. In the past, conflicts as intense as the Cold War led to general, full-scale war.

Clear patterns of behavior emerged in the course of this Cold War nuclear-era contest and we expect similar patterns in other intense Great Power conflicts today: First, each superpower's functional so-called sphere of influence included those countries in which the adversary would accept defeat in a battle for influence in its domestic political process. The adversary saw that counter actions might have a serious escalation potential for leading to a direct superpower (nuclear) military conflict. Second, however, the US and the USSR tolerated a surprising degree of diplomatic independence by small states in their respective spheres of influence. Third, an anomaly of the US-USSR Cold War was evident. Namely, the USSR tolerated American projections of influence deeply into what would appear--according to the geopolitical realist school--to obviously be within the Soviet sphere of influence. Yet the US demonstrated far less tolerance for similar Soviet efforts in the Western Hemisphere (e.g.: Nicaragua, Grenada).

Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov referenced the comparative belligerency of the US and Russia during and after the Cold War. He intended to justify Russian intervention in Ukraine purportedly to protect the Russophile population there.

“Hundreds of thousands of people were killed in Iraq and cities were razed to the ground. No weapons [of mass destruction] were found. Tony Blair in his memoirs said that they made a mistake, but it can happen to anyone. All of that was done to the countries located on the other side of the ocean. I'm not even talking about the reasons the Americans came up with for intervening the Dominican Republic or Grenada. President Reagan was talking about a threat to the lives of US citizens. Just a threat. There were thousands of Americans there. They invade countries, topple governments, etc.” (“Russia’s Lavrov Blames West,” 2022, para. 98).

One necessary factor for explaining the comparative sluggishness of the USSR in responding to American influence expansion onto its border states lies in the USSR itself. The USSR was a multinational state, with roughly half of population ethnically Russian. The other 14 titular Soviet republics contained a host of other primary intensity self-identification ethnic, sectarian and racial ingroups. The Soviet governing apparatus relied primarily on coercion to maintain the integrity of the Soviet state. It did so but in combination with accommodation and reconciliation of national political self-expression demands among conflicting groups. It contrasts with the US, which is a colonizer immigration-based, territorial nation state (Cottam and Cottam 2001).

The Soviet authorities ultimately failed in constructing a prevailing, primary intensity self-identification of the modal Soviet citizen with the Soviet territorial community. The significance of this distinction is evident in the more pronounced tendency of the US to project power globally during the Cold War. As a nation state, the US collectively was more prone 1) to perceive the external environment in terms of threats and opportunities for the American nation state; 2) to stereotype the sources of those perceived challenges, and 3) to overestimate its relative power capabilities (Cottam and Cottam 2001). Post-Soviet Russia is a nation state.

Ukrainian Nationalism and the (so-called) West

This question remains as to why Ukrainian nationalism put up effective large scale military resistance to their much more powerful neighbor. This resistance emerged despite explicit US administration statements that it would not militarily come to the aid of the Ukrainians in self-defense. International law permits third country aid in use of force in self-defense under Article 51 of the UN Charter. The US had repeatedly utilized this legal justification since 1945, e.g., to justify Operation Desert Storm to expel irredentist Iraq from Kuwait. Nuclear-armed Russia clearly deterred the US from direct intervention.

A comparative power analysis of the Ukrainian and Russian state power capabilities immediately pre-February 24, 2022, would have shown a significant disparity. It might have predicted that Ukraine would not be able to maintain its control over the territory it had controlled post 2014. Going further to retake territories lost in 2014-15 to reclaim sovereign control over its 1991 boundaries might seem hopeless. Such an analysis would have incorporated Morgenthau's concept of national morale. For example, Crimea is not only a historical romantic symbol of Russian national identity, but its Slavic population in 2014 was broadly sympathetic to Russian sovereignty (Tavberidze, 2023). Since annexing Crimea, Moscow has used its coercive authority to further cement local pro-Russian control over the province (Barros and Stepanenko, 2023).

Regarding Ukrainian national morale, Ukraine's population of 44 million made it the largest east European state (after Russia) in 1991 before the beginning of its partition in 2014. Russia's occupation of Crimea was bloodless, but the annexation of parts of Donetsk and Luhansk was not. It would precipitate a violent conflict that led to 14,000 deaths and up to 2 million displaced people and refugees before the full-scale Russian invasion on February 24, 2022 (Sakhanienko, Kolisnichenko and Rosenbaum, 2021). Intensifying hostility between Moscow and Kyiv was a concomitant with increasing cooperation between Kyiv and the Euro-Atlantic alliance. It, apparently, led to Moscow's decision to eliminate Ukraine as a sovereign state actor in international relations. The initial attempt failed. The multifactorial explanation for this initial failure would perhaps include implementing available scenario planning, even if highly unlikely to succeed. To quote the noted neo-conservative, US Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, "You go to war with the army you have-not the army you want or might wish to have at a later time" (Rieff, 2012, 34). Others have noted American neo-conservative hubris in early 2003 with its self-justificatory claims of imminent critical threats from Baathist Iraq to justify militarily-imposed regime change (Benhamou, 2015). Parallels are apparent in Moscow's justificatory irredentist claim of threat to Russophiles due to alleged neo-Nazi domination of Ukraine to attempt its own militarily imposed regime change in Kyiv (Boucher et al., 2022).

Inferring that the prevailing view in Russia would be that his occupation would be relatively low cost seems difficult to accept given events since 2014. The belief in its efficacy may have derived from an ultimately self-serving assumption that the US-led Western alliance instigated and fueled Ukrainian resistance. In other words, Ukrainian resistance is tenacious because the West both inspires it and supplies it. De facto occupation of Ukraine through installation of a client regime that would permit Russian surveillance and border control would cut off this spiritual and material oxygen.

The genesis of the Ukrainian belief that the West has a de facto inherent tendency to oppose Russian state influence includes the foundation and development of European integration. The backbone of European integration is a vast network of governmental bureaucratic and economic vested interests. European integrationist authorities encouraged neo-functional spillover, despite the emergence of various shades of significant Eurosceptic public opinion at least since fall of the Berlin Wall (Taggart, 2020).

American postwar hegemony is the international political environment within which postwar European integration has initiated, functioned and developed. This American hegemonic environment emerged from the prevailing view of relatively intense postwar threat from Moscow to manifest itself in the strategy of containment. Despite the intent of west European leaders, this containment framework dynamically shaped the political opportunities and obstacles for European integration. On the level of political volition, postwar Germany relied upon the security hegemony of the US to ease the fears and insecurities among postwar Germany's neighbors. Postwar Germany's reconstitution, reconstruction and reunification utilized American hegemony as a critical enabling international systemic factor (Cho, 2003). American hegemony permitted and enabled the Europeanization of postwar Germany.

Various political figures have expressed misgivings regarding the implications of American hegemony, perhaps most notably French president Charles De Gaulle (Gfeller, 2010). French president Francois Mitterrand's European security policy proposals reflected also misgivings regarding post-Cold War ultimate US post-Cold War hegemonic intentions in Europe (Bozo, 2008). A Gaullist, Nicholas

Sarkozy, in 2009 reintegrated France into the NATO command structure from which De Gaulle had withdrawn France in 1966 (Rieker, 2018). France's shift reflected the apparent self-image of relative inefficacy in opposing American hegemony. This strategic shift emerged despite Paris' warnings and opposition to the G.W. Bush administration's decision to invade and occupy Iraq in 2003 ("Iraq: March 6-19," 2003). The opposition of Paris did negatively affect foreign direct investment into France due to international investor unease in response to the public tensions between Paris and Washington (Arnold, 2005).

In sum, the EU has continued to utilize its close US alliance to remove foreign policy as a major demand on national resources in the form of military budget allocations. "Before a European defence policy can be formulated, defence spending priorities have to be determined. Defence choices are the result of national preferences and views of the threat which will differ between European member states. Nations will also have incentives to free ride and shift costs to the larger nations" (Hartley, 2023, 5). It also reflects the decline of nationalistic collective attitudinal predispositions in continental Western Europe states to perceive significant threats from the external international environment. Capability generation of European military autonomy is not an effective public opinion electoral support appeal. For decades, French leaders periodically have called for what today Macron labels European "strategic autonomy" but persistently have lacked the political capacity to move towards it (Anderlini and Caulcutt, 2023). One obstacle has been persistent German skepticism towards French proposals that even risk suggesting a distancing of the EU from its foundational reliance on US-NATO security in Europe (Erlanger, 2023). It corresponds with a de facto default on the American alliance to ease any fears regarding economic dependency on Germany. Controls that France and others place on Germany through the EU are important as well, but not sufficient. Nationalism is significantly stronger among the East European EU members. Poland, for example, under the Law and Justice Party in power since 2015 relies on its US alliance to support its cooperation with its allies. French president Emmanuel Macron's conciliatory approaches to Beijing led Polish senior officials to reaffirm their US alliance as the foundation of their security (Cohen, 2023). This reliance facilitates the ruling rightwing Law and Justice Party to utilize appeals to latent, but salient Polish suspicion towards Germany to win votes ("Poland Formally Demands," 2022). It is secure in the notion that such appeals have American hegemony as political guardrails with the raging war in neighboring Ukraine.

The integration of eastern Europe into the EU has intensified American hegemony over EU policy. In this sense, EU enlargement has had a negative trend effect on the EU as a peace strategy for Europe. This eastern Europe focus on the US alliance reflects its orientation towards a reliable security alliance to oppose the expansion of Russian influence in their region. The extent of lingering suspicions regarding Germany is a question that seems to be minor if at all in significance. Suspicions of Germany neo-colonialism through German foreign direct investment and exports seems to be politically relatively insignificant (Lankowski, 2015).

The ability of the EU to develop an autonomous security policy for collective self-defense and military power projection remains daunting. Potential conflicts and fractures among the 27 EU member states remain a challenge. The counterfactual as to whether a re-elected Trump administration would have lessened or removed the prospect of the Russian invasion that occurred in February 2022 is an interesting thought experiment. Some who downplay the threat of Trump to the NATO alliance note that Trump's political weakening by so-called Russiagate and electoral defeat left Putin without an interlocutor. "Putin felt that he was without partners, in a sense like Stalin had found himself 'alone' after Roosevelt and Churchill were gone" (Ellison et al., 2023, 204).

Russian vs. Ukrainian Nationalism

Moscow's perceived opportunity in Ukraine was derivative of its perceived threat from the West. Moscow and Washington compete for influence in Ukraine (DeDominicis, 2022). Washington has a strong commitment to maintaining the support of eastern Europe to American hegemony, which Germany accepts. It necessitates a status quo support of the US to Kyiv, even if the outcome includes a scenario for the de facto partition of Ukraine. Kyiv and Ukrainian nationalism will integrate into the

Euro-Atlantic community the Western alliance will acquiesce to Moscow's annexation of the borderlands it has annexed. Russia and Russian nationalism will be thus contained along with China and Chinese nationalism, which will ally along with Iran and Iranian nationalism.

A Korea-type scenario has emerged in commentary in reports on Russian mass media broadcasts. Russian media is also referencing a Swiss newspaper report that the US authorities have proposed to Moscow that Russia accept the annexation of 20% of Ukraine's post-1991 territory in return for a ceasefire. Washington and Moscow denied the report (Reuters, 2023, Van Brugen, 2023). Moscow and Kyiv have both indicated that they refuse to negotiate. If Moscow is refusing to negotiate, then the US will likely continue to support Ukraine defensively but without providing sufficient resources to expel Russian forces from Ukraine. In the prevailing view of the fighters, a hurting stalemate has to be achieved that is ripe for resolution (Ifediora, n.d., 6) Achieving it is very difficult in the midst of battles in which regime survival depends on the outcome. The competition for global public opinion support includes media portrayals of the alleged crimes of the other side in the conflict. The politically attentive Russian public is apparently polarized, with many acquiescours and accommodators to Putin's regime fleeing the country to avoid being mobilized for this war (Nechepurenko, MacFarquhar and Isai, 2023).

DATA AND METHODOLOGY

2023 Washington's Prevailing View of Russian Intentions

Implicit differences in terms of appropriate political strategic response to Russia's invasion have their foundations in differing inferences of the ultimate intentions behind Russian belligerency. The *New York Times* editorial board, for example, argues that Moscow's escalation of belligerency in February 2022 was due to Moscow's perception of political weakness in the West. According to this worldview, Moscow viewed the West as lacking the will and determination to oppose Moscow's attempted assertion of control over Ukraine:

"Isolated from anyone who would dare to speak truth to his power, Mr. Putin ordered an invasion of Ukraine last year, convinced that the Ukrainians would promptly shed their "fascist" government. The start of the war stunned Russians, but Mr. Putin seemed convinced that a West wasted by decadence and decline would squawk but take no action. He and his commanders were apparently unprepared for the extraordinary resistance they met in Ukraine, or for the speed with which the United States and its allies, horrified by the crude violation of the postwar order, came together in Ukraine's defense" (Editorial Board, 2023, para. 13).

The prevailing view in Washington appears to be that Moscow and Kyiv will not seriously negotiate over a ceasefire at present. Negotiations are likely until such time as a prevailing view emerges within each capital that ongoing fighting is more costly, at present and in the future, than a ceasefire. In sum, Moscow and Kyiv must view the fighting as in effect a hurting stalemate. The US prevailing view is that attrition will eventually exhaust Kyiv and Moscow after months, perhaps years, of ongoing fighting, with Russian casualties approaching 1000 a day. Kyiv and Moscow have to conclude that maximal objectives that they are voicing are unachievable. In Moscow these demands are international recognition of the annexation of the four complete provinces of Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson, along with Crimea to Russia. In addition, rump Ukraine must accept international legal status as a neutral state, i.e., it may not join NATO. On the Ukrainian side, complete return to the 1991 borders of Ukraine and the removal of Putin from office, plus war reparations, appear to be its maximal demands, along with EU and NATO membership.

The Putin regime has appeared implicitly to signal its willingness to negotiate the partition of Ukraine. The pro-Western territory focused around Lviv acquiescing to the loss of the territories east of the Dnipro to Moscow would be part of this formula. The acquiescence to the integration of Kyiv into the Euro-Atlantic system would be the test of the accuracy of the implied inferences regarding Moscow's perception of threat. Putin himself noted that the annexation of Galicia to Ukraine by Stalin is the ultimate source of Ukrainian nationalist hostility to Moscow.

“What did we believe at one time? We believed that OK, the USSR ceased to exist. But, as I said at yesterday's Defence Ministry Board meeting, we thought our common historical roots, our cultural and spiritual background would be stronger than what pulls us apart, and such forces have always existed. We assumed that what unites us was stronger. But no, it was not so, due to the assistance of outside forces and the fact that people with extreme nationalist views came to power basically after the collapse of the Union.”

“And this division was growing worse all the time with the help of these forces and despite all our efforts. As I once said - at first we were pulled apart, separated and then set against each other. In this sense, they have achieved results, of course, and in this sense it has been something of a fiasco for us. We were left with nothing else. Maybe we were deliberately brought to this, to this brink. But we had nowhere to retreat, this is the problem.”

“They were always fully involved; they did their best. I do not remember now, but you can read up on it in history books. One of the deputies of the tsarist State Duma said, if you want to lose Ukraine, add Galicia to it. And this is what happened in the end; he turned out to be a visionary. Why? Because people from that part behave very aggressively and actually suppress the silent majority in the rest of that territory.”

“But again, we believed that the underlying foundations of our unity would be stronger than the trends that are tearing us apart. But it turned out this was not the case. They began to suppress Russian culture and the Russian language, tried to break our spiritual unity in totally barbaric ways. And they pretended that no one noticed. Why? Because, as I said, their strategy was to divide and rule” [sic] [emphasis BD] (“Russia's President Putin uses term 'war' for first time in press,” 2022, paras. 42-45).

Medvedev has also made statements regarding Moscow's willingness to accept the partition of Ukraine.

“Dmitry Medvedev, the deputy head of Russia's Security Council and a longstanding close ally of President Vladimir Putin, has said that new "special international norms" are needed to hold talks on ending the war in Ukraine.”

“They are again recalling the principles of international law as the basis for negotiating. The universal principles of the public law of peoples are certainly important, but the problem has always been in their interpretation. For example, at least two of the seven principles contained in the UN Charter are obviously understood differently by us and by the countries hostile to us. This is the principle of self-determination of nations (when it comes to the former republics of Donbas and other former territories of Ukraine). And the principle of conscientious fulfilment of international obligations (when it comes to the Minsk agreements),” Medvedev wrote on his Telegram channel on 18 January.

“Therefore, what is necessary for new negotiations is not so much a unified understanding of the principles of international law but agreement on two legal aspects. First, recognition (or at least tacit acceptance) of the results of self-determination of the people of the former territories of Ukraine, which are embodied today in the internal law of Russia - in its Constitution. And second, the development of special international norms designed for the current situation and future international relations. As it was, say, during the preparation of the UN Charter in 1945. In fact, this is the creation of new international rules that complement the system of jus cogens [preceding two words in Latin] norms,” he added. [sic] (“Putin Ally Calls For New International Rules For Ukraine Peace,” 2023).

Medvedev has made intensely belligerent statements previously, apparently for domestic public opinion mobilizational aims. The above statement portrays Moscow as an great power supporter of the status quo. The US-led hegemonic expansion into Ukraine is consequently an implication that the US is the

revisionist power. It aims to subordinate indirectly Russian national significance to secondary status, despite Moscow being one of the founding UN Security Council permanent members. Again, a formula test for Moscow's intentions appears to be acquiescence to partition with Moscow acquiescing to western Ukraine's integration into Euro-Atlantic structures.

The Putin government stereotyped Ukraine as a degenerate actor as did most Western intelligence agencies. The prevailing view that Russia would relatively quickly seize control of the capital and reinstall Yanukovich, ousted in 2014, proved to be a gross miscalculation on the basis of nationalist stereotyping (Euractiv, 2022). The Putin government consequently has mired Russia in an attritional conflict with Ukraine receiving life-support military and economic aid from Euro-Atlantic allies. Putin has to justify the invasion he launched in February 2022 or risk being toppled and potentially worse, along with his regime core supporters.

NATO Post-Cold War Containment of Moscow

The February 24, 2022, Russian invasion of Ukraine temporarily pushed the preoccupation with China down the agenda for EU-NATO cooperation. Recently (January 2023) the leaders of the member states of EU reaffirmed EU-NATO unity. They described the enhancement of the EU security capabilities as a strengthening of the North Atlantic alliance's capabilities (European Council, 2023):

“Our mutually reinforcing strategic partnership contributes to strengthening security in Europe and beyond. NATO and the EU play complementary, coherent and mutually reinforcing roles in supporting international peace and security. We will further mobilize the combined set of instruments at our disposal, be they political, economic or military, to pursue our common objectives to the benefit of our one billion citizens” (para. 9).

The nuclear setting continues to reinforce patterns of influence competition that first became evident during the Cold War. Moscow and Washington compete indirectly for influence over the polity of a third actor (Cottam, 1967). In one pattern, a great power intervenes directly with military force while the other publicly provides only military aid to the third, arena target polity. These dynamics played out on a comparable scale in Korea, Vietnam and Afghanistan. The characterization of the US and Russia as great powers contrasts with predominant Cold War-era narratives that they were so-called superpowers. Post-Soviet Russia's GDP has been compared in size to that of Italy or South Korea, due primarily to the size of its export commodities sector. Its deployed nuclear weapons capability gives it the capacity to participate as a primary protagonist in scenarios leading to the devastation of human civilization through threat of accidental escalation (Cottam and Gallucci, 1978). Avoiding uncontrolled military conflict escalation leading to utilization of nuclear destruction remains the primary, but not the only, foreign policy imperative, as it has been since 1945.

The US response to Moscow's February 24, 2022, invasion of Ukraine functionally aims to contain Russian irredentism. It assumes that Russian belligerence is due to frustrated great power status recognition of Russia's hegemony over the territories of the former Soviet Union. It does not assume that the prevailing view in Moscow perceives an indirect, but intense threat to Russia through American-led globalization of Ukraine via its European integration variant (DeDominicis, 2022). This perceived enemy stereotype views the greater polity challenge of American-led globalization. In this definition of the situation, the observer sees US foreign policy motivation as belligerently aggressive. It is a diabolically clever, cynically rational actor engaged in a long-term plan to dominate the international community (Cottam 1977). This view characterizes the prevailing view in Washington regarding the Cold War that the US allegedly won by successfully containing the USSR. Moscow perceives it as aiming to subvert and disintegrate Russia through the attraction of so-called Europeanization of the former Soviet territories. Ukraine, according to the prevailing Russian narrative of its national history, is the most vulnerable and attractive target as the cradle of Russian civilization. It is also the most vulnerable target for Europeanization due its political geography. For example, in August 2022, Russian Security Council secretary Nikolai Patrushev stated, “By organising a coup d'etat in Kyiv in 2014 and starting the accelerated transformation of Ukraine into the so-called anti-Russia,

the Anglo-Saxons set out not only to create a springboard for pressure to be put on our country, but also to create a precedent for the further fragmentation of the Russian ethnic group in order to completely eradicate it” (“Russia Fighting Ukraine’s Western-Installed Puppet Regime,” 2022).

Patrushev’s primary intended target audience in this TASS Russian language report was domestic. Foreign audiences would inevitably respond that it is propaganda to control the Russian public because the European Union’s primary aim is to promote peace in Europe. Moscow might respond that whatever differences the EU leaders have with US policy, they never restrain the US, and end up eventually not only acquiescing, but supporting US policy. For example, in *Vedomosti* business daily:

“*Vedomosti (business daily) - "French President Emmanuel Macron, who has returned from a meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping, stressed that the Europeans are not interested 'in speeding up the solution of the Taiwan issue'... Macron noted the need for Europe to gain 'strategic autonomy'..."*

“*"In terms of relations with Washington, one can really see 'Gaullist' notes in Macron's statements, in particular, the mention of 'strategic autonomy' and the refusal to get involved in new conflicts under the American leadership. Here one can recall both the Cold War and the issue of the invasion of Iraq in 2003, says Pavel Timofeev, the head of the Department of European Political Studies at IMEMO RAS. But in fact, we are not talking about any 'anti-Atlantic rebellion', the expert says."*

“*Yuri Rogulev, director of Franklin Roosevelt's Foundation for the Study of the United States, agrees. He stressed that France's de facto foreign policy is being built in line with Washington's course, which is evident from Paris' behaviour in the Ukrainian crisis and participation in the supply of weapons to Kyiv. Macron only pretends to play 'the Fronde', Rogulev believes."* [...] (“Russian Press Previews,” 2023, para. 22-24).

Patrushev’s characterization encapsulates the social competition strategy that prevails in Moscow regarding the conflict with the North Atlantic community over Ukraine. Ukraine has become this target of social competition due to Russian national irredentist claims to a region that had been part of the Russian empire. Ukraine became formally sovereign with the disintegration of the USSR into its fifteen constituent republics. Irredentist conflicts are particularly prone to social competition strategies because of the characterization of the allegedly occupied or colonize area as part of the nation.

Moscow’s Prevailing Worldview

The prevailing worldview in Moscow as of 2023 views the EU as essentially the institutional framework for US hegemonic coordination of the national power resources of its NATO allies. This Russian government prevailing view contrasts with some Western academic literature portraying the EU’s Common Defense and Security Policy from a neo-realist perspective. It sees the CDSP as an EU attempt at “balancing” against the US in the post-Cold War unipolar environment. Other literature views the EU as lacking the power capability to act in the military arena independently of the US. The CSDP in fact enhances US-EU security cooperation to make a “more effective and enduring NATO” (Erciyas and Soydemir, 2022, 8). This latter perspective is closer to Moscow’s worldview. Far from viewing the EU as balancer or hedger against the US, Moscow sees the Trump administration as illustrating the weakness of the EU. French president Emmanuel Macron highlighted this weakness by describing NATO during the Trump administration as experiencing “brain death” due to “a lack of strategic coordination and leadership from the United States” (Erlanger, 2019, para. 1). One 2021 observer infers that the start of trends leading to Macron’s pronouncement emerged with the Obama administration’s “transatlantic departure” with its heralded “pivot” to Asia (Ferreira Da Cruz, 2021, 15).

Macron more recently reiterated oft-repeated French calls for the development of EU strategic autonomy. Little evidence exists of its effectiveness in shaping the prevailing view in Moscow towards perceiving substantive differentiation of the EU from US-led NATO. One Belarusian observer

associated with the opposition to Lukashenka critiques the prevailing view in Moscow and Minsk as viewing Warsaw and Kyiv as “mindless puppets of Washington” (BBC Monitoring, 2022, para. 5). Despite Macron’s condemnation of the absence of US leadership under the Trump administration, the EU appeared unable to organize a viable compensatory response. It did not effectively adopt a soft balancing, or hedging, strategy towards the US. “[H]edging strategies are adopted when states fear abandonment and seek to reduce their dependence on other states, either by cultivating alternative partners and projects, or self-insure against the possible betrayal of trust by other states” (Nielsen and Dimitrova, 2021, 703, referencing Ringsmose and Webber, 2020, 301).

The EU remained collectively passive. Among the obstacles was the generally stronger commitment of the newer east European members of NATO/EU to orienting their military security policies towards Washington. “Because of this insurmountable structural cleavage, the EU will experience, for a long time from now on, a gap between the political will of unity, formally expressed by European leaders and the actual capacity to adhere to the idea of ‘strategic European autonomy’” (Naumescu, 2020, 33-34). Macron’s November 2019 corpse-like characterization of NATO generated rejections of varying intensity. They came, among others, from the Turkish president, the German Chancellor and the NATO Secretary General. Among other rejoinders, Jens Stoltenberg responded, “But the European Union cannot defend Europe. European unity cannot replace transatlantic unity. A strong NATO and a strong European union are two sides of the same coin. Both are indispensable for the continued freedom and prosperity of Europe” (NATO, 2019, para. 27, referenced in Sarcinschi, 2019).

The EU functionally defaulted to placing its bets on Trump’s removal from office. This bet paid off, but it can lead an observer to speculate as to whether Trump’s re-election, if it had happened, would have lessened Moscow’s perception of challenge from the US/NATO/EU. Nielsen and Dimitrova (2021) note the January 2019 *New York Times* (Barnes and Cooper) report that Trump raised privately the prospect of the US withdrawing from the NATO alliance. Although the justification was the drain on US resources, clearly Trump did not perceive Russia as a major threat to US interests, as Trump understood them. Moscow’s conflict with Kyiv escalated publicly in spring, 2021, a few months after Biden’s inauguration (Kramer, 2021). The Trump US administration had distanced itself from active involvement in Moscow-Kyiv negotiations over the Donbas conflict (Kramer, 2019). Trump’s interest in Ukraine declined following the revelations surrounding his July 25, 2019, call to newly elected Ukrainian president Volodymyr Zelensky. Trump sought to use US aid to leverage Kyiv to announce an investigation into US businessman Hunter Biden, active in Ukrainian business circles. He thereby aimed to besmirch the reputation of his looming presidential election rival, former US vice-president Joe Biden, the father of Hunter. In the Obama administration, Biden had oversight responsibility for Ukraine and had been actively engaged in promoting particular reform policies there (Kramer, 2020).

According to this perspective, Joe Biden represents the reassertion of the primacy US foreign policy establishment, founded and cultivated during the Cold War. Notoriously referred to as “the Blob,” it is “the bipartisan, Washington-based, foreign policy elite that believes maintaining the United States’ global dominance is essential to ensuring American safety and international peace” (Beinart, 2022, para. 5, Lyall, 2021). Reynolds (2020, 44) notes that “the more influential critics of Washington’s foreign policy consensus argue [...] that a broad bipartisan conglomeration of interlocking bureaucracies, think-tanks, and lobbies constitutes the Blob.” The developing institutionalization of the functional assumption that post-Soviet Moscow remains a foreign policy challenge came to characterize the prevailing view in post-1991 Washington (Maitra, 2021).

Prevailing in this establishment worldview is the attitudinal assumption that Moscow would seek to re-establish the regional hegemony it lost following the 1989-91 Communist collapse. A foundational component of this worldview is that post-Cold War Washington should respond to the appeals of the post-Communist European polities. The US should take the lead in containing Moscow’s presumably revanchist influence by expanding NATO (Allin, 2022). Amidst the US nationalist response to the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks on the US mainland, US defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld would highlight these east European allies (Sedivy and Zaborowski, 2004). Labelling them as “New

Europe” for their support of the US in its impending 2003 Iraq invasion, he contrasted them with obstructionist, resistant “Old Europe,” focused on Paris and Berlin (Iraq, 2003, 30, 32). Beinart (2022) highlights the high marks the US foreign policy establishment has given to containing Russian expansion into Ukraine by providing military aid to Kyiv.

Individual leaders and collective policy patterns provide evidence as to the functional self-understanding of the NATO/EU alliance regarding its ultimate foreign policy intentions. These collective self-understandings may differ from the prevailing view of NATO/EU ultimate intent as perceived by the targets of NATO and EU strategy, including Moscow. The Putin government apparently shares Stoltenberg’s characterization of NATO and the EU being two sides of the same coin. This analysis infers that Moscow’s prevailing view sees the functional intent of the Euro-Atlantic alliance is, at best, to subordinate Russia to a second-rate global power status. Russia is, at best, to submit to American hegemonic predominance as per postwar west European nation states, i.e., as per a European mid-range power. At worst, the aim is to dismember Russia, with the American-led Euro-Atlantic community acquisition of Ukraine the main wedge for accelerating this disintegration. The assumption is that permitting NATO’s integration of Ukraine, even a rump Ukraine, would constitute appeasement of an aggressive, imperialist US. As with Munich in 1938, such appeasement will only make the appeased aggressor more aggressive. The Russian authorities articulated this worldview through its control over Russian broadcast media, e.g., in response to Henry Kissinger’s proposal to this effect. Kissinger’s “trap.” According to one Russian pro-regime pundit, “Without restoring some order in the [Russian] elite and in the authorities, the number of these manipulations will only grow, and the number of people who would be internally ready to go where Kissinger calls them [...] will grow” (“Russian State TV,” 2022, para. 11). In this enemy image of the US in the nuclear setting, the immediate threat comes from internal actors within the Russian polity that would functionally serve as subversive American agents.

As incentivized by the nuclear setting, this subordination occurs indirectly. A critical component is permanently dislodging Ukraine from Moscow’s sphere of influence via the EU and its civilian power capabilities. In this worldview, the EU acts as the handservant of US hegemony in Europe. The perception of threat as the prevailing view in Moscow is further evident in the domestic control formula that the regime authorities implement. Aside from coercion, the public opinion influence predominance formula aims, functionally, to inoculate domestic public opinion from foreign news sources. Western reports regarding a range of issues, e.g., targeting of civilian infrastructure, are matched quickly by Russian state broadcast media reports. The latter circulate reports of Ukrainian targeting of civilian infrastructure in Russian-held areas. Foreign news reports disseminating into Russia of Russian military targeting of Ukrainian infrastructure thereby can be more readily questioned as disinformation. The current popular term is fake news, thereby, maintaining public opinion support for the authorities. This mimicking of Western news reports occurs continuously, indicating that the Russian authorities are concerned about it and perceive it as a source of threat to their authority. If the Russian authorities viewed their adversaries as degenerate and contemptible, they would not focus on immediately matching Western media narratives. In fact, prevailing Western media narratives of Ukrainian victimization by Russian crimes and suffering are met with a counternarrative of Russians’ own victimization in similar ways.

The EU’s rhetorical emphasis on its identity as a “civilian superpower” includes human rights promotion as a predominant theme (Moravcsik, 2003, para. 41). Romanova (2016) highlights the analytical importance of focusing on the subjective perception of “normative power Europe” by a particular target state, whether Russia or otherwise (2016, 1). Romanova (2016) affirms that the Russian state’s ultimate collective foreign policy motivation is to gain status equality with the EU and the US in international relations. Romanova (2016) notes that Putin’s rejoinders to EU critiques of its human rights record have highlighted EU complicity with the US in establishing “secret prisons and torture in Europe” (2016, 308). The Putin regime authorities had long been skeptical of EU expansion of its influence into the former Soviet states before the beginning of the Russo-Ukraine war in 2014 (Ferguson 2018). One observer noted that the increasing trans-Atlanticism of EU policy under American “leadership” [*sic*] has spelled “the death of Europe as the subject of its fate” (Sakwa, 2019, 564, 569).

Another observer noted the strongly supportive response of “the West” to the 2014 liberal democratic revolution in Ukraine, in contrast to an Armenian mass movement 5 years earlier (Grigoryan, 2020, 1). Grigoryan argues that differentiating factor was the former was intensely hostile to Moscow’s influence, whereas the latter was not.

Maass (2020) illustrates that Moscow was skeptical of the EU’s ability to act as a coherent, effective actor in implementing its “state-building” project in Ukraine. Moscow’s effectiveness in overriding EU policy aims by partitioning parts of eastern Ukraine of course was a primary cause for the EU’s inability to achieve its stated goals. Maass notes that in 2013 in the leadup to the EU’s Eastern Partnership summit with Ukrainian President Victor Yanukovich in Vilnius, Moscow pressured Kyiv and Brussels for a trilateral trade agreement to include Russia. Thereby, Moscow would maintain its economic vested interests in Ukraine while Ukraine would gain the economic benefits of integration into the EU single market. When the EU demurred, then Yanukovich announced that he would not sign the economic association agreement with the EU in November. Moscow had ratcheted up economic sanctions on Ukraine threatening Yanukovich’s political support base in the industrialized Donbass region (Herszenhorn, 2013, Smale, 2013, Roth, 2013). His decision triggered protests that escalated to scores of deaths and his flight from Ukraine to Russia.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Russia’s conservative values affirmation response is part of the emerging authoritarian populist political regime that perceived opportunity and now threat emanating from Ukraine. The perceived threat from the US was the context that created the derivative perceived opportunity in February 2022 emanating from Ukraine. The conflict spiral crisis that has emerged has its foundations in these Soviet-era bureaucratic security apparatus vested interests, which now associate with post-Soviet Russian nationalism. Their association with American nationalism remains, with the elimination of Trump’s challenge due to perceived threat from the European Union. European integration has its foundation in these Western-counterpart bureaucratic security apparatus vested interests. Nationalist Euroscepticism can challenge this so-called establishment, as the Brexit phenomenon demonstrated. For those EU member state actors in which nationalism is not as salient, then they will tend to support EU integration. The ideological assumption that globalization would inevitably lead to democratization does not hold because of the critical role that state power plays in shaping class structure. For example, “unlike the middle classes in the West and other East Asian societies, the function of the Chinese middle class is not only driven by the logic of modernity and the market but also by the direct and powerful interventions of government. State power continues to play a huge role in shaping and reshaping China’s class structure” (Qin, 2021, 19).

Current debates regarding how to respond to Moscow’s dramatic escalation of its violent conflict with Ukraine include differences in the perception of ultimate Russian motivations. These differences focus, for example, on whether or not the US should take the lead in providing heavy tanks to Ukraine. Germany’s commitment to US hegemony also reflects its prospective acquiescence to its allies providing heavy tanks. Germany’s prevailing assessment of its own foreign policy tactical aims include a commitment to maintenance of US hegemony. If maintaining US hegemony necessitates acquiescing to a US commitment to increasing NATO military supplies to Ukraine, then Germany will acquiesce. Germany will not appear to be taking the lead in organizing the Western response to Moscow’s invasion. Notable has been the US response to the invasion at its one-year point. The US at first refused to provide Abrams tanks to Ukraine, after Berlin repeated its insistence to not being the first Western state to provide this type of military aid.

The EU’s close association with the US among the respective prevailing views in target states such as Russia, China and Iran makes Euro-Atlantic based activists vulnerable to stereotyping. In this enemy stereotype of the Euro-Atlantic community ultimately under Washington’s direction, public reports of disagreement or tensions between NATO member-state leaders are ultimately insignificant. In this enemy stereotype of US hegemony, individual leader idiosyncratic dissent, that reach media reports are epiphenomenal and ultimately insignificant. This predispositional characterization applies to the US as

well as to its alleged client/allies such as France. Trump's occupation of the White House did not alter the thrust of US foreign policy towards containment of Russia. A leader such as Trump that might have threatened this thrust would generate an American polity response that would remove him from power, i.e., Trump's electoral defeat in 2020.

A similar dismissal of individual leader dissent applies to France as well. Russian state-controlled broadcast media reminded domestic viewers that French president Emmanuel Macron repeatedly communicated personally via telephone with Russian president Vladimir Putin. Macron sought to dissuade Moscow from its full-scale 2022 invasion and then continued in attempting to persuade Putin to order a stop, but "Macron himself with his endless phone calls to the Kremlin got nowhere" ("Russian TV News," 2023, para. 16). This same state-controlled news broadcast on April 7 characterized France as a "vassal" of the US: "this is what happens when a vassal tries its hardest to formulate an independent policy, it doesn't really work out" ("Russian TV News," 2023, para. 19). France's supposed demonstrated genetic incapacity for agency explains Macron's alleged failure to persuade Chinese president Xi Jinping to pressure Moscow during Macron's state visit to Beijing. Notably, commenting on his just-completed state visit in Beijing, Macron declared on April 13 that being a US ally did not require being a "vassal" to the US (BBC, 2023, para. 3).

According to Moscow's prevailing worldview, this absence of agency capacity derives from the stereotyped nature of European Union polities. These forces that now threaten to subjugate Moscow have their foundation not in the individual foreign policy decision makers themselves. Liberal capitalist polities utilize non-state actors, e.g., multinational corporations and human rights NGOs, to become the Western polity agents for undermining Russian national morale. National morale is one of the core components in Morgenthau's conceptualization of power (Morgenthau, 1993).

Characterization of the post-Cold War international relations system as unipolar is a Weberian ideal-typical characterization. This perspective allows for elucidation of behavior patterns for which to observe and highlight. Drezner (2019) highlights the characterization of Schweller and Pu (2011) of the international system in which a rising power challenges the hegemonic leader of the status quo. Balancing by the challenger will appear to be a revisionist strategy according to the hegemonic discourse of the status quo leader. This insight stands in contrast to the characterization of balancing a status quo defense strategy, which in fact only applies within a multipolar international system. In 2022, the rise of China and its affirmation of its alliance with Russia appeared to conform with a balancing strategy against the US and its European allies. The expansion of Euro-Atlantic institutional structures provoked a violent response by Moscow, with the escalating conflict intensifying Russia's collaboration with China. One noteworthy inference from the application of this model is that it also confirms that the prevailing worldview in Moscow does not see the EU as another pole in a multipolar world. The intense if not always salient nationalist predispositions among various EU member states that has become manifest particularly since Brexit implies that the EU never had this capacity. For example, American hegemony is the framework which permits extended, institutionalized collaboration between Warsaw and Berlin (Zerofsky, 2023). The reassertion of conflict with Moscow indicates that Moscow's prevailing view infers a similar conclusion. European integration is significantly a project of American hegemony. It is an elaborate system of institutions ultimately supporting American hegemony in the form of American-led globalization in the European region.

A hedging strategy has been defined as a state's reaction to changing power distributions in international relations, located on a continuum between balancing and bandwagoning. It is a response to strategic ambiguity due to uncertainty regarding the foreign policy behavior implications of a shifting comparative power capabilities among states (Koga 2018). The cognitive revolution in international relations theory emphasizes the recognition of bounded rationality in international relations theory (Herrmann 1988; Hafner-Burton, Hughes and Victor 2013). Its relevance is evident in the impact of uncertainty regarding the further elaboration of this concept of hedging. Koga (2019) elaborates on sub-variations of hedging patterns of foreign policy behavior again reflecting the impact of uncertainty regarding various trends on current and future power balances. During the Trump administration, the willingness, ability or both of the EU to engage in hedging was not evident. Had Trump been re-elected

in 2020, perhaps the ensuing crisis may have pushed the EU to develop a greater autonomous power capability. Such an outcome is a hypothetical scenario that is difficult to prove. As of 2023, the EU has not demonstrated the capacity to act as great power. To rephrase, it has not convincingly demonstrated the power capability, including the internal public opinion influence capacity, to establish its own foreign policy aims autonomously. Its high-level foreign policy aims remain constrained within parameters established by of the US, and the US interaction with other great powers, e.g., China and Russia. One high-profile attempt that the EU leadership made to oppose the US was in the lead up to the US-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, an attempt that failed spectacularly.

A PATH FORWARD

A détente strategy may manifest itself in a pattern of the EU balancing against the US and Russia by participating in China's Belt and Road Initiative. Concurrently, the EU can also demur from following the US lead should Washington favor Ukraine joining NATO. The EU can prepare for the need to promote a détente between the US, Russia and China. It needs to adopt a more autonomous role in relation to the US in order to shape US, Russian and Chinese perceptual and attitudinal trends.

China can potentially play a role in maneuvering diplomatically to persuade Moscow to view the war in Ukraine as a hurting stalemate. The US and its allied would have to utilize its bargaining leverage to bring around Kyiv to this point of view. In this scenario, the US and its allies will continue to pledge military support to Ukraine but not sufficient to allow Kyiv to retake more territory, if Russia mobilizes. Kyiv's prevailing view that Russia is politically vulnerable will take time to emerge while Kyiv's expenditures in casualties seem not to be providing more than a military stalemate. The European Union will acquiesce to the US-led strategy. They will rationalize that by maintaining the alliance, Russia will more likely arrive at the hurting stalemate position as Russia integrates with Asia.

In this scenario, the battle front becomes a ceasefire line and a de facto border. Russia keeps the territory it holds but nothing more. Ukraine accedes to the EU and NATO, much like Cyprus did and Moldova will do with a so-called frozen conflict on its territory. Moscow has to come to conclude that gaining Odessa and linking with Transdnistria to landlock Ukraine is not achievable. Transdnistria will also be written off, in this scenario. Russia is also isolated from the West and throws in its globalization focus on Asia amidst the emerging Soviet 2.0 worldview of a conspiratorial Anglo-Saxon global system utilizing economics and soft power to assimilate and subordinate Russia.

The UN Security Council is a twentieth century framework for the immediate postwar status quo institutionalization of a multipolar international system. Multipolar systems are more amenable than unipolar and bipolar systems for the adaptation by defensive national great powers to pursue "social creativity" strategies (Cottam and Cottam, 2001; Evans, 2015, 404; Mazloomi et al., 2018). Moscow has repeatedly reasserted its aim to establish a multipolar world system. It aims through cooperation with China functionally to bandwagon against the West until the purportedly expansionist United States is contained. Moscow articulated this approach in its most recent foreign policy strategy, portraying itself as a "self-reliant civilization state" ("Summary of Russian Press," 2023, para. 46). "In the 2023 concept, Russia, China, India and the United States are named 'sovereign centres of world development' (read - the poles of that same multipolarity)" ("Russian Press," 2023, para. 19). The European Union should strive for international social creativity opportunities through promoting multipolarity. To distance itself more effectively from the US in the view of Moscow and Beijing, the European Parliament should have the right to initiate legislation. It will require elements of containment of the US.

The Russian conception of the world order that they advocate to the international community is, according to Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, "a more just, polycentric world order based on international law and UN centrality" ("Foreign Minister Lavrov," 2023, para. 12). Other comments by Lavrov and other leaders, such as Dmitri Medvedev, together indicate a world order which the UN Charter articulated at the end of the Second World War. The UN Security Council would constitute a framework for institutionalizing the wartime alliance into a postwar institutional framework for a global

concert of great powers. The permanent 5 members were formally equal in legal status with their respective veto power. Resuscitation of this framework would necessitate the rebuilding of Russian relative power capabilities through collaboration with China. The high-level tactical aim would be to redress the global diplomatic bargaining leverage which the US currently enjoys. In sum, Russia must reestablish a comparative diplomatic bargaining leverage relative capacity comparable to that which the old Soviet Union enjoyed. The Soviet claim to global leadership of the anti-imperialist struggle again is a theme of Putin's leadership, in collaboration with China and India, as well as Iran and other states resistant to US efforts to contain Russian influence expansion. The US and its developed country allies/clients together constitute the "golden billion" that claims global hegemony ("Putin Outlines," 2022, paras. 10-11).

The desired future configured in Moscow's so-called sovereign centers strategy appears to be a recreation of the multipolar world order. In sum, it is an imitation of the so-called concert of Europe to a global stage. An enforcement of Chapter VII of the UN Charter with a focus on the UN Security Council system would be the institutional framework. This Russian, so-called sovereign centers strategy is apparently a containment-type strategy oriented towards the US as a perceived threat. The prevailing view in Moscow is that the EU is not an alternate pole in this system. In this worldview, the EU has evolved into an institutional framework for coordinating European resources in support of US centered aspirations towards global unipolarity (Cottam and Cottam, 2001). The EU is one part of one of the sovereign center/poles under the US hegemonic domination. Russia's hegemonic dominance lies over the Slavic world. Predispositions towards perceived threats from China over Russian influence in Central Asia have mitigation predispositions from the shared perceived threat from Washington in Beijing and Moscow.

The EU appears to fallback to behavior in this worldview paralleling during the latter stages of the US-EU Cold War. The intensity of threat that the EU perceived from Moscow was significantly lower than the US prevailing view in the first term of the Reagan administration. The EU sought economic benefits from increasing trade with the Soviet Union, leading to the construction of the oil and gas pipelines from the USSR to Western Europe that are problematic today. In the early 1980s, the European Community did not oppose the US deployment of the Pershing II intermediate range ballistic missiles despite popular opposition. European valuation of its US alliance as critically important for supporting intra-European cooperation. The functional assumption was that Europe's expanding trade ties with the USSR would counteract tendencies towards a conflict spiral between the European Community and Moscow. This assumption appears to have been valid. Despite the reinvigoration of conflict between Moscow and Washington, Moscow did not perceive a significant threat from Europe per se. The integration of Germany into the European Community was evidence supporting the prevailing view in Gorbachev's Moscow that the Cold War was a conflict spiral, i.e., based upon mutual misperception of threat.

The prevailing view in Moscow of Ukraine as the scene of the source of derivative opportunity to counteract the overarching threat from Washington derives from the enemy image that prevails today. This threat is all-encompassing, and the nuclear setting incentivizes perceiving the threat as more insidious, *ceteris paribus*. The differentiation under Putin into the 21st century is that the prevailing view today, is that these economic ties themselves have become part of the threat from Washington. They are the instigator and supporter of so-called color revolutions.

So-called color revolutions are the vehicle for neo-colonial subversion and subjugation. Ohanyan and Kopalyan (2022, 29) differentiate the popular instigation of the 2018 Armenian so-called "Velvet Revolution." They contrast it with research that highlights the leadership of "top-down by the political elites, or the externally funded NGO sector, as has been the case in post-Soviet color revolutions" (Ibid.). The Putin regime's politically prevailing view is that vulnerable domestic actors for collaboration with the external threat include the Westernized bourgeoisie. Describing Western actors purportedly threatening Russia through Ukraine and elsewhere, Putin claimed that "They will try to bet on the so-called fifth column, on national traitors, on those who earn money here, with us, but live there," [...] "And 'live' not even in the geographical sense of the word, but in their thoughts, in their

slave-like consciousness” (Troianovski 2022, para. 20). So-called oligarchs whose wealth and influence derives from direct participation and exploitation of international commercial and financial flows are particularly suspect.

Moscow made non-governmental organizations a legal target in 2006 following the Orange Revolution in Ukraine. Repression against them intensified concomitantly with the subsequent deterioration in US-Russia relations (Gilbert 2020). Within Moscow’s prevailing view, liberal political and economic constituencies have vested their interests in Western economic, political and cultural power centers. According to this enemy stereotype, they have become fifth column conduits for neo-colonial subversion and subordination of Russia. According to President Putin, a month after the start of the full-scale invasion:

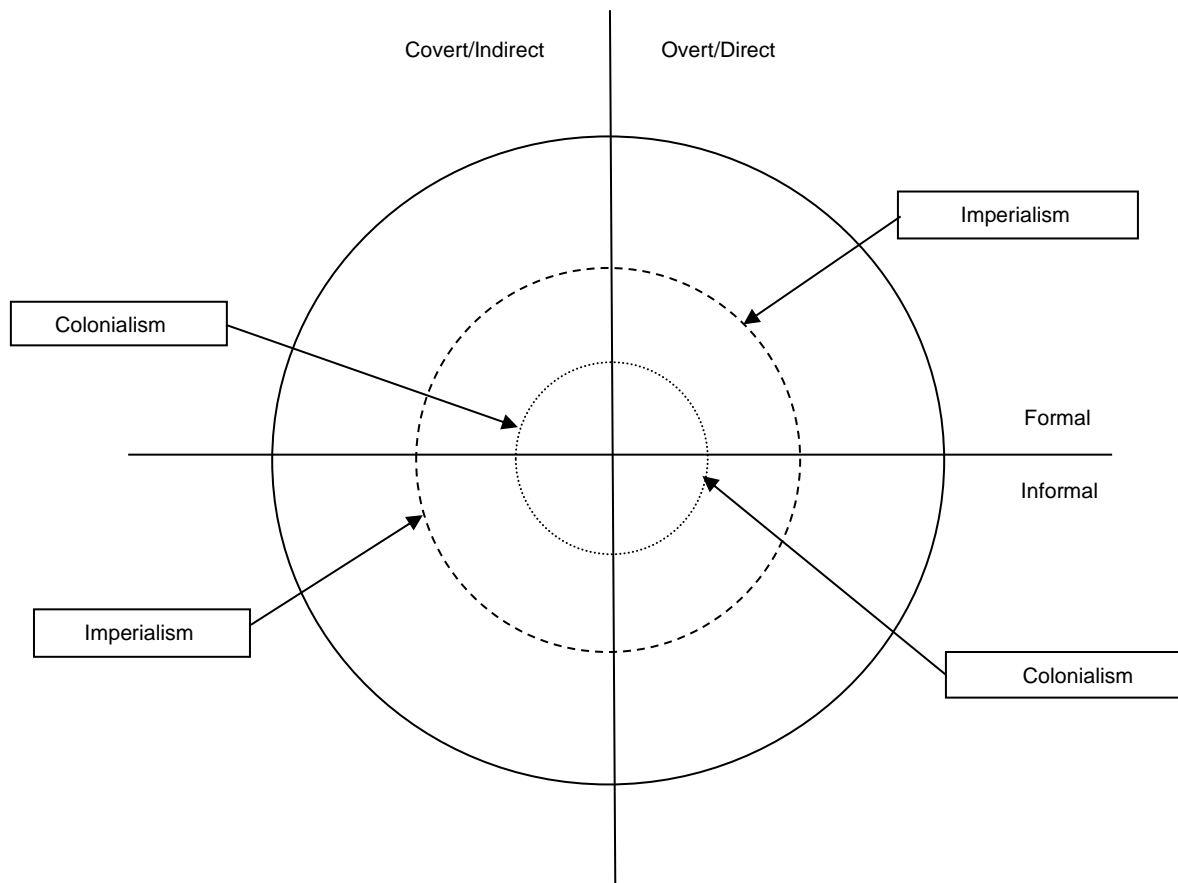
“But any nation, and even more so the Russian people, will always be able to distinguish true patriots from scum and traitors and will simply spit them out like an insect in their mouth, spit them onto the pavement. I am convinced that a natural and necessary self-detoxification of society like this would strengthen our country, our solidarity and cohesion and our readiness to respond to any challenge.”

“The so-called collective West and its fifth column are accustomed to measuring everything and everyone by their own standards. They believe that everything is for sale and everything can be bought, and therefore they think we will break down and back off. But they do not know our history and our people well enough” [sic] [emphasis BD] (“Putin Gives Speech on Ukraine, 2022, para. 53-54).

The more internationalist bourgeois constituencies within the Russian polity are, in this worldview, vulnerable to serving as de facto agents of informal, covert subversion serving Western power centers.

“Figure 1 is a schematic representation of the typologies of subjective perception of imperialism and colonialism by a citizenry demanding self-determination for the nation. In this conceptual framework, a nationalist values sovereign self-determination for the nation as a primary intensity motivation which shapes perception and behavior. Perceived threats to sovereignty are most obvious in over/formal direct imperial control, i.e., foreign conquest and occupation by an invading force. In the present era of near complete adult global political awareness, formal, direct imperialism generates the most resistance from local nationalists, raising the cost of the intervention. It was more common when popular awareness of the political sphere was limited to small percentage of the population, with the mass of the population politically engaged at most at the parochial, village level. To lessen costly nationalist resistance, interventions are masked with a patina of local agreement. For example, the foreign-imposed collaborationist ruler signs a formal legal agreement for military basing rights and legal immunity for the intervenor forces, as in 2001-21 Afghanistan. Obscuring foreign control further through avoidance of formal legal agreements while working through a collaborationist local elite, e.g., a traditional local ruling family, constitutes indirect, informal control” (DeDominicis, 2023).

Figure 1: “Variance in Perceptions of Foreign Policy” from *Foreign Policy Motivation: A General Theory and a Case Study*, by Richard W. Cottam, © 1977. Reprinted by permission of the University of Pittsburgh Press.



“Figure 1 is an inclusive typology of the forms of imperial control that reflects the rise mass popular political awareness in the modern era incentivizing occupying powers to engage in what today is called neo-colonialism. It consists of informal, indirect control to obscure the foreign ultimate authority over local government policy as so perceived by local nationalists. Other constituencies, e.g., business classes, may not resist this foreign domination if they perceive the latter as protecting and promoting their economic interests. The traditional elite threatened by the radical pro-change nationalistic forces may also collaborate with the foreign imperial power. The latter is a colonizing power if the local nationalist citizenry views it as aiming to assimilate and erase the nationalist’s primary, terminal self-identity community.” (DeDominicis, 2023).

Youth groups whom the Moscow authorities stereotypically perceive as vulnerable to Western consumerist offerings and lifestyle trends are also suspect as channels for subversion of the polity. For example, at the university level, the Russian authorities have announced the re-introduction of “Soviet-style compulsory military training courses and patriotic education were to be reintroduced to Russian universities” in 2023 (“Russian Universities,” 2023). Universities are also to generate curricula that will achieve ‘universal competence in countering extremism, terrorism and corrupt behaviour’ according to a directive from the Russian Education and Science Ministry (Ibid.).

The Ukraine conflict became the crisis inflection point for the Kremlin to break off the Russian polity from these alleged subversion channels and threats. The self-servingly perceived alliance with the Chinese authorities stems partly from the inference that a similar worldview prevails in Beijing. The latter heretofore had effectively exploited the national economic development opportunities that globalization provided to China. Beijing had perceived a derivative opportunity to exploit the latter stage of the US-Soviet Cold War which re-intensified in the latter half of the Carter administration. Bureaucratic inertia continued to allow Beijing to partner with the so-called developed countries in regulating globalization. The September 11, 2001, attacks led to US Middle East interventions in

response to them. These military occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan continued into the so-called Arab Spring regime challenges. They continued to distract Washington from intensifying its international influence competition with China even as rhetoric in the Obama administration included the so-called pivot to Asia. The disruption of Donald J. Trump's election and interference in alliances continued to divert US attention from Beijing. The focus continued towards Russia as the Mueller investigation into allegations of collusion between the Trump campaign in the lead-up to the 2016 US presidential election epitomized. Partly for domestic political electoral considerations, the Trump administration placed high-profile trade sanctions on China in January 2018 which the Biden administration has not reversed.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This paper has attempted to outline the prevailing views in Moscow, Brussels and Washington regarding so-called globalization's role in the Russo-Ukraine War. It highlighted the indirect nature of political competition and competitive political interference in third actors due to the imperatives of the nuclear setting. It highlighted that the European Union has not persuasively demonstrated its capacity to occupy a convincing balancer role in a multipolar international political system. It rather functions as a coordination mechanism supporting US global hegemony. Putin's Russia has consequently allied the Beijing to counter the diplomatic bargaining advantage of the so-called West. The latter seeks functionally to ally with Ukrainian nationalism against Russian irredentism.

The EU ideally should overcome US resistance and agree to the deployment of peacekeeping forces including Chinese forces along with ceasefire line in Ukraine. The remaining part of sovereign Ukraine should gain entry into NATO and the EU. Ukraine and Russia should integrate into the Chinese Belt and Road initiative. The main obstacle to this strategy for a durable ceasefire would likely be the US. This formula for a test would be part of a larger ceasefire strategy that included utilization of the UN Security Council institutional setting to include China in its implementation. Again, the main challenge here is the US; Washington appears unable to accept China's role as a formal party in European security arrangements.

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