

Department
of Political Science

Chair of Geopolitical Scenarios and Political Risk

The Ukraine war: from the special operation to the risk of a “great war”. Can the outcome of the conflict affect China-Taiwan relations?

Prof. Giuseppe Scognamiglio

Barbara Patrignani (646152)

THESIS SUPERVISOR

CANDIDATE

Correlator: Andrea Gilli

Academic Year: 2021/2022

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I: THE WAR IN UKRAINE: THE END OF PEACE IN EUROPE	8
1.1 FOREWORD: THE ANNOUNCED WAR	8
1.2 THE MINSK AGREEMENTS	11
1.3 A FAILED NATION-STATE?	15
1.4 THE OSCILLATION OF POLITICS BETWEEN THE WEST AND RUSSIA	16
1.5 THE OTHER WARS IN THE UKRAINE CONFLICT: INFIGHTING IN KIEV AND MOSCOW	18
1.5.1 <i>The internal war in Kiev</i>	19
1.5.2 <i>Moscow's internal war</i>	22
1.6 THE OTHER WORLD GENERATED BY THE WAR IN UKRAINE	26
1.6.1 <i>The Role of the Big Three</i>	27
1.6.2 <i>The day Europe lost its innocence</i>	29
1.6.3 <i>No collateral damage?</i>	30
CHAPTER II: THE NEW GEOPOLITICAL ORDER.....	34
2.1 ALTERATIONS TO THE WORLD'S ORDER	34
2.1.2 <i>Contrasting American and Russian interests</i>	35
2.2 THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE POST-COLD WAR SECURITY SYSTEM	36
2.3 WILL THE ATLANTIC ALLIANCE AND THE WEST REEMERGE?	39
2.4 THE LONELINESS OF THE WEST, THE GLOBAL SOUTH AND THE AMBIVALENCE OF CHINA	41
2.4.1 <i>China's position</i>	42
2.5 THE EUROPEAN PARADOX: INCREASING STRATEGIC AUTONOMY WHILE MAINTAINING CLOSER RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES	45
2.5.1 <i>REPowerEU</i>	46
2.6 A WAR OF TRANSITION: UNCERTAIN SCENARIOS	48
2.6.1 <i>War in Ukraine: Geopolitical hurricane</i>	49
2.6.2 <i>G20 Bali</i>	54
CHAPTER III: SANCTIONS: TYPES AND EFFECTS.....	57
3.1 WHAT SANCTIONS HAS THE EU ADOPTED SO FAR?	57
3.1.1 <i>Sanctions 2014</i>	58
3.1.2 <i>Impact of Sanctions in 2014</i>	60
3.2 SANCTIONS 2022 FROM FEBRUARY TO DECEMBER	62
3.2.1 <i>First Sanctions Package</i>	62
3.2.2 <i>Second Sanctions Package</i>	64
3.2.3 <i>Third Sanctions Package</i>	65
3.2.4 <i>Fourth Sanctions Package</i>	69
3.2.5 <i>Fifth Sanctions Package</i>	69
3.2.6 <i>Sixth Package</i>	70
3.2.7 <i>Seventh Package</i>	71
3.2.8 <i>Eighth Package</i>	72
3.2.9 <i>Ninth package</i>	73
3.3 BELARUS	74
3.4 IRAN	76
3.5 PROCEDURE FOR ADOPTING AND REVIEWING EU SANCTIONS	77
3.6 EFFECTIVENESS OF SANCTIONS	78
3.7 WHAT IMPACT HAVE THE SANCTIONS HAD ON RUSSIA?	79
3.8 CONSEQUENCES FOR THE ITALIAN AND EUROPEAN ECONOMIES	80
CHAPTER IV: TAIWAN IS NOT UKRAINE: THE INVASION OF FORMOSA IS NO MORE FEASIBLE TODAY THAN IT WAS IN THE PAST.	86
4.1 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	86

4.2 CHINA 2049	89
4.3 WHY DOES THE US CARE SO MUCH ABOUT TAIWAN?	92
4.4 TAIPEI'S STANCE TOWARDS THE WAR IN UKRAINE	94
4.5 WORST-CASE SCENARIO: AN UNLIKELY D-DAY	101
4.6 THE PLAUSIBLE CRISIS	104
4.7 REMOVING AMBIGUITIES	105
4.8 CONVENTIONAL INVASION IS NOT THE SCENARIO BEIJING WANTS	106
4.9 CONCLUSIONS: THE HYPOTHESIS OF AN ATTACK ON TAIWAN	107
CONCLUSIONS	110
SINTESI	121
BIBLIOGRAPHY:	128

Introduction

Those who in the last millennium thought, or rather hoped, that never again in the future would there be catastrophes like those of the two world wars with millions of deaths, unrelenting suffering and disastrous destruction, probably had not well appreciated that wars are an anthropological phenomenon. Imagining the possibility of extinguishing them is an unattainable utopia on Earth, where diverse peoples live, with their own passions, needs, interests and laws. History, unfortunately, is made up of wars with intervals of peace.

It is worth remembering that in the past, wars have been inextricably linked to territory: sometimes to defend one's own against the oppressor enemy, sometimes to gain that of others. This logic has disappeared with the domination of the market over the state, brought about by globalization, and the consequent weakening of competition between states, where territory has no longer been an object of defense or military acquisition, but rather a pole of attraction for wealth produced elsewhere, through highly expansive trade policies, as the Chinese economic rise demonstrates. In fact, China has seen its GDP grow by double-digit percentages, imposing itself on the strength of its productive capacity.

However, crises and exceptional events in recent years have shown the “wounds” of globalization, i.e. the limits of the economic model that has dominated the world for the past 30 years based on long supply chains and interdependence between countries, increasing social inequalities, environmental disaster, the absolute dominance of money at the expense of the fabric of values, the absolute power of the network giants, the crisis in the supply of resources and the relocation of the production of goods and services to geographical areas where labour costs are much lower than in the West. A situation as described above, on which weighs the responsibility of an uncritical adherence to this model.¹

Hence, the idea that the progressive unification of lifestyles and cultural symbols, coupled with the overwhelming power of trade, would make the world flat and peaceful has proved fallacious. This is demonstrated by the Russian invasion of Ukraine, which is clearly leading to a retreat, to the spasmodic search for new security of supply, where possible, in order to bring essential production back home and to avoid and/or mitigate dependence on others. In other words, we are facing a fragmentation of the previous economic model.²

With the Russian invasion of Ukraine, the fracture of the international order that emerged from the Cold War appears in all its evidence. This has brought out the return of empires as a consequence of the strengthening

¹ La fine della pace. *Limes* Edition 3/2022.

² *European Council* (2022). The impact on markets of Russia's invasion of Ukraine: the EU's response. Retrieved from: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/it/policies/eu-response-ukraine-invasion/impact-of-russia-s-invasion-of-ukraine-on-the-markets-eu-response/>

of autocracies and the weakening of democracies, as witnessed on the one hand by the two autocratic models of Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin; and on the other hand, by the crisis of democratic systems made evident by the progressive weakening of social classes, the impoverishment of millions of families and the worsening of social inequalities, as well as by the resurgence of inflation and the prospect of recession.³

Today, the international political scenario sees four great empires, i.e. governmental entities that express, albeit with different forms and methods, the will to extend their control to geopolitical areas larger than their own borders. These are the USA, Russia, China and to some extent Europe, on which, however, weighs the absence of a foreign policy framework and the presence of a Franco-German axis, predominant over the will of the other EU partners.

In this situation, we can say that Russia embodies, in the most traditional XIX-XX century way, the role of empire with an autocratic leader, holder of absolute power, an intransigent enemy of internal dissent, who has allocated huge economic resources to strengthen military armament, especially atomic armament, in order to redeem the humiliation of the USSR and its dissolution, recovering as far as possible, those territories that historically belonged to the great Russia, especially those inhabited by Russian-speaking minorities such as the Donbas.

All this, within the framework of a narrative aimed at contrasting the decadent Western civilization, according to which liberal ideas have become obsolete, with the Russian civilization that followed the Greeks, Byzantium and Eastern Christianity. Ultimately, Putin fears the spread of post-modern freedoms in Russia, he fears the network, customs and horizontal families. Therefore, Putin's neo-imperialism rests, on an ideological level, on the pillars of Russian patriotism, the Orthodox faith and the belief in the inescapable decadence of the West.⁴ Chinese policy, on the other hand, shows the face of its imperialism through the assertion, in the field of new technologies and market control, of the strength of lower cost products with more advanced technologies. Hence, the massive investments in vast and far-flung geographical areas, from the Indo-Pacific to Africa, but also in the USA and Europe. Among the objectives is also the creation of a logistical bridge in the Mediterranean with interest in the Italian ports of the Adriatic.

The common aim of Moscow and Beijing is to supplant the economic supremacy gained by the US in the last century and put an end to the unipolar world that emerged from the Cold War period but especially from the dissolution of the USSR. The American response to thwart Russo-Chinese ambitions has been to strengthen the framework of alliances, especially in Europe, after the Trumpian era had brought America back within the narrow confines of "First America". This is pursued on the one hand by exalting the commonality of values

³ *La fine della Pace*. Limes Edition 3/2022

⁴ Il caso Putin. Limes Magazine Edition 4/22

between the two continents and on the other militarily by strengthening the role of NATO, to stem the Russian threat in Eastern Europe, creating a network of new understandings in the Indo-Pacific area that bind on the security and economic front, the democracies of South Asia and the Far East to the Atlantic alliance, with the obvious aim of curbing Chinese ambitions in that area but also to prevent Taiwan from suffering the same fate as Ukraine.⁵

At the crossroads of these political-military tensions, today the most exposed continent is Europe, with a war in its bosom and negative economic-social repercussions caused by the sanctions adopted against Putin. The latter are damaging, beyond their actual effectiveness against Russia, the budgets of companies and families, especially in Italy, due to the considerable weight of its debt, the absence of effective industrial policies and necessary structural reforms, and a certain bureaucratic elephantiasis. But the challenge is evidently played out in Europe, which must choose between subalternity to the United States and its strengthening through economic-financial, military and energy integration among the states, from which alone can derive the growth of its value on a planetary level and its very possibility of playing its own role in the Ukrainian crisis competition that is independent of Washington and Kiev's wishes, in the knowledge that an agreement, without prejudice to the condemnation of aggression, can only be reached through “reciprocal renunciations” within the framework of the Minsk agreements not respected by either the Ukrainians or the Russians.⁶

Moreover, the excessive weakening of Russia would entail a dangerous strengthening of China into whose arms the remnants of the Russian empire would end up.

Among other things, the eventual dissolution of the Russian Federation would also undermine the reasons for the strong NATO presence in Europe, today justified by the potential threat of the Russian empire to neighbouring countries, especially Poland and the Baltic states. Therefore, the US interest, in the current situation, is to weaken Russia, yes, but not to push the conflict beyond this limit, because it could trigger, beyond the more abstract than concrete atomic threat, a disintegrative process that is difficult to control and certainly more violent than the current one, thus demonstrating the permanence of its geopolitical supremacy.

Hence, the very cautious attitude of the American political and military leadership not to push too hard on the accelerator, through the planning and control of military operations on Ukrainian territory, as well as through the judicious control in the dispatch of arms, both in terms of quality and quantity, also so as not to excessively deplete its military arsenal. This is because America might need them should a new theatre of war open up for the defense of Taiwan, whose objective Xi Ji Ping often continues to claim is to bring it back within the orbit

⁵ Elving R. (2022). Beijing and Moscow unite in efforts to redefine democracy itself. *Npr*. Retrieved from <https://www.npr.org/2022/02/06/1078432575/beijing-and-moscow-unite-in-efforts-to-redefine-democracy-itself>.

⁶ La fine della Pace. Limes Edition 3/2022

of the People's China, stifling the island's independence aspirations, whose interest in both strategic and commercial terms is common knowledge.

An evident sign of the indicated previous attitude on the part of the USA can be seen not only in the more or less secret resumption aimed at seeking the basis of a possible Russian-Ukrainian agreement to end the war, at least in the dimension of a “cease-fire”, but in the recent episode of the missile that fell on Polish territory. This was hastily traced back by the government in Kiev to an accelerated action of the Russian military forces, and was promptly traced back by America and also by Poland to its factual reality as an accident, probably caused by Ukrainian anti-aircraft fire, thus nipping in the bud the very dangerous invocations, received from some quarters, on the risk of the application of Articles 4 and 5 of the NATO Treaty. A scenario that would be catastrophic, not only for the parties involved but for the entire planet. This implies and requires a profound and careful analysis of the current geopolitical situation that has arisen from the Russian invasion against Ukraine and that has led to what is called “the big war” and which, in any case, will almost certainly lead to a new and different configuration of the dislocation of the economic and commercial interests of the actors of the “other” world, born from the overcoming of the previous ideological vision in which America-Russia predominated, in the current landing place of a multipolarism with the emergence of other geographical areas, especially in Asia and the Indo-Pacific, capable of playing, also due to their high demographic consistency, a significant role in the world scenario.⁷

In the meantime, the winter season is approaching and will probably mark a new phase in the Russian-Ukrainian military clash, made even more acute by the ongoing Russian reaction aimed at destroying energy infrastructures as a reaction to the defeats last suffered in the land conflict with the abandonment of some important and strategic territories such as Cherson.⁸

⁷ La grande Guerra. *Limes magazine* Edition 7 / 2022

⁸ Molinari, M. (2022). *Il ritorno degli imperi*. Rizzoli

CHAPTER I: The War in Ukraine: The End of Peace in Europe

The conflict that started in Eastern Europe following the invasion of Russian troops into Ukrainian territory on 24 February 2022, announced as a “special military operation”, immediately turned into a crisis of global dimensions and consequences. What has happened in Ukraine over the past 30 years is very complex. Only history will be able to shed light on the controversial events that have taken place. However, it all revolves around three fundamental concepts: limited sovereignty, the failure of the nation state, and the oscillation of politics between the West and Russia.

1.1 Foreword: The announced war

In order to fully understand the reasons for the Russian-Ukrainian conflict and the subsequent involvement of the Western world, which has made every effort to support the government in Kiev with heavy economic sanctions against Russia and the massive dispatch of weapons, the emotional rather than rational explanation of the existence of an “absolute evil”, later declined in the iconic expression “there is an aggressor and an aggressed”, does not seem sufficient. This reduces to simplicity a complex affair that needs to be investigated with the method of rationality and knowledge of the roots of war⁹.

Far from wishing to take a priori partisan positions between pro and anti-Putin, as always, the enemy of an effort aimed solely at cultivating analysis as the guiding thread of an orientation towards understanding, there is no doubt that the complexity of the situation leads to a continual seesaw between two conflicting aspects that must be kept separate¹⁰. On the one hand, the aspirations of the Ukrainians not to see their territory undermined and the suffering of the people, and on the other, the geopolitical reasons matured in history that have led Vladimir Putin to the extreme decision, certainly not justifiable, as it stands in open contrast to the principles of the 1945 UN Statute and the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which establish a minimal consensus of the international community on the intangibility of borders and the territorial integrity of states and the rights of people.¹¹

Therefore, the war launched by Putin represents a breach of international law and constitutes a serious threat to the entire framework of the global order, since it cannot be ruled out that its effects go far beyond the current conflict and may legitimise other possible future aggressions against countries committed to defending their

⁹ Masters, J. (2022). Ukraine: Conflict at the Crossroads of Europe and Russia. *Council on Foreign Relations*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/ukraine-conflict-crossroads-europe-and-russia>

¹⁰ Patel, M. (2022). What Russia means to Ukraine: A long complicated history. *The Indian Express*. Retrieved from: <https://indianexpress.com/article/research/what-russia-means-to-ukraine-a-long-complicated-history-7773826/>

¹¹ *Giurisprudenza Penale* (2022). L'invasione russa dell'Ucraina e i crimini di guerra. Retrieved from: https://www.giurisprudenzapenale.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/donnarumma_gp_2022_11.pdf

autonomy and independence from the other's reason of state¹². This is what could happen with regard to the island of Taiwan, should Taiwan declare its independence *de iure*, which would inevitably lead to the armed involvement of the US¹³.

The method of in-depth analysis is therefore necessary to avoid prejudices or insufficient representations, since every event and even more so war must be evaluated in the following stages. First the upstream causes of the event must be analyzed, then the event itself and finally the downstream consequences¹⁴. Mixing the aforementioned factors indiscriminately does not lead to logical conclusions, as this would lead to the interweaving of non-homogeneous figures of thought.

However, this analysis cannot but be preceded by a brief summary of the historical and geopolitical reality of Ukraine. The thread running through the latter is the Russian genealogy, which from Kievan Rus' to the Tsarist empire across the USSR leads to the present Russian Federation. Through this historical argument, Putin claims the right to a review of what are felt to be injustices inflicted on Russia after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. Indeed, what is called the Russification of Ukraine has its roots in the history of the past centuries¹⁵.

As early as 1667, after rural Orthodox Christian populations, fleeing the oppression of Catholic Poland in the 15th century, had formed themselves into “military communities of Cossacks” and settled in the Dnieper basin, the lands east of the Dnieper river were given to Russia (Truce of Andrusovo)¹⁶. Later, in 1793, Russia also obtained the territories to the west, at the expense of Poland, thus coming to exercise its power over the entire river basin.

In 1917, in the wake of the Bolshevik revolution, the population in the entire basin formed an independent republic, with its own parliament (Rada). In December of the same year, a Soviet government was formed in Karkov, which took over Kiev and forced the Rada to take refuge in Zitomir, which was dissolved in April 1918¹⁷.

¹² *Max-Planck-Gesellschaft* (2022). “Putin is abusing international law”. Retrieved from: <https://www.mpg.de/18442939/putin-is-abusing-international-law>

¹³ De Lisle, J. (2022). U.S.-Japan-Taiwan Dialogue: Deterrence, Defense, and Trilateral Cooperation. *Foreign Policy Research Institute*. Retrieved from: <https://www.fpri.org/article/2022/12/u-s-japan-taiwan-dialogue-deterrence-defense-and-trilateral-cooperation/>

¹⁴ Carciolo, L. (2022). *La pace è finita: così ricominciamo la storia in Europa*. Feltrinelli

¹⁵ Sciarrone, R. (2022). Ma davvero l’obiettivo di Vladimir Putin è “ricostruire l’Unione Sovietica”? *Geopolitica.info*. Retrieved from: <https://www.geopolitica.info/obiettivo-putin-ricostruire-unione-sovietica/>

¹⁶ *Encyclopedia Britannica* (2022). *Truce of Andrusovo | Russia-Poland (1667)*. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/event/Truce-of-Andrusovo>

¹⁷ *Valigia Blu* (2022). *Lezioni di Storia / Ucraina, un paese prigioniero del proprio passato?* Retrieved from: <https://www.valigiablu.it/lezioni-di-storia-ucraina/>

In 1921, the Soviet Republic of Ukraine was born and in 1945¹⁸ almost all territories inhabited by Ukrainians were absorbed into the Soviet Socialist Republic of Ukraine, a member of the USSR. With the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact in 1991, Ukraine became an autonomous republic.

Thus, the historical, political, cultural and linguistic link from the empire to the Soviet Union that united the Ukrainian and Russian peoples is undeniable. Hence the narrative of big Russia encompassing and embracing little Russia, and the consequent historiographical thread with which Putin explains his war of aggression as a legitimate preventive move against a possible, more serious and imminent conflict with NATO. In summary, it can therefore be said that Ukraine remained in the orbit of Russian and Soviet power from 1793 until 1991, when the Supreme Soviet formally declared the Soviet Union dissolved¹⁹. There are centuries of history in which Ukraine was one of the buffer states desired by the tsars for the security of the empire. Moreover, one must also take into account, both the recent events in Ukraine, which present an internal picture of strong laceration, as well as the presence of the country's two souls, the Russophilia and Russophobia, and the non-implementation of the Minsk Agreements.²⁰

Moscow's concern also stemmed from the fact that from 28 June to 10 July 2021, the Atlantic alliance had conducted the “Sea breeze” military exercise in the Black Sea and Odessa²¹, during which the British destroyer HMS Defender had crossed the waters of that sea claimed by Russia after the annexation of Crimea in 2014. Later in the second half of July, NATO conducted another “three swords” military exercise near Poland's border that also involved the United States, Poland itself and Lithuania. These events do not justify the invasion of Ukraine, but give an account of the strengthening in Putin of the idea that these were explicit provocations aimed at demonstrating that NATO was not afraid of its threats in Ukraine.²²

Even in the West, there was no shortage of premonitory stances that the expansion of NATO into the countries belonging to the former USSR might prove too aggressive even from the point of view of promoting liberal values against the illiberal Russian regime, which might have stimulated the Kremlin's reaction. As then happened with what was to be called the special military operation to denazify Ukraine and replace “President Zelens'kyj with good people”, as Silvio Berlusconi stated icastically recently.²³

¹⁸ History of Ukraine - the Soviet Union Period. *Ukrainetrek.com*. Retrieved from: <https://ukrainetrek.com/about-ukraine-history/soviet-union-period>

¹⁹ *History* (2022). Ukraine declares its independence. Retrieved from: <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/ukraine-declares-its-independence>

²⁰ Gulevich, V. (2021). Ukraine: Russophobia plus Russophilia. *Modern Diplomacy*. Retrieved from: <https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2021/05/24/ukraine-russophobia-plus-russophilia/>

²¹ Gorenburg, D. G. (2021). The HMS Defender Incident: What Happened and What Are the Political Ramifications? *Russia Matters*. Retrieved from: <https://www.russiamatters.org/analysis/hms-defender-incident-what-happened-and-what-are-political-ramifications>

²² Dixon, R. (2021). The U.S.-Ukraine Sea Breeze naval exercises, explained. *Washington Post*. Retrieved from: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/07/02/ukraine-us-military-black-sea/>

²³ *Il Foglio* (2022). Berlusconi: "Putin voleva sostituire Zelensky con un governo di persone perbene". Retrieved from: <https://www.ilfoglio.it/politica/2022/09/23/video/berlusconi-putin-voleva-sostituire-zelensky-con-un-governo-di-persone-perbene-4470295/>

It is a fact that after the special military operation failed, mainly due to the tenacity and resistance of the Ukrainian people and the substantial and decisive military aid of the Western world, the USA and England in the lead, a war broke out in Europe. Although this war it is called Russian-Ukrainian, in reality sees America in the foreground, with its massive military intervention and the other NATO countries in the perspective of defending Ukraine's right to maintain its territorial integrity. However, through an unconcealed objective of a substantial weakening of Russia and a possible fracture of the popular consensus that Putin still seems to enjoy.²⁴

It is thus that the so-called “security dilemma” has materialized, namely that a state, in this case the Russian Federation, in an attempt to dissuade governments from possible attacks has made concrete those very dangers from which it would have wanted to protect itself. What, in fact, Zelensky and Putin have provoked with their military exercises, deplored even by the Supreme Pontiff with the well-known expression “NATO's barking at Russia's doorstep has aroused Russia's wrath that I cannot say whether it was provoked, but facilitated perhaps yes”.²⁵

1.2 The Minsk Agreements

The war in Ukraine did not begin in 2022, but in 2014. For eight years the conflict has been at "low intensity," though not for the poor people who have suffered the consequences and especially for the approximately 15,000 casualties, including nearly 4,000 civilians²⁶. Prior to the large-scale Russian invasion on February 24, its fate hung diplomatically on the so-called Minsk agreements, the only text on which to date the Ukrainian government that emerged from the Euromaidan revolution and the Russian government have found a formal understanding, brokered by France and Germany.²⁷

In order to try to understand how the signing of the Minsk Protocol II came about, why there is talk of a second protocol, and thus be able to connect it with the situation today, it is important to briefly sketch the historical background of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict²⁸.

After 1991, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, relations between Moscow and Kyiv saw ups and downs. Tensions peaked in 2013, when the Ukrainian people unleashed a wave of protests against then-

²⁴ La fine della Pace. *Limes Edition* (2022)

²⁵ *SWI swissinfo.ch* (2022). Pope criticises Russia over cruelty in Ukraine but says war perhaps provoked. Retrieved from: <https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/pope-criticises-russia-over-cruelty-in-ukraine-but-says-war-perhaps-provoked/47671806>

²⁶ Prashad, V. (2022). Russia-Ukraine war began in 2014, not 2022. *MR Online*. Retrieved from: <https://mronline.org/2022/03/16/russia-ukraine-war-began-in-2014-not-2022/>

²⁷ *European Parliament* (2020). Retrieved from [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2020/646203/EPRS_ATA\(2020\)646203_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2020/646203/EPRS_ATA(2020)646203_EN.pdf)

²⁸ *Reuters* (2022). Factbox: What are the Minsk agreements on the Ukraine conflict? *Reuters*. Retrieved from: <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/what-are-minsk-agreements-ukraine-conflict-2022-02-21/>

President Janukovyč, who was very close to Putin²⁹. "Euromaidan" soon became a national movement, characterized by pro-Western and anti-Russian (but also far-right) elements³⁰. Citizens challenged Janukovyč's choice not to sign the Association and Free Trade Agreement (AA) with the European Union and accused him of being nothing more than a puppet in the hands of the Kremlin. Demonstrations forced him to flee³¹.

Not even a month after the protests broke out, the situation became even more complex: in March 2014, a referendum was organized in Crimea (deemed illegal by the Ukrainian Constitutional Court) expressing the will of the peninsula's predominantly Russian-speaking inhabitants to return under Moscow's control. In a predictable move, Putin welcomed the result of the consultation as a signal and declared the secession of the Republic of Crimea from Ukraine and its annexation to Russia³². At the same time, conflict flared up in Donbass, a pro-Russian region in the east: civil war began and the two provinces of Donetsk and Luhansk proclaimed themselves independent with Moscow's approval and the anger of Kyiv, which never accepted any of the upheavals of those months³³.

In an attempt to end hostilities, negotiations were initiated between the parties in Minsk, under the auspices of the OSCE. A first tranche took place in September 2014, the second (Minsk Agreements II) in February 2015. The first agreement was reached on September 5, 2014 by the so-called "Trilateral Contact Group on Ukraine," composed of representatives of Russia, Ukraine and the breakaway republics of Donetsk (DNR) and Luhansk (LNR). Supervised by an OSCE (Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe) spokesperson, the agreement included an immediate ceasefire, prisoner exchange, and Kyiv's commitment to grant more power to the separatist republics.³⁴

Despite diplomatic efforts, the fighting did not stop. The civil war continued, and even the implementation of a memorandum two weeks after the signing of the Protocol served little purpose. This new commitment included, among other things, the establishment of an OSCE observation mission in the Donbass region and a ban on offensive operations, but it still did little to stop the war.³⁵

For this reason, in February the negotiators returned to the negotiating table, once again in Minsk, to discuss a more effective and targeted package of measures. Thus, on February 15, 2015, the Minsk Protocol II was

²⁹ Ray, M. (2010). Viktor Yanukovich | Facts, Biography, & Flight to Russia. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Viktor-Yanukovich>

³⁰ Siciliano, G. (2022). Scontri tra Russia e Ucraina, tutto nasce dall'Euromaidan. *MasterX*. Retrieved from: <https://masterx.iulm.it/news/esteri/guerra-in-ucraina/scontri-tra-russia-e-ucraina-tutto-nasce-dalleuromaidan/>

³¹ *France 24* (2022). Ucraina: del Maidán a la guerra, ocho años de tensiones con Rusia. Retrieved from: <https://www.france24.com/es/rusia/20220228-rusia-ucrania-maidan-protestas-conflicto>

³² Pifer, S. (2019). Five years after Crimea's illegal annexation, the issue is no closer to resolution. *Brookings*. Retrieved from: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2019/03/18/five-years-after-crimeas-illegal-annexation-the-issue-is-no-closer-to-resolution/>

³³ *Crisis Group*. Conflict in Ukraine's Donbas: A Visual Explainer. Retrieved from: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/content/conflict-ukraines-donbas-visual-explainer>

³⁴ *Diritto Consenso* (2022). Gli accordi di Minsk. Retrieved from <https://www.dirittoconsenso.it/2022/03/23/gli-accordi-di-minsk/>

³⁵ *La guerra russo Americana*. Limes (2022).

signed by the heads of state of Russia, Ukraine, France and Germany³⁶. The initiative of the so-called "Normandy Quartet"³⁷ called for an immediate ceasefire, the removal of heavy weapons from the frontline and the effective establishment of an OSCE monitoring mission, the withdrawal of foreign forces and the resumption of dialogue on elections in Donetsk and Luhansk, and possible constitutional reform to grant more autonomy to the Donbass area.

Although the fighting stopped and the OSCE began its work, Russia has never actually acknowledged its role in the conflict. In addition, Kyiv has always refused dialogue with pro-Russian rebels, saying it will accept the holding of elections under the Protocol only once the occupied areas are liberated and demilitarized. The status of the Donbass has thus never been defined. For Kyiv, it should have the same autonomy as other Ukrainian regions; for Moscow, a special status with its own police force and judiciary. There is no doubt that the failure of the Minsk Agreements is one of the causes of the war. As hostilities rage, to find itself suspended is not only the future of the Donbass but that of all of Ukraine³⁸.

After the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, Ukraine became an independent state³⁹. A crossroads of cultures, peoples, civilizations and traditions, it is the gateway to Western Europe on the one hand and Central Asia on the other. Moreover, it is through Ukraine that gas pipelines that supply major European countries pass. For these reasons, during its independence experience, this Eastern European state was an emblematic case of democracy with limited sovereignty due to its strategic geopolitical and geo-economic position⁴⁰.

Both the Westerners, Americans and Europeans, and the Russians have tried from the beginning to influence Ukraine's choices and decisions, both in domestic and foreign policy, for different reasons but with the same objective: to impose their own hegemony over the country. For the Americans, it is a military hegemony in line with their desire to expand NATO to the east to "protect" all former Soviet states from the Russian threat. For the Europeans, on the other hand, it is a commercial hegemony aligned with their strategic choice to expand the single market of fundamental freedoms, single currency, rule of law, prosperity and democracy. Finally, it is an all-encompassing hegemony, economic, political and cultural, for the Russians, unable to tolerate the end of the Soviet Union and to see a fraternal people and a historically important territory recede.⁴¹

³⁶ *Crisis Group*. Conflict in Ukraine's Donbas: A Visual Explainer. Retrieved from: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/content/conflict-ukraines-donbas-visual-explainer>

³⁷ *Euractiv* (2015). Normandy quartet agrees to reinforcement of Ukraine OSCE mission. Retrieved from: www.euractiv.com. <https://www.euractiv.com/section/europe-s-east/news/normandy-quartet-agrees-to-reinforcement-of-ukraine-osce-mission/>

³⁸ Wolczuk, K. (2022). Russia's longstanding problem with Ukraine's borders. *International Affairs Think Tank*. Retrieved from: <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2022/08/russias-longstanding-problem-ukraines-borders>

³⁹ *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Ukraine - Independent Ukraine. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Ukraine/Independent-Ukraine>

⁴⁰ *Reuters* (2022). Russian gas flows to Europe via Ukraine fall after Kyiv shuts one route. Retrieved from: <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/requests-russian-gas-via-key-ukraine-transit-point-fall-zero-data-shows-2022-05-11/>

⁴¹ *Crisis Group* (2022) Reaffirming Ukraine's Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity at the UN. Retrieved from: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/global/reaffirming-ukraines-sovereignty-and-territorial-integrity-un>

Over the past three decades, so-called Western soft power has been countered by Russian interference in Ukrainian internal affairs. Moscow has assiduously tried to keep the country under its sphere of influence, with the aim of creating a state similar to Belarus. It has tried by all means: supplying gas and oil at privileged prices, paying off a large part of Ukraine's public debt and creating special relations with pro-Russian presidents. But even then, it failed, playing the special operation card to take back at least those parts of Ukraine with a strong Russian-speaking presence.⁴²

America, for its part, also accepting pressure from Ukraine tried to make it a member of NATO, perhaps not adequately assessing the risks this would entail. To better understand the issue, a small digression is necessary. It is not clear whether NATO enlargement to the east was a cause or a consequence of (potential) Russian aggression⁴³. In other words, it is unclear whether the enlargement was done solely to protect the Eastern countries from Russian attack, and thus should have acted as a deterrent, as atomic weapons did in the Cold War, or whether it was part of a broader plan designed to then prepare for a final attack on Russia. If the principle applies that the more nations are armed and possess weapons of mass destruction, the more utopian war becomes, as was the case during the Cold War period, one might consider enlargement to be right. But if enlargement is aimed at weakening Russia, considered the number one enemy after China, it could have undesirable effects, as shown by the current disastrous war whose outcome is difficult to predict today⁴⁴.

For its part, the European Union has promoted, out of commercial interests, the creation of a free trade area with Ukraine, with a view to its possible admission to the community, which is also useful to show that the democratic model could also work for the Slavic peoples⁴⁵. However, it should also be noted that, apart from general support for the Ukrainian cause, some countries, especially Germany⁴⁶, the Netherlands and the northern European countries, have privileged their own interests, especially in the energy field, with positions that are not always aligned with the EU countries. Even in Italy⁴⁷, the ties of some political parties with Putin's Russia have favoured dissenting positions, especially with regard to the supply of arms to Ukraine.

⁴² La fine della Pace. *Limes Edition* (2022)

⁴³ *NATO* (2022). NATO's response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Retrieved from: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_192648.htm

⁴⁴ La Russia cambia il mondo. *Limes* (2022)

⁴⁵ Disney, R., & Szyszczak, E. (2022). Ukraine's accession to the European Union: what difference would it make? *Economics Observatory*. Retrieved from: <https://www.economicsobservatory.com/ukraines-accession-to-the-european-union-what-difference-would-it-make>

⁴⁶ Campagnol, L. (2022). La questione energetica tedesca al tempo della guerra in Ucraina. *Geopolitica.info*. Retrieved from: <https://www.geopolitica.info/questione-energetica-tedesca-guerra-ucraina/>

⁴⁷ Poggioli, S. (2022). Italy has been a strong supporter of Ukraine — but that is starting to change. *NPR*. Retrieved from: <https://www.npr.org/2022/11/10/1135146431/italy-ukraine-support-military-aid-russia-war>

1.3 A failed nation-state?

The opposition between East and West, vaguely reminiscent of the Cold War, is probably the result of the ethno-linguistic, cultural and religious physiognomy of the Ukrainian people, essentially divided in half: the Ukrainian-speakers present in the north-western part of the country⁴⁸, partly Catholic, much more inclined to westernisation and open to a progressive Europeanisation of Ukraine, and the Russian-speakers living mainly in the south-eastern⁴⁹ territories, Orthodox, much closer to the Russian motherland and perhaps willing to one day rejoin it.⁵⁰

In particular, in 2012, the massive presence of ethnic Russian minorities in the country had led the pro-Russian President Viktor Yanukovich to follow a particular language policy by introducing the concept of a “regional language”. According to the legislation, in areas of the country where there is a minority of more than 10% speaking a language other than Ukrainian, the regional language enjoys equal status with the Ukrainian language and can be used as a vehicular language in schools and local administrative bodies. However, this choice, although legitimate, has created a further deep rift in the country, leading several regions to disown the Ukrainian language, one of the founding elements of a nation through which individual and collective identity is built.⁵¹

Thus, it is precisely the multi-national, multi-confessional and multi-lingual character that has led Ukraine to be conceived as a failed nation-state⁵², comparable in this to Iraq, Syria (difficult coexistence between Shiites and Sunnis) or Ireland (civil war between Catholics and Protestants). We are therefore faced with a country where for some time, the population has coexisted peacefully, but each faction has repeatedly tried, through politics and elections, to get the better of the other⁵³.

The concept of a nation-state may be considered anachronistic, yet there is no doubt that in order to exist, a state must coincide with a nation that has a common people, language, culture, history and ethnicity. According to these canons, the Ukrainian nation does not exist. For Ukrainians, their nation must speak Ukrainian and

⁴⁸ Walton, A. (2021). L'ultima parola | La guerra culturale di Kiev per far parlare l'ucraino ai suoi cittadini. *Linkiesta.it*. Retrieved from: <https://www.linkiesta.it/2021/06/ucraina-russo-lingua/>

⁴⁹ Walker, S. (2022). Enemy tongue: eastern Ukrainians reject their Russian birth language. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/04/enemy-tongue-eastern-ukrainians-reject-their-russian-birth-language>

⁵⁰ Constantin, S. (2022). Ethnic and linguistic identity in Ukraine? It's complicated. *EURAC Research*. Retrieved from: <https://www.eurac.edu/en/blogs/mobile-people-and-diverse-societies/ethnic-and-linguistic-identity-in-ukraine-it-s-complicated>

⁵¹ *Atlantic Council* (2018). The Truth Behind Ukraine's Language Policy. <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/the-truth-behind-ukraine-s-language-policy/>

⁵² *Vocal Europe* (2015). Is Ukraine a failed Nation-State? Retrieved from: <https://www.vocaleurope.eu/is-ukraine-a-failed-nation-state/>

⁵³ Surwillo, I., & Slakaityte, V. Ukraine is closer than you think. *DIIS*. Retrieved from: <https://www.diis.dk/en/research/ukraine-is-closer-than-you-think>

must have a history, a foundation myth that begins in the 9th century with Kievan Rus' and, after the dissolution of the USSR, continues with independence⁵⁴.

For Russian speakers, it is almost the opposite: the Ukrainian nation must speak Russian and its history is inextricably linked, first to the empire then to the Soviet Union and later to the Russian Federation. From what has just been said, one can understand both Janukovych's decision to introduce the regional language and glorify the Soviet past, and Porošenko's antithetical choice to erase the regional languages and dismantle all references to communism and the Soviet Union.⁵⁵

In a more democratically mature country, this issue would have been resolved with the concept of “autonomy”. Italy, for example, provides for the protection of linguistic minorities and has granted special status to five particular regions⁵⁶. In three of these, French (Valle d'Aosta), German (Trentino Alto Adige), and Slovenian (Friuli Venezia Giulia) are regularly spoken. Spain has done the same with the Autonomous Communities. In Catalonia, the Basque Country and Galicia, Catalan, Basque and Galician are spoken respectively. Article 3(3) of the Spanish Constitution even speaks of the richness of linguistic pluralism and the cultural heritage of multilingualism. Article 3(1)⁵⁷ enshrines a fundamental principle: “Castilian is the official language of the State. All Spaniards have the duty to know it and the right to use it”⁵⁸.

The duty to know it: that is the crux of the matter. Unfortunately, young people from the Russian ethnic minority in Ukraine have not had the opportunity to study Ukrainian, and this has led them to have big problems once they enter the working world.

1.4 The oscillation of politics between the West and Russia

The governments that have succeeded one another in Ukraine over time, more or less democratic, have had very marked positions, reflecting the centrifugal forces on the ground: on the one hand there have been governments with a clear Western, pro-European and to some extent Atlanticist orientation, on the other hand there have been pro-Russian governments more in tune with Moscow⁵⁹. The former have promised their voters membership in the European Union, the fight against corruption, the strengthening of democracy and the promotion of human rights. The latter, on the other hand, opted for maintaining the status quo, which entailed alignment with Moscow, a certain autocratic involution, repression of internal dissent and political opponents,

⁵⁴ Mankoff, J. (2022). Russia's War in Ukraine: Identity, History, and Conflict. *CSIS- Center for Strategic and International Studies*. Retrieved from: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/russias-war-ukraine-identity-history-and-conflict>

⁵⁵ Wolczuk, K. (2001). *The moulding of Ukraine: The constitutional politics of state formation*. Central European University Press.

⁵⁶ *Interreg- Italia Slovenia* (2020). PRIMIS - The protection of linguistic minorities in Italy. Retrieved from: <https://www.ita-slo.eu/en/all-news/news/primis-protection-linguistic-minorities-italy>

⁵⁷ *Queen's University*. Multiculturalism Policies in Contemporary Democracies. Retrieved from: University. <https://www.queensu.ca/mcp/national-minorities/resultsbycountry-nm/spain-nm>

⁵⁸ Mus, F., Vandemeulebroucke, K., D'Hulst, L., and Meylaerts, R. (2011). *La traduction dans les cultures plurilingues*. Artois Presses Université.

⁵⁹ *Il Post* (2022). Breve storia dell'Ucraina. Retrieved from: <https://www.ilpost.it/2022/02/26/ucraina-breve-storia/>

and little concern for rights. During the two pro-Russian presidencies, the two most important revolutions in contemporary Ukraine broke out: the Orange Revolution and Euromaidan. Although some analysts argue that they were finely orchestrated by the West in the grip of a pressing need to export, in this case consolidate, democracy. However, the first popular uprising arose to denounce the electoral fraud that had led to the election of pro-Russian President Viktor Janukovych. The second, which started in Maidan Square and spread throughout Ukraine, arose from the decision of the then President Viktor Janukovych to terminate the association agreement (a pre-accession procedure) with the European Union and the related free trade agreement⁶⁰.

Euromaidan was a controversial and ambiguous event⁶¹. It was interpreted by many as a great exercise in democracy, similar to the Arab Springs, in which the people took to the streets to oppose a government of corrupt despots. Others, on the other hand, interpreted it as a real neo-Nazi and Russophobic *coup d'état*, secretly organised by the CIA, to oust the pro-Russian Janukovych. Undoubtedly, among the demonstrators were people driven by neo-Nazi, right-wing extremist, ultranationalist and Russophobic ideologies, such as the Azov Battalion⁶², who took part in violent and deplorable acts such as the Odessa Massacre. However, it must be admitted that most of the protesters were peaceful and moved by a slight patriotic and nationalist sentiment.

While Ukraine was on the brink of civil war, as expected, Janukovyč was replaced by a nationalist, pro-Western, pro-European president, Peter Porošenko.⁶³

Porošenko's political agenda was very clear: gradual estrangement from the Russian sphere of influence, Ukraine's accession to the European Union and NATO, a language policy geared towards reinvigorating the primacy status of the Ukrainian language, and the cancellation of the autonomy of Russian-speaking minorities⁶⁴. It also began a process of erasing communist history from the country. Infighting and hostilities between Ukrainians and Russians intensified. Perhaps out of fear or perhaps out of opportunity, entire pro-Russian regions began to claim greater autonomy, even independence from Ukraine. In a military blitz, Putin invaded Crimea and annexed it to the Russian Federation⁶⁵. He then called a referendum to sanction the peninsula's effective union with Russia. However, the popular vote was not considered legal by the Ukrainian

⁶⁰ Wolczuk, K. (2001). *The moulding of Ukraine: The constitutional politics of state formation*. Central European University Press.

⁶¹ Kominko, S. (2021). Ukraine's nation-building journey and the legacy of the Euromaidan Revolution. *Atlantic Council*. Retrieved from: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/ukraines-nation-building-journey-and-the-legacy-of-the-euromaidan-revolution/>

⁶² Goncharenko, R. (2022). The Azov Battalion: Extremists defending Mariupol. *DW.com*. Retrieved from: <https://www.dw.com/en/the-azov-battalion-extremists-defending-mariupol/a-61151151>

⁶³ *Contact Ukraine* (2018). Brief History of Ukraine Since Independence. Retrieved from: <https://www.contactukraine.com/about/ukraine-since-independence>

⁶⁴ *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Ukraine - The Porošenko administration. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Ukraine/The-Porošenko-administration>

⁶⁵ Clinch, M. (2022). How Russia invaded Ukraine in 2014. And how the markets tanked. *CNBC*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cNBC.com/2022/01/27/how-russia-invaded-ukraine-in-2014-and-how-the-markets-tanked.html>

government⁶⁶. Incidentally, it resembles the referendum in Catalonia, which was also considered illegal and unconstitutional by the central government in Madrid.

Meanwhile, in the Donbass, two regions, in a swift Moscow-backed coup, proclaimed themselves independent. They are the Donetsk People's Republic and the Luhansk People's Republic. Emulating the Crimeans, they too rejoined the Russian Motherland. Thus, began a low-intensity conflict between paramilitary groups. A kind of proxy war between the West and Russia⁶⁷.

As Porošenko's popularity collapsed due to his austerity policies and the serious allegations of corruption against him, defeated in the 2019 presidential elections, Volodymyr Zelenskyj was elected to the presidency⁶⁸: a Ukrainian comedian of Jewish and Russian-speaking origin, famous, among other things, for starring in a television series entitled “Servant of the People”, as a history professor who decides to become president by challenging the Ukrainian oligarchs. Paradoxically, Zelenskyj was actually elected president of Ukraine with the fourfold objective of reactivating the EU and NATO accession procedure, fighting corruption, normalising the serious situation in the Donbass and reorganising language policy.⁶⁹

1.5 The other wars in the Ukraine conflict: infighting in Kiev and Moscow

With the start of the Russian military intervention in Ukraine on 24 February 2022, ordered by President Vladimir Putin, it became evident that there were conflicts, divisions and clashes of interests between the various warring factions within the centres of power in Kiev and Moscow respectively. These tensions increased as the military confrontation in Ukraine progressed and could affect the final outcome of the conflict and the future of both states. One can therefore speak of two parallel conflicts: the first, the Ukrainian military war, which is being fought in the Ukrainian theatre of operations between Ukraine and its allies against the pro-Russian forces in Lugansk and Donetsk, backed by the Russian armed forces; the second, the internal wars of a political nature, some of them pre-existing, which are being fought in the spheres of power in the capitals of Kiev and Moscow. These arise or escalate as a direct consequence of Russian military intervention and, in the case of Russia, as a consequence of the subsequent international sanctions imposed against it at the instigation of the United States and the European Union as a result of this intervention.

⁶⁶ Сурган, О. (2022). The 5 reasons why the "referendum" in Crimea is illegal. *Суспільне Крим*. Retrieved from: <https://crimea.suspilne.media/en/articles/45>

⁶⁷ *Nationalia* (2015). Constitutional reform, autonomy for Donetsk and Luhansk foreseen in Ukraine ceasefire deal Retrieved from: <https://www.nationalia.info/new/10460/constitutional-reform-autonomy-for-donetsk-and-luhansk-foreseen-in-ukraine-ceasefire-deal>

⁶⁸ Scott, A. (2019). Ucraina, il comico Zelens'kyj al ballottaggio con Porošenko. *Il Sole 24 ORE*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/ucraina-comico-Zelens'kyj-ballottaggio-Porošenko--ABn0kejB>

⁶⁹ Brill. Porošenko, Petro. Retrieved from: https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/international-year-book-and-statesmens-who-s-who/Porošenko-petro-SIM_person_53199

1.5.1 The internal war in Kiev

Following the Russian military intervention in Ukraine, tensions and clashes have increased between two power factions in the Ukrainian camp: on the one hand the pragmatists and on the other hand the ultranationalists. At the same time and on a second level, another internal war within the ultranationalist faction is emerging: that between the groups of the so-called new right (radical right) and the extremists⁷⁰.

First, there is an internal war between the pragmatic front, whose visible leaders are people from President Volodymyr Zelensky's inner circle, such as current Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal, Defence Minister Oleksii Reznikov, Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba and Mykhailo Podolyak, a member of the negotiating team who is part of the influential group of presidential advisors, and the ultranationalist sector, which has great weight within the organs and structures of the Ministries of Defence and Interior, as well as within the Security Service of Ukraine (SBU intelligence). The members of the ultranationalist sector mostly come from extra-parliamentary political parties or ultranationalist militias that have been progressively integrated into the Ukrainian Armed Forces, National Guard and Territorial Defence Forces, as well as internal security forces. This faction has great mobilising power in the streets and a highly radicalised support base.⁷¹

Secondly, there is an internal war within the heterogeneous, broad and diverse ultranationalist sector⁷², between the faction that is called the New Right, which ranges from a part of the Right Sector (Pravy Sektor) and the National Corps to small extra-parliamentary parties, such as the more liberal Democratic Axe, among others, and the extremist faction, whose main representatives include the Svoboda party, a part of the Azov Battalion or C-14 group.⁷³

The former, the new right, evolve towards the Polish model of nationalism, i.e. they see themselves as Ukrainian nationalists with conservative, anti-communist and anti-Nazi ideas. Therefore, paradoxically, they aim to gradually “de-Nazify” the Ukrainian nationalist movement⁷⁴ in order to give it a less radicalised image both at home and abroad and thus gain presence and support within Ukrainian society⁷⁵. In their view, the external projection of Ukraine and the defence of its interests and sovereignty cannot be associated with groups

⁷⁰ Likhachev, V. (2018). Far-right Extremism as a Threat to Ukrainian Democracy. *Freedom House*. Retrieved from: https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2020-02/ukraine%20brief%20final_1.pdf

⁷¹ *Wilson Center*. The Map of Political Forces in Today's Ukraine. Retrieved from: <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/map-political-forces-todays-ukraine>

⁷² Morris, L. et al. (2022). «Right-wing Azov Battalion emerges as a controversial defender of Ukraine». *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/04/06/ukraine-military-right-wing-militias/>

⁷³ Fernandez, F. (2018). «C14: la extrema derecha ucraniana continúa su expansión». *Descifrando la Guerra*. Retrieved from: <https://www.descifrandolaguerra.es/c14-la-extrema-derecha-ucraniana-continua-su-expansion/>

⁷⁴ Sengupta, K. (2022) «Nationalists not extremists: Pravy Sektor deny radicalism claims and say they want to “serve” Ukraine». *The Independent*. Retrieved from: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-pravy-sektor-extremism-b2011598.html>

⁷⁵ Kramer, A. (2022). «Armed nationalists in Ukraine pose a threat not just to Russia». *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/10/world/europe/ukraine-nationalism-russia-invasion.html>

that openly display neo-Nazi symbolism and support for national socialist ideology. This entails a clash with the extremist sector of ultranationalism, caused by the divergent vision of how the state model of Ukraine should be in the future.⁷⁶

Thus, in contrast to the new right, the extremist faction⁷⁷, a minority but with some weight within the Armed Forces and some state security structures and with a strong presence in the south-eastern part of Ukraine, upholds national socialist and anti-Semitic ideas and fully vindicates the historical figures of Stepan Bandera and Roman Shukhivych⁷⁸. Meanwhile, the New Right partially glorifies them, ignoring the intermittent period of collaboration of the Bandera-led Organisation of Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN) faction and the Ukrainian Insurgent Army (UPA) with Nazi Germany in World War II.

For all these reasons, in addition to coping with the Russian invasion and leading efforts to gain as much support as possible abroad, President Zelens'kyj has to manage this internal war between the various factions, whose current main points of disagreement and friction are the negotiations with Russia, Ukraine's membership in the European Union and NATO, and defence policy, in terms of the military planning and strategy implemented by the government to cope with Russian military intervention in the Ukrainian theatre of operations.

The position of the pragmatists is to keep all avenues of negotiation open with Russia to end hostilities, but with clear red lines⁷⁹. In return for the withdrawal of Russian troops from Ukrainian territory, they are open to negotiating a new agreement: Minsk III, which would include, once again, the possibility of establishing special autonomy for the provinces of Lugansk and Donetsk within Ukraine⁸⁰, as well as the renunciation of the Kiev government to join NATO in the short term, provided that a group of states would take over its security in return.⁸¹

⁷⁶ *Reporting Radicalism* (2011). C14 - Radical right-wing group with youth camps, paramilitary unit and history of violence. Retrieved from: <https://reportingradicalism.org/en/dossiers/groups/c14-radical-right-wing-group-with-youth-camps-paramilitary-unit-and-history-of-violence>

⁷⁷ Karatnycky, A. (2018) «Ukraine, Anti-Semitism, Racism, and the Far Right». *Atlantic Council*. Retrieved from: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/ukraine-anti-semitism-racism-and-the-far-right/>

⁷⁸ Cohen, J. (2018). «Ukraine's neo-Nazi problem». *Reuters*. Retrieved from: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-cohen-ukraine-commentary-idUSKBN1GV2TY>

⁷⁹ *UKRINFORM* (2022). «Ukraine must use every opportunity to negotiate with Russia until war ends». Retrieved from: <https://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-ato/3465782-president-ukraine-must-use-every-opportunity-to- negotiate-with-russia-until-war-ends.html>

⁸⁰ Allan, D. (2022). «The Minsk Conundrum: Western policy and Russia's war in Eastern Ukraine». *Chatham House*. Retrieved from: <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2020/05/minsk-conundrum-western-policy-and-russias-war-eastern-ukraine-0/minsk-2-agreement>

⁸¹ Brennan, M. (2022) «Full transcript: Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal on “Face The Nation”». *CBS News*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/denys-shmyhal-transcript-face-the-nation-04-24-2022/>

On the contrary, they claim the right of Ukraine, as a sovereign state, to decide on EU membership. In fact, the application for such a process has already been submitted⁸². As for Crimea, the pragmatists do not give up its sovereignty at all⁸³. However, President Zelensky claims that Ukraine will leave the negotiating table if pro-Russian forces and Russia organise referendums in the areas under their control on Ukrainian territory to join the Russian Federation. This faction also has in mind the negotiation scenario that could open up in a post-Putin Russia that would make no concessions to Moscow possible.

At the same time, the pragmatists adopt a defensive stance in the face of the military offensive of the pro-Russian militias in Lugansk and Donetsk and the Russian Armed Forces. The pragmatists realise that without more military assistance from NATO and the EU they will hardly be able to stop and militarily defeat in the Donbas and south-eastern Ukraine a far superior enemy in terms of military capabilities⁸⁴. They are therefore trying to buy time and are counting on intensified military support. At the same time, the international sanctions adopted against Russia should force the Moscow government to make concessions at the negotiating table.

The position of the ultranationalists clashes with that of the pragmatists.⁸⁵ They oppose any concessions by President Zelensky, especially regarding the special status of the Donbas, and advocate ending negotiations with Russia, demanding its complete withdrawal from Ukrainian territory, including Crimea. Therefore, they advocate a more offensive and all-out war position in the theatre of Ukrainian operations, in order to achieve the military defeat of Russia and the pro-Russian militias. In this sense, the New Right demands more support from European states and NATO in terms of military capabilities to achieve its goal. The New Right faction is also in favour of Ukraine's right, as a sovereign state, to freely decide whether or not to join NATO and the EU, a position that brings it closer to the pragmatists, but distances and differs from the position of the extremist faction, which advocates a sovereign and free Ukraine for Ukrainians alone, without external interference and not being part of NATO or the EU.⁸⁶

The internal war and tensions between the factions escalated with the dismissal by President Zelens'kyj of Generals Naumov Andriy Olehovych and Kryvoruchko Serhiy Oleksandrovyh, attached to the Internal

⁸² RTVE (2022). «Ucrania entrega la solicitud para ser candidato a la adhesión a la Unión Europea». Retrieved from: <https://www.rtve.es/noticias/20220418/ucrania-formulario-adhesion-union-europea/2333664.shtml>

⁸³ UKRINFORM (2022). «Ukraine's independence, territorial integrity, sovereignty non-negotiable». Retrieved from: <https://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-politics/3466241-yermak-ukraines-independence-territorial-integrity-sovereignty-nonnegotiable.html>

⁸⁴ BBC (2022). «Kiyv's allies pledge more weapons to help win war». Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-61155035>

⁸⁵ M. Risyad Sadzikri (2021). Too Far, yet “Unstoppable”: The Story of Ultranationalism in Ukraine. *Kontekstual*. Retrieved from: <https://kontekstual.com/too-far-yet-unstoppable-the-story-of-ultranationalism-in-ukraine/>

⁸⁶ Wilson Center. The Role of Ultra-Nationalism in Conflict and Crisis: Russia, Ukraine and the EU. Retrieved from: <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/event/the-role-ultra-nationalism-conflict-and-crisis-russia-ukraine-and-the-eu>

Security Service Department, for “treason” at the end of March this year⁸⁷. The assassination, on 5 March in Kiev, of Denis Kireev, a member of the first Ukrainian negotiating group with Russia, accused by the SBU of treason and links with pro-Russian sectors; and the confrontation between pragmatists and ultranationalists over decisions taken concerning the port city of Mariupol and the defence of the Donbas territory⁸⁸.

In the latter case, the ultranationalists asked Zelensky to send support units and reinforcements to break through the encirclement of pro-Russian militias and the Russian Armed Forces in Mariupol, the extremists' symbolic city, receiving a negative response. As a result, both the New Right and the extremists accused the Ukrainian government and the pragmatists of “handing over” Mariupol to the pro-Russian Donetsk militias and Russia, thus “sacrificing” part of the Azov Battalion present in the city's defence. Indeed, on 10 April, an Azov commander, who was in the last pockets of resistance in the city's industrial zone, branded the politicians in Kiev as traitors for not giving enough help in a video posted on social media⁸⁹.

1.5.2 Moscow's internal war

The “special military operation” to “denazify” and “demilitarize” Ukraine ordered by Russian President Vladimir Putin and the international sanctions imposed by the United States and the European Union against Russia also have serious consequences for Russia's domestic politics. This presidential decision has thus led to an escalation of internal warfare in Moscow's power centres, not only between the siloviki and the civilians - the two classic factions that have been competing for power since Vladimir Putin took office as prime minister at the end of Boris Yeltsin's presidency in August 1999, but also in the internal politics of the Russian Federation.⁹⁰ This has also spilled over to the descendant generations of both factions, causing an intra-generational war between the continuists, or “mini-Putin”, and the open, or “mini-Yeltsin”⁹¹.

Relations between the siloviki⁹², a faction led by President Putin himself and whose members mostly come from the armed forces, security and intelligence agencies, and the civiliki⁹³, a faction composed of more

⁸⁷ Wall, R. (2022). «Zelensky fires two Generals for being “traitors”», *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from: <https://www.wsj.com/livecoverage/russia-ukraine-latest-news-2022-04-01/card/president-zelensky-fires-two-generals-cASwBg7pfy4FKlh2f25t>

⁸⁸ B., Dave (2022). «“Hero” Ukraine peace negotiator shot dead amid claims he was double agent», *Daily Mirror*. Retrieved from: <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/hero-ukraine-peace-negotiator-shot-26398152>

⁸⁹ *Мировое обозрение* (2022). Командир Азова в Мариуполе УМОЛЯЕТ о помощи - кончилась даже еда! Последние сводки из Мариупольского котла 10 апреля. Retrieved from: <https://tehnovar.ru/350331-Komandir-Azova-v-Mariupole-UMOLYaET-o-pomoschi-konchilasy-daghe-eda-Poslednie-svodki-iz-Mariupolyskogo-kotla-10-aprelya-15-video2022.html>

⁹⁰ Lieven, A. (2022). Inside Putin's circle — the real Russian elite. *Financial Times*. <https://www.ft.com/content/503fb110-f91e-4bed-b6dc-0d09582dd007>

⁹¹ Gusak, D. and Servitja Roca, X. (2013). «La voz de los futuros líderes rusos», *Esglobal*. Retrieved from: <https://www.esglobal.org/la-voz-de-los-futuros-lideres-rusos/>

⁹² Dutton, J. (2023). Who are the "Siloviki"? Russia's elite security faction. *Newsweek*. Retrieved from: <https://www.newsweek.com/who-are-siloviki-russias-elite-security-faction-1775796>

⁹³ Rivera, D. and Werning Rivera, S. (2018). The Militarization of the Russian Elite under Putin. *Routledge*. Retrieved from: <https://academics.hamilton.edu/documents/Rivera%20and%20Rivera,%20The%20Militarization%20of%20the%20Russian%20Elite,%20Prob%20of%20Post-Comm%202018.PDF>

technical and bureaucratic profiles in administration and diplomacy, have never been easy. A key figure in maintaining a certain balance between the two factions has been Dmitry Medvedev⁹⁴, former President, former Prime Minister and current deputy chairman of the Security Council of the Russian Federation. However, this balance⁹⁵ seems to have broken down and is in a critical situation after the launch of the “special military operation”. The main current points of friction are the war in Ukraine and the concept of Greater Russia, i.e. Russian foreign and security policy, international sanctions and relations with the West, as well as the vision of the post-Putin Russia scenario and the succession to the presidency.

The siloviki and hard-line continuists have broad support and a presence in the intelligence community, security agencies, and a section of diplomacy formed both inside and outside Russia, as well as within the Russian Armed Forces, where the group of “Syria Fellows” stands out, a new generation of military personnel and strategists who already occupy the middle and upper ranks of the structure. Moreover, the members of the “Syria Fellows” group are said to be the protégés of a rising figure in Moscow's power circles: General Alexander Dvornikov⁹⁶, the new head of military operations in Ukraine since 9 April and a key player in the planning and development of the Russian military intervention in Syria.⁹⁷

This faction promotes the Greater Russia project and the defence of national interests in the “near abroad”, using hard (military) power if necessary⁹⁸. Therefore, it is in favour of Russia's military intervention in Ukraine, not only to defend the rights of the pro-Russian and Russian-speaking community in the Donbas, which are included in the Military Doctrine of the Russian Federation and the fulfilment of which is the obligation of the president as commander-in-chief of the Armed Forces⁹⁹, but also because eastern and southern Ukraine are part of the New Russia that is part of the Greater Russia project¹⁰⁰.

In this direction, the faction believes that the victory in the war in Ukraine and the control of these territories give Russia, as a revisionist power, a global projection that goes far beyond regaining its power as an expeditionary force with the intervention in Syria; they signify the beginning of the “return” of Greater Russia and a new international order that openly challenges the United States, using hard balancing or military power

⁹⁴ Ray, M. (2008). Dmitry Medvedev | Facts & Biography. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Dmitry-Medvedev>

⁹⁵ *Stratfor* (2012). Russia's Shifting Political Landscape, Part 2: Breakdown of the Kremlin Clans. Retrieved from: <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/russias-shifting-political-landscape-part-2-breakdown-kremlin-clans>

⁹⁶ Rathbone, J. P. (2022). «Military briefing: Alexander Dvornikov, Russia's new commander in Ukraine». *Financial Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ft.com/content/7f90a244-f1da-4483-ab73-c80fa7248523>

⁹⁷ Rivera D.W. and Rivera S.W. (2018) The Militarization of the Russian Elite under Putin. *Routledge*. Retrieved from: <https://academics.hamilton.edu/documents/Rivera%20and%20Rivera,%20The%20Militarization%20of%20the%20Russian%20Elite,%20Prob%20of%20Post-Comm%202018.PDF>

⁹⁸ Trenin, Dmitri (2021). «Russian Foreign Policy: Shifting gears». *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. Retrieved from: <https://carnegiemoscow.org/commentary/85827>

⁹⁹ Bowen, A. (2020) «Russian Armed Forces: Military Doctrine and Strategy». *Congressional Research Service*. Retrieved from: <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/row/IF11625.pdf>

¹⁰⁰ Torrico, E. and Piantadosi, G. (2022). «Novorosiya: el sueño zarista detrás de la guerra de Putin», *El Confidencial*. Retrieved from: https://www.elconfidencial.com/mundo/europa/2022-04-02/rusia-putin-novorossiya-guerra-ucrania-donbass_3401511/

to do so; they represent a heavy defeat for the superpower of the international system, the United States and NATO, in its goals of a policy of containment of Russia, and a heavy defeat for the superpower of the international system in the post-Soviet space¹⁰¹.

In this sense, for this faction, the Russian homeland and its values¹⁰² are more important and are above the international sanctions approved by the West against Russia, the economic interests of certain sectors, such as the oligarchs, and any kind of negotiation that would make Russia give in to their positions. For this reason, once the “special military operation” has begun, they believe there is no point in continuing to negotiate with the Kiev government unless it capitulates. Furthermore, they call on the Russian people to make an effort, and sacrifice by presenting this war as a “great patriotic war”, i.e. for the survival of the Russian Federation.¹⁰³

At the same time, they advocate a Russian economy that turns completely towards the East (Asia-Pacific), Africa, Latin America and the strategic partners and allies that oppose international sanctions against Russia, e.g., the other BRICS states (Brazil, India, China and South Africa)¹⁰⁴: in essence, a return to the Primakov Doctrine and its extended “strategic triangle”¹⁰⁵. Finally, they argue that to ensure the realisation of the Greater Russia project and its strengthening in the future post-Putin era, there can only be one path: continuism.¹⁰⁶

For its part, the civiliki faction, with its open or “mini-eltsin” descendants, is fuelled by a part of the new generation of technicians within the administration, government bodies and the diplomatic corps. In turn, some of the so-called Russian oligarchs, such as Vagit Alekperov, founder and former chairman of Lukoil; Oleg Tinkov, founder of Tinkoff Bank, among other enterprises; Mikhail Fridman, founder of Alfa Bank, and Alexei Mordashov, chairman of Severstal, belong to this faction¹⁰⁷. This latest joining of the frontrunners has led them to be branded as traitors to Mother Russia by the continuists, who accuse them of putting money and

¹⁰¹ Hill, F. (2022) «Russia’s assault on Ukraine and the international order: Assessing and bolstering the Western response». *Brookings*. Retrieved from: <https://www.brookings.edu/testimonies/russias-assault-on-ukraine-and-the-international-order-assessing-and-bolstering-the-western-response/>

¹⁰² Cooper, Julian (2021). «Russia’s updated National Security Strategy». *NATO Defense College*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ndc.nato.int/research/research.php?icode=704>

¹⁰³ Pifer, S. (2022). The Russia-Ukraine war and its ramifications for Russia. *Brookings*. Retrieved from: <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-russia-ukraine-war-and-its-ramifications-for-russia/>

¹⁰⁴ Lissovolik, Y. (2022). «Can BRICS underpin a New World Order?». *Russian International Affairs Council*. Retrieved from: <https://russiancouncil.ru/en/analytics-and-comments/analytics/can-brics-underpin-a-new-world-order/>

¹⁰⁵ Rumer, E. (2019). «The Primakov (not Gerasimov) Doctrine in action». *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. Retrieved from: https://carnegieendowment.org/files/Rumer_PrimakovDoctrine_final1.pdf

¹⁰⁶ S. Kainikara (2019). Russia’s Return To The World Stage: The Primakov Doctrine. *Eurasia Review*. Retrieved from: <https://www.eurasiareview.com/05112019-russias-return-to-the-world-stage-the-primakov-doctrine-analysis/>

¹⁰⁷ *The Guardian* (2022). «Russian tycoon Oleg Tinkov denounces “insane war” in Ukraine», *The Guardian*. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/apr/20/russian-tycoon-oleg-tinkov-denounces-insane-war-in-ukraine>

their own well-being before that of the motherland, thus distancing themselves from those who helped them gain their status at a time when they are needed at President Putin's side.¹⁰⁸

The most open-minded are upset by Russia's military intervention in Ukraine, which they oppose. They believe that it is not worth jeopardising the Russian economy and the welfare of its citizens for the territory of the Donbas and the Putinist expansionist idea of Greater Russia, and even less that this has led to the severing of political and economic relations with Western European states, which this faction considers Russia's natural and strategic partners. Therefore, its members oppose Putin's expansionist foreign policy and bellicose actions in the “near abroad”. They support a foreign policy that prioritises peace and diplomacy to resolve conflicts with NATO and its expansion, as well as placing economic and trade issues and the resumption of relations with the West at the centre¹⁰⁹.

In this sense, they promote an end to the war in Ukraine through new negotiations to establish an agreement, Minsk III. In return, international sanctions should be lifted and full relations with the states that applied them should be gradually re-established¹¹⁰. Finally, they envisage a post-Putin state model that is more open to democratic and economic reforms, and with a new proposed security architecture for Europe - taking up the blueprint presented by Medvedev in 2008¹¹¹, bringing Russia closer to its European counterparts and combating mutual perceptions of enemies: an open model closer to Yeltsin and further away from Putin.

These differences between the factions emerged as soon as the military intervention in Ukraine began on 24 February¹¹². The first clashes in this internal war occurred when some of the aforementioned Russian oligarchs, such as Fridman and Alekperov and later Tinkov and Mordashov, opposed the decision to take military action in Ukraine. A month later, within the government, Anatoli Chubais, Putin's special representative and long-standing high-ranking official during the Yeltsin era, resigned over his disagreement with President Putin's decision¹¹³. A very significant case in terms of domestic politics is that of Natalia Poklonskaya, former Duma deputy and former Prosecutor General of the annexed Republic of Crimea, who stated that the Z and V, used by the Armed Forces and pro-Russian militias in the military intervention, are symbols of grief and that she hopes for a solution to the conflict as soon as possible¹¹⁴.

¹⁰⁸ *Eurasia Review* (2019). Tracing the rise of Medvedev's network - Russia's "civiliki". Retrieved from: <https://www.intellinews.com/tracing-the-rise-of-medvedev-s-network-russia-s-civiliki-500013934/?archive=bne>

¹⁰⁹ Melnikova, J. (2022). «The Europe of political realism and the future of NATO – back to basics?». *Russian International Affairs Council*. Retrieved from: <https://russiancouncil.ru/en/analytics-and-comments/analytics/the-europe-of-political-realism-and-the-future-of-nato-back-to-basics/>

¹¹⁰ Timofeev, I. (2022). «Russia-West: Is it possible to lift the sanctions?». *Russian International Affairs Council*. Retrieved from: <https://russiancouncil.ru/en/analytics-and-comments/analytics/russia-west-is-it-possible-to-lift-the-sanctions/>

¹¹¹ Shchedrov, O. (2008). «Russia comes in from Cold, Medvedev says in Berlin». *Reuters*. Retrieved from: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-medvedev-security-idUSBAT00225020080605>

¹¹² Il caso Putin (2022). *Limes*

¹¹³ *BBC* (2022). «Russian veteran reformer Chubais quits job as Putin envoy». Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60849918>

¹¹⁴ Dremlyugin, A. (2022). «Poklonskaya puede ser privada de premios estatales por declaraciones sobre los símbolos Z y V». *Kommersant*. Retrieved from: <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/5317384>

Perhaps the most striking case of disagreement with Putin's decision, given his position, is that of Dmitry Peskov, a Russian diplomat and current Kremlin press secretary. Some independent Russian military analysts with good connections within the military establishment, such as the popular Mikhail Onufrienko and Yuri Podolyaka, a famous Russian “rutuber” analysing the war in Ukraine, have pointed to him as one of the breakers within the president's inner circle, despite being his spokesman. Peskov, subject to international sanctions, would support a greater diplomatic effort to reach a negotiated resolution of the conflict. The reason why he continues to hold his position as spokesman could be explained by the fact that the presidency wants to give an image of unity within the Kremlin and unwavering support for military intervention. His departure would prove otherwise.¹¹⁵

1.6 The other world generated by the war in Ukraine

The military invasion of Ukraine will have far-reaching consequences for international relations. But, contrary to claims, it is not the beginning of a new model of global order. This war is simply another chapter in the decades-long competition between great powers. What is new, however, is the possibility of an escalation of the conflict that could lead to a direct military confrontation between Russia and the Atlantic Alliance. This time, contrary to what has been done so far, without the intervention of actors, without proxies¹¹⁶.

The acrimonious positions taken by all actors involved, as well as the deaths and destruction caused, have closed the door to any possibility of a reasonable understanding between Russia, Ukraine, NATO and the European Union. The challenge of reversing this stalemate is to find a way out of the crisis that allows Russia to claim victory, albeit rhetorically, and Ukraine to have a sustainable future as a sovereign nation.¹¹⁷

On 24 February, everything changed. In the months and weeks leading up to that date, the debate in Western specialised circles had two time perspectives. In the short term, speculation multiplied on possible scenarios of Russian military intervention in Ukraine. Hypotheses ranged from maintaining a hybrid pressure on Ukraine (intimidating deployment near the common border, actions in cyberspace, diplomatic pressure, threats of gas supply restrictions), through a limited intervention in the south and east of the country, to a possible large-scale invasion, seizure of Kiev and overthrow of the Zelensky government as the final option. To tell the truth, the latter possibility was considered by many to be the least likely. On the other hand, there was also abundant analysis of the geopolitical context that brought us here: the interests at stake, the perceived threats from one side or the other, the demands, the unjustifiable excuses, the mistakes made. Discussions repeatedly returned

¹¹⁵ TASS (2022). Kremlin on sanctions: What doesn't kill you makes you stronger. Retrieved from: <https://tass.com/politics/1481309>

¹¹⁶ Carracciolo, L. (2022). *La pace è finita*. Feltrinelli

¹¹⁷ Molinari, M. (2022). *Il ritorno degli imperi*. Rizzoli.

to the consequences of the Cold War, the collapse of the Soviet Union, NATO's eastward enlargement, Russia's interventions in Georgia, Ukraine (2014), Syria, Belarus and Kazakhstan¹¹⁸.

All this has been put on the back burner, subordinated to the gravity of events. The invasion of a sovereign country, in the 21st century and in the heart of Europe, puts the urgency of finding an acceptable way out at the top of the agenda.

In this tragedy with many victims, the role of the great loser is, for the moment, that of Ukraine: with its hitherto unfulfilled aspiration, to hope for its integration into NATO, unthinkable for the moment, to suffer the mutilation of its territory that is unlikely to be reversed. With millions of displaced people, the infrastructure destroyed, the economy reduced to subsistence levels with a difficult prospect of an imminent recovery.¹¹⁹

1.6.1 The Role of the Big Three

Russia's increasing pressure on Ukraine prior to the 24 February attack, as well as Moscow's repeated demands to prevent Ukraine from joining NATO and to remove NATO's military presence from Russia's borders¹²⁰, were interpreted by the allies as an expression of Russia's desire to redesign the European security architecture that emerged in Helsinki in 1975¹²¹. In the absence of a detailed definition of this new architecture, a task that is far from simple a priori, the relevance of an update did not seem far-fetched. This half-century in the history of the Old Continent has been very intense: one of the signatories to those agreements, the USSR, simply no longer exists, and the strategic balance in Europe has changed substantially. For this reason, on both sides of the Atlantic, there has been no lack of voices in favour of the hypothesis of a special status for Ukraine and the revival of arms control measures and the transparency of military activities, which have been so badly damaged in the last decade by the withdrawal of Russia and the United States from almost all agreements signed in the past. But the invasion makes the opening of a negotiating table impracticable at the moment.¹²²

Russia's aggression kicked the European and global geopolitical chessboard, opened the sounding board and triggered a crisis that can no longer have a positive outcome for it. The Kremlin overestimated its forces and underestimated the Ukrainian people's resilience and the West's determination to repel the invasion. Even if a military defeat of Ukraine, costing more or less resources on the ground and more or less human lives,

¹¹⁸ *La Repubblica* (2022). Ucraina, cosa vuole davvero Putin? Domande e risposte sull'attacco della Russia. Retrieved from: https://www.repubblica.it/esteri/2022/02/25/news/ucraina_cosa_vuole_putin_cosa_puo_fare_loccidente_domande_risposte-339285334/

¹¹⁹ Molinari, M. (2022). *Il ritorno degli imperi*. Rizzoli.

¹²⁰ Basile, M. (2022). Perché l'Ucraina è così importante per la Russia e per l'Occidente. *La Repubblica*. Retrieved from: https://www.repubblica.it/esteri/2022/02/24/news/guerra_perche_luكرانيا_e_cosi_importante_per_russia_usa_nato_europa-339002040/

¹²¹ *Royal United Services Institute* (2022). European Security Architecture: Against Russia, or With It? Retrieved from: <https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/european-security-architecture-against-russia-or-it>

¹²² La Russia cambia il mondo. *Limes* (2022)

including Russian ones, is possible, Moscow will be faced with a worrying reality: thousands of dead Russian soldiers, sanctions, business and capital flight, cuts in the supply of high-tech components, a domestic economic crisis and increased dependence on China¹²³.

The US exit from Afghanistan and the almost immediate unveiling of the agreement between the United States, Great Britain and Australia (AUKUS) were just two clear signs that Washington's turn towards the Pacific, initiated by previous presidents, was also in full force for Biden. The new administration is not completely abandoning Europe, but the object of its greatest concern remains China¹²⁴.

Since the beginning of the military build-up near Ukraine, in the months leading up to the invasion, the US has completely rejected Moscow's demands, an attitude in which it has been wholeheartedly supported by the UK. Russia's move to cross the threshold between the ever-confusing grey zone and open war offers America an opportunity to show a determination and resolve that had been badly wounded after the regrettable withdrawal from Afghanistan, thus sending a clear message to the two revisionist great powers: Washington will defend its status and hegemony at any cost. Regaining lost credibility means not letting Ukraine fall today and Taiwan fall tomorrow.¹²⁵

The countries of the European Union, for their part, aware of their role as subsidiary victims in a conflict that will ultimately be resolved on their territory, launched an intensive campaign to “convince” Putin not to take the decision he ultimately did. The authorities in Brussels, as well as the leaders of France and Germany, among others, repeatedly visited Moscow. Europe's diplomatic gamble, however, yielded and Anglo-Saxon firmness prevailed.

At this point, it is difficult to imagine a negotiated solution to the conflict that would satisfy both Russian demands and Ukrainian grievances¹²⁶. If any power can attempt to do so with any guarantee of success, it is China¹²⁷. With the United States excluded, because of its frontal opposition to Moscow, no one can assume this responsibility better than Beijing. And, in a sense, it should not lack the will to do so. But it will only do so if it is guaranteed a successful mediation and, with it, a shining role as a reliable and responsible global power. The deep understanding between the two presidents, Xi and Putin, and the convergence of interests vis-à-vis the common American adversary/enemy are well known. From this point of view, it is in Beijing's interest that the United States, for years focused on China's Indo-Pacific neighbourhood, with which it has a

¹²³ La fine della Pace. *Limes* (2022)

¹²⁴ Wong, E., & Swanson, A. (2022). U.S. Aims to Constrain China by Shaping Its Environment, Blinken Says. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/26/us/politics/china-policy-biden.html>

¹²⁵ Molinari, M. (2022). *Il ritorno degli imperi*. Rizzoli.

¹²⁶ Boni, M. (2022). Le difficili prospettive negoziali nel conflitto tra Russia e Ucraina. *Analisi Difesa*. Retrieved from: <https://www.analisedifesa.it/2022/12/le-difficili-prospettive-negoziali-nel-conflitto-tra-russia-e-ucraina/>

¹²⁷ Modolo, G. (2022). La Cina si farà coinvolgere in una mediazione per far finire la guerra? *La Repubblica*. Retrieved from: https://www.repubblica.it/esteri/2022/03/06/news/la_cina_si_faro_coinvolgere_in_una_mediazione_per_porre_fine_alla_guerra-340513434/

heated commercial, technological, and geopolitical confrontation, be forced to diversify its efforts and to a certain extent cancel the path that was leading them away from Europe and towards China's inland seas. But it is no less true that the great Asian country is, fundamentally, a trading giant whose market is the whole world.

For such a power, nothing is more worrying than a global scenario of widespread instability and war in the homeland of some of its best customers: the European Union and Ukraine itself. The possibility of a sanctions package also being adopted against China is a scenario that the country will try to avoid at all costs. It will not be affinity with Russia or hostility towards the West that will determine China's final position, but the sheer defence of its own interests.¹²⁸

1.6.2 The day Europe lost its innocence

The crisis in Ukraine did not begin on 24 February 2022. One only has to recall the pressure and threats it has suffered over the years, the seizure of Crimea and the ongoing destabilisation of the Donbas¹²⁹. Faced with this reality, the EU has reacted with more literature than practical measures. It is true that the Global Strategy approved in 2016 already reflects the concerns raised by Russian assertiveness, which is why the document speaks not only of soft power, but also of hard power and strategic autonomy. The current President of the European Commission has from the outset expressed his intention to have a more geopolitical Commission¹³⁰ and his High Representative often repeats that Europe must be a respected actor, especially in its immediate vicinity. But these good intentions have not materialised into meaningful action. The willingness to equip itself with a credible military instrument is still swirling in the Brussels maze, and dependence on Russian gas has not only not been reduced in the last decade, but has even increased. However, on this occasion, Europe's reaction to the invasion has been more forceful than precedent suggested: strong sanctions, coordinated with the United States, which, besides hitting the Russian economy, will undoubtedly have painful repercussions for Europeans.¹³¹

Perhaps the most significant reaction, in terms of breaking with a position held since the end of World War II, has come from Germany: indefinite suspension of the opening of the Nord Stream gas pipeline, arms supplies to Ukraine, increasing the defense budget to 2 percent of German GDP, immediate spending of 100 billion euros on the Bundeswehr, and even questioning, for now only verbally in some quarters, the total shutdown of nuclear power plants decreed by Chancellor Merkel. In Finland and Sweden, it is no longer taboo to discuss

¹²⁸ La fine della Pace. *Limes* (2022)

¹²⁹ *Save the Children Italia* (2022). Crisi Ucraina-Russia: tutto quello che c'è da sapere. Retrieved from: <https://www.savethechildren.it/blog-notizie/crisi-ucraina-russia-tutto-quello-che-c-e-da-sapere>

¹³⁰ Koenig, N. (2022). The 'Geopolitical' European Commission and its Pitfalls. *IWM WEBSITE*. Retrieved from: <https://www.iwm.at/blog/the-geopolitical-european-commission-and-its-pitfalls>

¹³¹ S. Meister (2022). A Paradigm Shift: EU-Russia Relations After the War in Ukraine. *Carnegie Europe*. Retrieved from: <https://carnegieurope.eu/2022/11/29/paradigm-shift-eu-russia-relations-after-war-in-ukraine-pub-88476>

NATO membership. Denmark is considering the possibility of joining the Common Security and Defense Policy, from which it has so far remained estranged. Switzerland, at least in this particular case, has set aside its neutrality. Hungary questions, but does not prevent, the firmness of the Union. It remains to be seen whether this European cohesion and harmony with transatlantic allies will stand the test of time and the rebound effects of sanctions on Europe itself. This time, however, everything seems to indicate that Europe has lost its innocence.¹³²

1.6.3 No collateral damage?

An old military aphorism says that battles are not fought to be lost. Although we do not know how the military operation invading Ukraine was planned, it does not seem too far-fetched to conclude that the ground campaign did not develop according to Moscow's expectations¹³³. At the moment after a significant advance of the Russian military perhaps on the eastern side of Ukrainian territory, the government in Kiev managed to recover part of the areas gained by the Russian army, which had to fall back abandoning significant areas such as Kherson¹³⁴. This event led Russia to change its strategy, opting for a heavy missile bombardment of Ukrainian power plants, resulting in numerous deaths, including among civilians, and dramatic living conditions for the Ukrainian people, deprived in a large part of the territory of electric light and the possibility of using heating systems¹³⁵. This situation of severe suffering, however, is not affecting the will of the Kiev government, which continues to claim the right to defend its territorial integrity, and even to retake Crimea, as a condition for sitting at the negotiating table.

Extreme position that, without the total military defeat of Russia "unwanted by the great powers U.S. and China" is unlikely to be realized. Suffice it to say that Russia's constitution legitimizes military intervention "by any means" to defend territories acquired, through occupation and popular referendum, to its sovereignty¹³⁶.

On the other hand, it should be emphasized that the U.S. government in this war had and has mainly two goals: to interrupt Russian-German and Russian-European energy dependence, a goal this achieved. The second goal is to weaken Russia by separating it from China, also an accomplished goal. Therefore, the Ukrainian goal as mentioned above of retaking the entire territory through the use of armed forces with American support appears impossible, especially because Washington absolutely does not want the war to expand and result in a global conflict even with the use of nuclear weapons even if tactical.¹³⁷

¹³² Shankar, P. (2022). Months into the Ukraine war, has Germany's position changed? *Aljazeera*. Retrieved from: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/5/5/germanys-russia-policy-under-the-microscope-amid-war-in-ukraine>

¹³³ L'ombra della bomba. *Limes* (2022)

¹³⁴ Adams, P. (2022). Kherson biggest Russian loss since withdrawal from outside Kyiv. *BBC News*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-63598805>

¹³⁵ L'ombra della bomba. *Limes* (2022)

¹³⁶ Alessandra Ricciardi. Tutto dipende dagli Usa e Cina. *Italia Oggi*. Retrieved from: <https://www.italiaoggi.it/news/tutto-dipende-dagli-usa-e-cina-2591116>

¹³⁷ Molinari, M. (2022). *Il ritorno degli imperi*. Rizzoli.

In this scenario, it is impossible to predict whether or not time will play against the invader, although the images of destruction and casualties translate into delegitimization and loss of prestige for Russia, to such an extent that it has led the European community to brand Russia a “terrorist state”¹³⁸. Even the repeated message of brotherhood between the Russian and Ukrainian peoples has lost credibility among the Russian-speaking Ukrainian population. By denying the existence of Ukraine as a nation, the aggression and destruction wrought by Russian forces has achieved the opposite result: that of reinforcing the feeling of a Ukrainian homeland¹³⁹.

Moreover, in Eastern European countries, the sentiment of rejection of “Russianness” is growing, in a regrettable generalization that does not discriminate between the Russian people and their current government¹⁴⁰. Whatever the outcome of the conflict, the inevitability of increasingly reducing, and eventually breaking, energy and trade dependence on Russia appears now certain for Europe, as in fact is already happening¹⁴¹.

Replacing the entire Russian market with Europe with the Chinese market will be impossible and, in any case, will only deepen Moscow’s dependence on Beijing. In the specific field of security, so repeatedly invoked by Russia, the strengthening of transatlantic cohesion and the leadership of the United States is evident, with the addition also of some non-allied European countries and lifelong friends in Asia, especially Japan. With the Ukrainian war, NATO is regaining its original *raison d’être* at a time when it needed it most, given the doubts and reticence of some allies after the U.S. shift to the Pacific and abandonment of Afghanistan. The West, or liberal democracies as it may be, has an opportunity to revitalize itself after the disruptive Trump administration. The strengthening of NATO is pushing Europe to rearm to the teeth to continue to face the dreaded Russian aggression: the Baltic Republics, the Eastern countries, Finland, Sweden and Ukraine, present us with a new vicious cycle of military escalation in Europe.¹⁴²

Certainly, there is no shortage of, nor will there be a shortage of, unintended consequences for the West as well, both for European companies and for the United States and Canada. Energy disengagement will not be easy, quick or cheap. The sanctions are having a serious rebound effect for the European people, and from this point of view Western societies are not very resistant to endure prolonged sacrifices¹⁴³.

¹³⁸ *Parlamento Europeo* (2022). Il Parlamento riconosce la Russia come stato sponsor del terrorismo. Retrieved from: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/it/press-room/20221118IPR55707/il-parlamento-riconosce-la-russia-come-stato-sponsor-del-terrorismo>

¹³⁹ *Affari Internazionali* (2023). L'invasione russa e la fine dell' "ambiguità occidentale" in Ucraina. Retrieved from: <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/visione-ucraina-russia-dopo-il-2022/>

¹⁴⁰ Rivolta, D. (2022). La Russia “nemica” e la sporcizia sotto il tappeto dell’occidente. *Notizie Geopolitiche*. Retrieved from: <https://www.notiziegeopolitiche.net/la-russia-nemica-e-la-politica-del-doppiopesismo/>

¹⁴¹ *IEA* (2022). How Europe can cut natural gas imports from Russia significantly within a year. Retrieved from: <https://www.iea.org/news/how-europe-can-cut-natural-gas-imports-from-russia-significantly-within-a-year>

¹⁴² *Limes* (2022). La fine della Pace

¹⁴³ Hamau, R. (2022). Perché alcune sanzioni fanno più male all’Occidente. *Lavoce.info*. Retrieved from: <https://www.lavoce.info/archives/95508/perche-alcune-sanzioni-fanno-piu-male-alloccidente/>

Europe's good intentions to strengthen its security and defense policy in the Mediterranean will be neither easy, nor quick, nor cheap. Europe's good intentions to strengthen the EU's military profile, contained in the recently approved Strategic Compass, will be more than ever or as always subordinate to the absolute preponderance of NATO as the only reliable organization, at the moment, to guarantee security on the Old Continent. The withdrawal from Afghanistan has made this clear, and the war in Ukraine has made it even clearer: Europe is far from being able to intervene militarily in challenging combat scenarios without U.S. support¹⁴⁴.

It will also be necessary to see how much the sacrifices imposed on European citizens and businesses, in terms of high utility bills, crisis of energy sources, inflation, increase in poverty and predictable increase in social conflicts also due to the growing level of unemployment, will be able to make them accept the exchange between more military security and less welfare for very large segments of the population. Italy in this scenario is among the countries that are most suffering from the consequences triggered by the war in Ukraine¹⁴⁵, also taking into account that in the pre-war period our country had not yet reabsorbed all the negative effects of the 2008 financial crisis and the 2020 pandemic crisis.

In fact, the current crisis lays bare the structural weaknesses of the Italian economy due primarily to the huge public debt, the elephantine weight of bureaucracy, the harmful problems of the tax system with very high percentages of evasion and avoidance, and lastly the significant growth of inflation that has returned after so many years, due to the continuous increase in prices to worrying levels. Italy is certainly not the only member state of the European Union to pay the consequences of the conflict: Germany¹⁴⁶ itself and Spain¹⁴⁷ also register a significant contraction in their GDP; France¹⁴⁸ also appears to be affected with a modest decline in economic growth, while the Netherlands¹⁴⁹, in contrast, of the Title transfer facility gains as a function of the quantity of trade, shows better post-conflict economic forecasts than before the Russian invasion. So, wanting to conclude this paragraph on the collateral damage of the war in Ukraine, we cannot fail to count the thousands

¹⁴⁴ Meijer H., Brooks S. G. (2021). Illusions of Autonomy: Why Europe Cannot Provide for Its Security If the United States Pulls Back. *International Security* 2021. Retrieved from: https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00405

¹⁴⁵ *The Economist* (2022). Italy is the latest victim of Ukraine-related divisions. Retrieved from: https://www.economist.com/europe/2022/06/23/italy-is-the-latest-victim-of-ukraine-related-divisions?utm_medium=cpc.adword.pd&utm_source=google&ppccampaignID=18151738051&ppcadID=&utm_campaign=a.22brand_pmax&utm_content=conversion.direct-response.anonymous&gclid=CjwKCAiAlp2fBhBPEiwA2Q10D7eMxs-gWe7marVkosRULnehiHDz9pO8Ejk6CFCheC2pZSejiiCeMRoC4QcQAvD_BwE&gclid=aw.ds

¹⁴⁶ Anheier, H. (2022). How Much Has the Ukraine War Changed Germany? *Project Syndicate*. Retrieved from: <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/germany-strategic-policy-changes-after-russian-invasion-ukraine-by-helmut-k-anheier-2022-09>

¹⁴⁷ Heller, F. (2022). Spain least affected by Ukraine war, says finance minister. *Euractiv.com*. Retrieved from: https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/short_news/spain-least-affected-by-ukraine-war-says-finance-minister/

¹⁴⁸ Ragot, X. (2022). War in Ukraine: What short-term effects on the French economy? *Le blog*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ofce.sciences-po.fr/blog/war-in-ukraine-what-short-term-effects-on-the-french-economy/>

¹⁴⁹ *Information from the Government of the Netherlands* (2022). The Netherlands' position. Retrieved from: <https://www.government.nl/topics/russia-and-ukraine/the-netherlands-position>

of deaths, many including civilians, the millions of refugees fleeing their country and the consequent problems of reception in other European countries, the rising prices of gas, oil, food and raw materials. The war thus not only profoundly and negatively affects the lives of people in Europe but also opens the door to a new world disorder, which is unlikely to be better than the present one.¹⁵⁰

¹⁵⁰ J. Borrell (2022). The war in Ukraine and its implications for the EU. *EEAS Website*. Retrieved from; https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/war-ukraine-and-its-implications-eu_en

CHAPTER II: The new geopolitical order

Russia's war in Ukraine is accelerating changes in the world order, imposing a new balance of power. Analysts in the countries involved are assessing the implications of this rebalancing to position themselves for these significant changes. At today's time, the following reality can be portrayed. Ukraine is devastated; Russia, the aggressor will suffer the long-term consequences; NATO, led by the United States, has been strengthened and is imposing a rebalancing of forces; Europe is going through a human security crisis paying for the effort of remilitarization; China has essentially chosen for the time being a kind of neutral position with respect to the war; and India, like many countries in the global south, is facing geostrategic pressures to define its position. It also looks at how different powers are aligning themselves in the face of the conflict, which is causing changes in the global economic and financial system, as well as hindering cooperation in multilateral institutions. What are these changes, their implications and consequences?

2.1 Alterations to the world's order

The reasons for the war in Ukraine cannot be well understood without retracing notable stages in the relations between Russia and the United States of America. They are waging a proxy war on the Ukrainian field, admittedly also in support of an illegitimately aggressed people but aimed at weakening Russia with a view to redefining the European geopolitical framework and international relations both politically and economically¹⁵¹.

With this in mind, it seems appropriate to start, even as evoked recently from 2022, when a commitment to cooperation between NATO and Russia was signed at the Italian military base in Pratica di Mare, near Rome¹⁵². The event was in its way a historic phase, in fact, Bush said “the agreement offered the world a prospect of a more hopeful century.”

Russia was at the beginning of its economic recovery after the fall of the Soviet Union, and the challenge of global influences seemed to have been won by the U.S. outright. The agreement followed a period when U.S.-Russia relations thanks in part to personal relations between Yeltsin and Clinton were quite good. In fact, in 1996 Russia supported the NATO mission in Bosnia to implement the peace agreement that ended the civil war. The following year the “Founding act on mutual relations, corporation and security” was signed—a first mutual commitment to refrain from threats and use of military force. The agreement held even in 1999, despite

¹⁵¹ Solana, J. (2022). The World Order After the Ukraine War. *Project Syndicate*. Retrieved from: <https://www.project-syndicate.org/onpoint/world-order-after-the-ukraine-war-by-javier-solana-and-nina-l-khrushcheva-2022-08?barrier=accesspaylog>

¹⁵² *Il Post* (2022). Vent'anni fa i rapporti fra Occidente e Russia erano nella loro fase migliore. Retrieved from: <https://www.ilpost.it/2022/05/28/pratica-di-mare/>

the fact that NATO intervention in Kosovo threatened the interests of Serbia, an historic ally first of the USSR and then of Russia.¹⁵³

2.1.2 Contrasting American and Russian interests

It should be recalled that 1999 was a pivotal year for Russian political life, as on December 31 President Yeltsin resigned, held by Russians responsible for a true national tragedy for bringing about the collapse of the economy and the collapse of state power. On January 1, 2000 began the political rise of Putin, in whose leadership Russians saw the man capable of lifting the economy but also stabilizing domestic politics and defending Russia's prestige internationally. The growing consensus toward Putin, mainly due to the recovery of the economy (foreign debt fell from 90 percent of GDP in 1999 to 12 percent at the end of 2005; foreign reserves increased by \$600 billion). Despite the dictatorial trait of the regime connoted by brutal repression of dissent, it could not help but cause the return of an imperial vision of Russia and aversion to the Western bloc especially as a result of two heavy humiliations deemed unbearable by the new tsar, Vladimir Putin, Iraq in 2003 and Libya in 2011.¹⁵⁴

Indeed, in the American invasion of Iraq, a neighboring country of Russia, an initial deep rift between the U.S. and Russia was consummated, not only because the war began by bypassing the UN, but especially because it was marred by the false claim that the invaded country possessed heavy weapons of mass destruction. The U.S. invasion of Iraq swept away the Sea Practice Agreement, aimed primarily at combating international terrorism after the Sept. 11, 2000 attack on the twin towers in New York with it the prospect, albeit a very tenuous one, of Russia joining NATO.¹⁵⁵

The bombing of Libya in 2011 was another severe blow to Russian image and interests there. In this wartime affair there was a further override of the determinations of the UN Security Council, in that in the face of the bloody civil conflict triggered in that country by the desire for political renewal against the more than 40-year old Gaddafi regime, it had only authorized the closure of the skies in Libya. Instead, in fact, took place the bombing of Libyan territory and the shooting down of Qaddafi whose death was a real detriment to Russia both on the military supply front and on the profitable trade arrangements amounting to between \$5-10 billion. Moreover, one cannot disregard the additional grounds for conflict between American and Russian interests constituted by the war in Syria, where Russia has major strategic interests including: military bases and

¹⁵³ *La Russia cambia il mondo*. Limes Magazine edition 3/2022

¹⁵⁴ *History.com* (2022). Putin becomes acting president of Russia, following Yeltsin's resignation. Retrieved from: <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/putin-becomes-president-russia>

¹⁵⁵ *The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica* (2004). Iraq War. *Encyclopaedia Britannica*. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/event/Iraq-War>

American sanctions against Iran, one of the Russian Federation's strongest political and commercial partners.¹⁵⁶

2.2 The disintegration of the post-Cold War security system

The issue of NATO enlargement and the possible accession of Ukraine and other countries bordering Russia cannot be separated from the broader debate on the pan-European security architecture, the main components of which, inherited from the Cold War and the subsequent post-Cold War era, have been dismantled over the past two decades or are in a state of stalemate. These include the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM) of 1972¹⁵⁷, the Intermediate-Range Missile Treaty (INF) of 1987¹⁵⁸, the Conventional Forces in Europe Treaty of 1990¹⁵⁹, and the New Arms Reduction Treaty (ARCT) of 2000; the New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START Treaty) of 2010¹⁶⁰; and the network of mutual confidence-building measures established in the post-Cold War period at the behest of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), most notably the Open Skies Treaty of 1992.¹⁶¹ One after another, they were abandoned.

The unilateralism adopted by the U.S. under President George W. Bush (2001-2009) and that of Donald Trump (2017-21) led to denunciation and withdrawal from most of these treaties, not without cross-accusations of non-compliance with Russia, Moscow's consistent rejection of the U.S. withdrawal, and European inaction. This process is a key element in understanding the context and background of the invasion. Indeed, the creation of a new arms control system was at the center of negotiations and exchange of proposals between the United States and Russia in the weeks leading up to the Russian attack. Regardless of the outcome of the war, this is a crucial issue for the creation of a lasting shared security system in Europe that, as envisioned in the post-Cold War era, is based on mutually acceptable guarantees, arms control, and mutual trust, as opposed to the illusory and dangerous claim to generate security through mere armed deterrence, a new bloc policy, and conventional and nuclear rearmament.¹⁶²

The ABM Treaty, signed in 1972 by Nixon and Brezhnev, codified nuclear deterrence and the doctrine of "mutually assured destruction" by prohibiting the installation of systems capable of intercepting

¹⁵⁶ Terry, P. C. (2015). The Libya intervention (2011): neither lawful, nor successful. *The Comparative and International Law Journal of Southern Africa*, 48(2), 162–182. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24585876>

¹⁵⁷ Freedman, L. D. (2007). Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty | international treaty. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Anti-Ballistic-Missile-Treaty>

¹⁵⁸ D. Kimball (2019). The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces. *Arms Control Association*. Retrieved from: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/INFtreaty>

¹⁵⁹ *Federal Foreign Office* (2021). Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty). Retrieved from: <https://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/en/aussenpolitik/themen/-/218430>

¹⁶⁰ *United States Department of States*. New START Treaty. Retrieved from <https://www.state.gov/new-start/>

¹⁶¹ *Arms Control Association* (2021). The Open Skies Treaty at Glance. Retrieved from: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/openskies>

¹⁶² La Russia cambia il mondo. *Limes Magazine* Edition 3/2022

intercontinental ballistic missiles¹⁶³. A key part of the nuclear balance of power during the 30 years it was in place, it was unilaterally denounced by the Bush administration in December 2001 to allow the United States to install a missile defense shield—officially, the National Missile Defense System—whose stated goal was a possible attack by Iran. Soon after, Russia withdrew from the 1993 Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty II. Perhaps the U.S. withdrawal from the ABM Treaty was one of the key moments in Russia’s estrangement from the West. Initial plans for the missile shield included a naval system, but later land bases in Romania (operational since 2016) and Poland (in 2022) were chosen. Russia has never believed that the system is aimed exclusively at Iran, and Trump himself later stoked Russian distrust by declaring that the system could be used against missiles launched from anywhere, anytime, and anywhere¹⁶⁴.

Russia considers a direct threat, especially the Aegis Ashore system installed at the Redzikowo base in Poland, a real “red line” for the Kremlin. Russia argues that these launchers can be easily adapted to fire offensive missiles that would be only 200 kilometers from the Russian territory of Kaliningrad and 1,500 kilometers from Moscow, and that the transparency mechanism proposed by the United States is not sufficient. In December 2021, Putin himself denounced the commissioning of such a base, rhetorically asking whether Russia was installing offensive missiles near the U.S. border¹⁶⁵.

Another key piece of the European security and arms control architecture was the Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces Treaty (INF Treaty), whose signing in 1987 by Ronald Reagan and Mikhail Gorbachev is one of the milestones that marked the end of the Cold War. The importance of this instrument should not be underestimated. Faced with the balance of nuclear terror based on intercontinental missiles, in the 1980s the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), followed by the United States, deployed intermediate-range nuclear missiles with clear offensive potential that could be used in the event of nuclear war limited to the European theater of operations. This caused a major social backlash in Western Europe and gave rise to a vibrant peace movement. The INF Treaty banned missiles with a range of 500 to 5,000 kilometers, and by 1991 nearly 2,700 had been eliminated. In October 2018, however, President Donald Trump announced the unilateral denunciation of the treaty by the United States. The stated reason was the deployment of the new Russian SSC-8 missile¹⁶⁶. According to Russia, its range would be less than 500 kilometers, but the United States claims that its maximum range is 2,500 kilometers and would therefore constitute a violation of the Treaty. However, the underlying reason seems to be China’s or Iran’s development of new intermediate-range

¹⁶³ Burr, W. (2001). The Secret History of The ABM Treaty. *The National Security Archive*. Retrieved from: <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB60/>

¹⁶⁴ Higgins, A. (2022). On the Edge of a Polish Forest, Where Some of Putin’s Darkest Fears Lurk. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/16/world/europe/poland-missile-base-russia-ukraine.html>

¹⁶⁵ *President of Russia* (2021). Vladimir Putin’s annual news conference. Retrieved from: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67438>

¹⁶⁶ *BBC* (2019). INF nuclear treaty (2019): US pulls out of Cold War-era pact with Russia. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-49198565>

missiles and the INF Treaty's lack of flexibility in the face of these new realities¹⁶⁷. A Russian proposal for a moratorium after the denunciation of the treaty was not accepted, so this important instrument also ceased to be in force in August 2019. For Russia, the installation of missiles in Poland and Romania illustrates the risks posed by the absence of agreed limits to NATO enlargement. The abandonment of this important treaty poses visible security risks in Europe, may encourage a new arms race, and is a further sign of the crisis in the current nuclear nonproliferation regime.¹⁶⁸

In 2007, it was Russia that announced the “suspension” of its participation in the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE Treaty), an instrument that established limits on conventional forces in Europe and a system of cross-checks. Among other reasons, Moscow pointed to alterations in the force limits agreed upon in the Treaty due to NATO's fifth enlargement in 2004, which included the Baltic states, and “extraordinary circumstances,” referring to U.S. plans to install a missile defense shield in Poland¹⁶⁹.

In November 2020, the United States also withdrew from the 1992 Open Skies Treaty¹⁷⁰, citing Russia's noncompliance, despite opposition from several of its allies, including Ukraine, and in 2021 Russia also announced its withdrawal. Finally, the New START Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, signed in 2010 by Presidents Obama and Medvedev, expired in 2021 after leading to a significant reduction in strategic nuclear weapons.¹⁷¹ Trump questioned it as one of the “bad agreements” signed by his predecessor and blocked negotiations with Russia for its renewal, so much so that Biden and Putin agreed that year to extend it until 2026, pending new negotiations that have not yet begun.

These elements, which do not constitute an exhaustive analysis of the issue, illustrate a process of abandonment and demolition of an architecture of security, arms control and confidence-building measures that, with all its flaws, was in place in the post-Cold War period. Its demise re-proposes the old “security dilemma” of the bipolar confrontation. This security architecture reflected, in part, ideas that emerged in the 1970s and 1980s, such as common security-proposed by Olof Palme in 1982-cooperative security and the concept of “indivisibility of security.” This assumes that the security of one state, whether or not it is part of an alliance, is inseparable from that of all others and cannot be achieved at the expense of others. This concept was included as a key principle in the Helsinki Act of 1975, adopted by the Conference on Security and

¹⁶⁷ Immenkamp, Beatrix (2019) “The end of the INF Treaty? A pillar of European security architecture at risk”. *European Parliament Research Service*. Retrieved from: <https://epthinktank.eu/2019/02/05/the-end-of-the-inf-treaty-a-pillar-of-european-security-architecture-at-risk/>

¹⁶⁸ C. Torralba (2019). The era of nuclear control is crumbling. *El País*. Retrieved from: <https://elpais.com/autor/carlos-torralba-zaragoza/2/>

¹⁶⁹ Reif, K. (2015). Russia Completes CFE Treaty Suspension. *Arms Control Association*. Retrieved from: <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2015-04/news-briefs/russia-completes-cfe-treaty-suspension>

¹⁷⁰ Reif, K. and Bugos, S. (2020). U.S. Completes Open Skies Treaty Withdrawal. *Arms Control Association*. Retrieved from: <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2020-12/news/us-completes-open-skies-treaty-withdrawal>

¹⁷¹ Lee, J. (2011). The new start treaty: signed. *The white house*. Retrieved from: <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2011/02/02/new-start-treaty-signed>

Cooperation in Europe, the predecessor of the OSCE, but was de facto abandoned with the eastward enlargement of the Atlantic Alliance, Russian interventionism in its neighborhood, and the unilateral withdrawal from disarmament and arms control agreements.¹⁷²

In the weeks leading up to the invasion, Russia proposed a draft bilateral treaty with the United States, seeking to restore symmetry in relations between the Cold War superpowers, leaving both the EU and Ukraine itself out of the discussion. Among Russia's demands were the withdrawal of NATO troops and offensive weapons from Eastern Europe, restrictions on the deployment of intermediate-range nuclear missiles-including the closure of the Redzikowo base-and a neutral status for Ukraine¹⁷³.

The Western response-two documents from the United States and NATO, very close but with some differences between them, leaked by El País newspaper (2022)-opened the possibility of negotiations on some of these elements. In particular, a possible disarmament treaty and new mutual confidence-building measures in the framework of the OSCE and the NATO-Russia Council were discussed, but the United States did not accept Russian demands on Ukraine's non-membership in the Atlantic Alliance¹⁷⁴. Putin's response was categorical: "The United States ignored our main demands"¹⁷⁵.

2.3 Will the Atlantic Alliance and the West reemerge?

The invasion of Ukraine has challenged the dominant narrative about the growing bipolar shape of the international system. This system, it has been argued, increasingly revolves around the strategic competition between a rising China and the United States, their gradual economic decoupling, and, according to some, the inevitable emergence of the "Thucydides dilemma" associated with this power transition and a new "cold war" between the two powers. This would imply a growing economic and strategic centrality of Asia and the Indo-Pacific, a new U.S. geopolitical construct to serve its policy of alliances in the region, such as the AUKUS (Australia, United Kingdom, United States). This description also included the loss of Europe's strategic relevance and the crisis of trust and commitment to NATO on both the European and U.S. side in the face of mutual distrust and doubts about its mission and purpose; and, finally, the difficult dilemmas for regions such as Latin America and Africa, deprived of autonomy as mere scenarios in the growing bipolar competition¹⁷⁶.

¹⁷² Rathbone, J. P., & Ivanova, P. (2022, 7 febrero). What is 'indivisible security'? The principle at the heart of Russia's ire against Nato. *Financial Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ft.com/content/84a43896-2dfd-4be4-8d2a-c68a5a68547a>

¹⁷³ Hall, Ben, y Olearchyk, Roman (2022) "Ukraine has upgraded its war aims as confidence grows says foreign minister". *Financial Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/europe/ukraine-has-upgraded-its-war-aims-as-confidence-grows-says-foreign-minister-1.4875015>

¹⁷⁴ A. Mars and B. De Miguel (2022). U.S. and NATO reject Russia's claim to halt Alliance enlargement. *El País*. Retrieved from: <https://elpais.com/internacional/2022-01-26/estados-unidos-rechaza-la-demanda-de-rusia-de-limitar-la-expansion-de-la-otan.html>

¹⁷⁵ J. G. Cuesta (2022). Putin accuses U.S. of ignoring his main demands in Ukraine crisis. *El País*. Retrieved from: <https://elpais.com/internacional/2022-02-01/putin-acusa-a-ee-uu-de-ignorar-sus-principales-demandas-en-la-crisis-de-ucrania.html>

¹⁷⁶ Sanahuja, José Antonio (2020) "¿Bipolaridad en ascenso? Análisis equívocos frente a la crisis de la globalización". *Foreign Affairs Latinoamérica*.

This description of the international system, presented here in simplified form, has visible analytical weaknesses. Based on realist and state-centric readings of the international, it neglects the international political economy and transnational issues and risks, and fails to capture phenomena such as the crisis of globalization and the role of business and non-state actors¹⁷⁷. Indeed, on a reflective reading, such descriptions should be seen more as power narratives that better explain the vision and interests of those who construct them, discursively and materially, than the social reality they are meant to describe.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine either radically challenges this narrative or forces it to become more complex. Beyond the goals of the invasion, it represents an unbridled vindication of Russia's claims to be recognized as a global, or at least European, power-although the opposite could happen, accelerating its decline-that strains its relations with China and other emerging countries. The invasion places Europe once again at the center of global geopolitics. The United States returns to the old continent and to NATO, an organization that is reactivated and seems to recover a clear sense of its mission, evoking, to some extent, that of its origins. For EU countries that have been more wary of Russia-the Baltic states, Poland and the Czech Republic-the invasion represents a bitter vindication of their positions vis-à-vis other, more skeptical member states, such as France and Germany. Some of the strongest positions toward Russia and in favor of NATO now come from progressive political forces, such as the Greens in Germany or the Social Democrats in Sweden. In particular, Finland and Sweden, leaving behind decades of neutrality, have rushed to apply for NATO membership.¹⁷⁸ This gave new meaning to the Madrid NATO Summit in late June and the adoption of the Alliance's new "Strategic Concept".¹⁷⁹

With this, the idea of a major comeback of the West reappears in global geopolitics, largely based on the reactivation of the North Atlantic axis, which presents itself to the world with a message of leadership, unity and firmness in defense of the international order. Indeed, this Western and North Atlantic unity was perhaps another of the unexpected elements of this war, both for its own protagonists and for Russia. It may be inferred-although this is largely conjecture-that one of the premises of the Russian invasion was a weak response by the United States, increasingly absent from Europe in the Trumpian period, heavily conditioned by its dependence on Russian gas, divided and unwilling to bear more of the burden of the war's consequences. To a large extent, this was the case with the Western reaction in 2014 to Russia's occupation of Crimea and pro-Russian separatism in the Dombass, which was firm at the time but now appears very lukewarm. Nonetheless, thanks to weeks of coordination and joint preparation, the United States and the European Union were able to launch a wave of very strong sanctions in several stages and in a coordinated manner after February 24. These include the freezing of transactions of most Russian banks through the international payment system SWIFT,

¹⁷⁷ Sanahuja, J. A. (2020). Bipolarity on the rise? Equivocal analyses in the face of the crisis of globalization. *Academia*. Retrieved from: https://www.academia.edu/43171760/_Bipolaridad_en_ascenso_Análisis_equívocos_frente_a_la_crisis_de_la_globalización

¹⁷⁸ A. Alonso (2022). "Sweden renounces its anti-nuclear soul by joining NATO". *El Independiente*. Retrieved from: <https://www.elindependiente.com/internacional/2022/05/27/suecia-renuncia-a-su-alma-antinuclear-al-entrar-en-la-otan/>

¹⁷⁹ La Russia cambia il mondo. *Limes* 2022.

a company based in Belgium; the freezing of about \$300 billion¹⁸⁰ of Russian foreign exchange reserves, which is about half of what it had accumulated in its coffers in anticipation of the war and sanctions; and other restrictions on trade and investment, which have led to the total or temporary suspension of operations of more than a thousand multinational companies in Russia, with serious effects on employment and the functioning of supply chains. This has important economic, political and analytical implications, as it calls into question the statist view of the international system, affirming the role of other non-state actors. Moreover, it reveals that if Russia has been able to turn economic interdependencies into an instrument of coercion (armament), so too can the United States and the EU-though with an asymmetric distribution of costs.¹⁸¹

2.4 The loneliness of the West, the global South and the ambivalence of China

As the votes of the UN General Assembly show, the West and the Global South converge in condemning Russia for acts that, for the most part, have been described as an act of aggression that violates fundamental principles of the UN Charter, such as abstention from the use of force, territorial integrity and sovereignty of states¹⁸². This is not an alignment with the West, but principles that the countries of the South helped to define-particularly Latin America, the protagonist of the first wave of decolonization in the early 19th century-and have consistently defended. Russia is often perceived in the Global South as a counterweight to Western and U.S. hegemony, in line with the weight that anti-imperialism still has in the political culture of the post-colonial world. However, a legalistic view of the international order, also rooted in this postcolonial consciousness, has prevailed in the Global South. As a result, very few countries supported the invasion, and those with stronger ties and interests at stake, especially in Africa, chose to abstain rather than support the act of aggression¹⁸³. In Latin America, for example, even countries such as Nicaragua and Cuba, closer to Russia, abstained from voting to condemn in the General Assembly¹⁸⁴.

Even this prediction, if it existed, turned out to be wrong. In fact, through weeks of coordination and joint preparation, the United States and the European Union were able to launch a wave of very strong sanctions in several stages and in a coordinated manner after February 24. These included as mentioned above, the freezing of transactions of most Russian banks. In this scheme, the abstention of India and China should be noted, given their demographic, economic and political weight and their relations with Russia¹⁸⁵.

¹⁸⁰ Reuters (2022). Sanctions have frozen around \$300 bln of Russian reserves, FinMin says. Retrieved from: <https://www.reuters.com/article/ukraine-crisis-russia-reserves-idUSL5N2VG0BU>

¹⁸¹ Henry, F., & L, N. A. (2019). Weaponized Interdependence: How Global Economic Networks Shape State Coercion. *MIT Press*. Retrieved from: <https://direct.mit.edu/isec/article/44/1/42/12237/Weaponized-Interdependence-How-Global-Economic>

¹⁸² Zhang, Y. (2022). The Puzzling Silence of the Global South on Russian aggression against Ukraine. Retrieved from: <https://www.scripts-berlin.eu/publications/blog/Blog-62-Zhang-Puzzling-Silence/index.html>

¹⁸³ Fabricius, P. (2023). Abstaining in absentia: does SADC have a common position on Ukraine? *ISS Africa*. Retrieved from: <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/abstaining-in-absentia-does-sadc-have-a-common-position-on-ukraine>

¹⁸⁴ Cuffe, S. (2022). Why did Central America shift UN votes on Russia-Ukraine war? *Al Jazeera*. Retrieved from: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/10/21/why-did-central-america-shift-un-votes-on-the-russia-ukraine-war>

¹⁸⁵ *Guerra Globale: il conflitto russo-ucraino e l'ordine internazionale* (2023). Corriere della Sera.

The case of China is particularly important because of its closer ties and its economic rise and weight. Russia is China's third-largest gas supplier and the source of one-third of its oil imports, as well as its main arms supplier.¹⁸⁶ It can therefore be a key player in bringing Russia to the negotiating table, as it has been asked to do by the West. In the long run, how the relationship between Russia and China takes shape will be decisive in the process of shifting power in the current international system.

Within the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa) and other groupings, China has maintained a consistent line of questioning U.S. hegemony and has supported Russia in its demands against NATO enlargement, and conversely, Russia supports Chinese criticism of Taiwan and the U.S. strategy in the Indo-Pacific and AUKUS. Such support, however, is not unconditional. China, which upholds the principles of sovereignty, non-intervention, and abstention from the use of force, has not condemned but neither supported Russia's operations in Georgia in 2008 and the annexation of Crimea in 2014. In 2022, China's position, as noted above, was similar.¹⁸⁷

2.4.1 China's position

On February 4, 2022, at a time of high tensions with the United States and the EU, Putin met with Xi Jinping. At that meeting, China clearly supported Russia's claims against NATO enlargement; important agreements were signed on Russian gas supplies to China, 25-30 years in advance; and an important declaration was adopted containing a detailed vision of the international order, different from the Western one, and stating that the friendship between the two countries has "no limits, no exclusion zones, and no upper limits." The questions are obvious: Did Russia inform China of its plans in Ukraine? Would it have approved them? If informed, would China have signed such a statement? China could not ignore that such an invasion would put it in an awkward position and, on the other hand, the consequences of a war and the expected wave of sanctions would severely damage its economic interests as China is more exposed to globalization. Until February 23, the Chinese government and media, aligned with Russia, openly questioned U.S. claims of an imminent invasion. According to Russian academic sources, there is little evidence that this issue has been addressed. It may be that Russia did not inform China, but this defies logic because it would have been an affront and would have generated much distrust.¹⁸⁸

It is more likely that there was half-news or talk of a quick and painless operation, in line with the Kremlin's original plan, assuring China that after the predicted collapse of Ukraine, a Western reaction detrimental to its

¹⁸⁶ *The Economist* (2022). How rotten is the Russian army? The unsuccessful invasion of Ukraine becomes dangerous because it is weak. Retrieved from: <https://newsdirectory3.com/how-rotten-is-the-russian-army-the-unsuccessful-invasion-of-ukraine-becomes-dangerous-because-it-is-weak-1-5-jbpress/>

¹⁸⁷ Ross, J. (2021). 'AUKUS' is Anglo-Imperialism resurrected. *BRICS international Portal*. Retrieved from: <http://infobrics.org/post/34169/>

¹⁸⁸ Molinari, M. (2022). *Il ritorno degli imperi*. Rizzoli.

economic interests could not be expected. In any case, the invasion has placed China in the difficult position of positioning itself for a large-scale war involving one of its partners as well as its relations with the West and its economic interests. Beijing does not want to abandon Moscow, but it does not support the invasion, nor does it seek confrontation with Washington. As noted above, it has defended Russia's claims to NATO and reproduces Russian arguments about Europe's subordinate role to the United States; but, at the same time, it has avoided endorsing Moscow's territorial claims-nor has it sought Russian support for its goals in the China Sea-or resuming the "denazification" argument, as this would contradict its traditional foreign policy positions¹⁸⁹. On the other hand, while criticizing the unilateralism of Western sanctions, in practice both the Chinese government and Chinese companies have complied and acted very cautiously to avoid sanctions, and in many cases companies have quickly severed ties with Russia as a result. However, some gestures have gone in the opposite direction, such as the joint flights of Russian and Chinese strategic bombers near Japanese airspace, coinciding with Biden's visit to Japan for a meeting of Quad (Australia, the United States, India, and Japan) leaders in May 2022, joint exercises that have been repeated thereafter.¹⁹⁰

In mid-March, citing undisclosed intelligence information, the United States claimed that Russia was asking for economic and military aid from China, which China immediately denied as disinformation. In public statements and high-level talks between March 15 and 18, the United States said it would adopt economic sanctions against China if China provided such support.¹⁹¹ This episode illustrated China's difficult strategic dilemma: militarily supporting Russia and using Ukraine as a proxy vis-à-vis the West would mean risking costly sanctions and damaging its economic interests. As a trading power, China cannot afford a new "iron curtain" in Europe or globally¹⁹². Whether due to U.S. warnings or threats or China's own strategic calculus, such assistance has not materialized, but neither has China played the role in mediating or influencing Putin that the West perhaps hoped for¹⁹³.

This ambivalent stance of "pro-Russian neutrality" may have eroded China's image and satisfied neither side: it did not provide the support Russia needed and expected from China, nor did it prevent a rapid deterioration of its relations with the United States and countries such as Japan or South Korea, in a scenario where the similarities between Russia and Ukraine and China and Taiwan were very obvious, though generally misleading. Based on this strategic dilemma, Hu Wei (2022), in a widely circulated but perhaps unrepresentative text on the terms of China's internal debate, challenged this position. Assuming Russia's

¹⁸⁹ *Guerra Globale: il conflitto russo-ucraino e l'ordine internazionale*. Corriere della Sera (2023).

¹⁹⁰ *La Russia cambia il mondo*. Limes Magazine Edition 3/2022

¹⁹¹ Wong, E. and Barnes J.E. (2022). Russia Asked China for Military and Economic Aid for Ukraine War, U.S. Officials Say. *New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/13/us/politics/russia-china-ukraine.html>

¹⁹² *U.S.- CHINA: ECONOMIC and SECURITY REVIEW COMMISSION (2022)*. China's Position on Russia's Invasion of Ukraine. Retrieved from: <https://www.uscc.gov/research/chinas-position-russias-invasion-ukraine>

¹⁹³ *La fine della Pace*. Limes (2022)

strategic defeat, this analyst argued that a policy of calculated ambiguity is neither possible nor desirable¹⁹⁴. China should therefore choose the lesser of two evils, aligning itself more clearly with the West in order to preserve its political and economic interests, and, as the only country with the ability and leverage over Russia, should do everything in its power to prevent a cornered Putin from escalating the war.

In fact, upon closer inspection, while it is indisputable that Putin's aggression against Ukraine has challenged the security of the whole of Europe by provoking the strengthening of NATO on the old continent, it is China that is preparing to challenge the U.S. on the most difficult and ambitious terrain: to create a coalition of states representing the majority of the planet's population and to isolate the West with an alternative geopolitical project¹⁹⁵.

Indeed, against the backdrop of this ambitious revival of strategic competition with Washington, based not only on economic growth but also on technological innovation, Xi intends to redefine a multilateral arrangement capable of "encircling" the West.

This strategy was evident in the 14th meeting, held in 2022 in Beijing, with the leaders of Russia, Brazil, India and South Africa where the aim was not only to broaden the audience and other players such as Iran and Argentina, but to create a kind of "friends sharing" among the emerging economies of the planet characterized by the greatest growth prospects. If, therefore, the tools used by Putin to restore Russia to the imperial dignity it possessed in the time of the zars and during the existence of the Soviet Union are the traditional ones: military interventions abroad-Georgia (2008), Crimea and Donbass (2014), Syria (2015), Libya (2017), Mali (2020) and Central Africa (2021) repression of domestic dissent, belief in the inescapable moral decadence of the West. Instead, China pursues global leadership through assertiveness on the new technology front, aggressive and penetrating economic competition with the power of cheaper and more advanced products. Therefore, the Chinese strategy pursued through the Belt and Road Initiative, too, can be described as imperial since it tends to impose itself in large and far-flung geographic areas by leveraging its commercial strength. From this perspective, the war in Ukraine represents an unforeseen incident that may nevertheless prove useful in achieving its own goals¹⁹⁶.

¹⁹⁴ Maul, H. (2022). Why China Isn't Backing Away From Alignment With Russia. *The Diplomat*. Retrieved from: <https://thediplomat.com/2022/04/why-china-isnt-backing-away-from-alignment-with-russia/>

¹⁹⁵ *La Russia cambia il mondo*. Limes (2022).

¹⁹⁶ *La fine della pace*. Limes (2022).

2.5 The European paradox: increasing strategic autonomy while maintaining closer relations with the United States

Prior to the Russian attack on Ukraine, the EU was already in a moment of “geopolitical awakening”¹⁹⁷, driven by the following elements: a strong socio-economic and fiscal response to the pandemic (NextGenerationEU), with the great leap in the federal direction represented by the common debt; the ecological transition and the European Green Pact’s push toward renewable energy; and the quest for greater strategic autonomy. With all this, the EU has also sought to transform itself to meet the challenges of the crisis of globalization and the liberal international order.

The Russian attack on Ukraine, far from being a brake, has accelerated these transformations. In the words of European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, this war represents a real turning point for Europe, its worldview, and its relations with Russia.¹⁹⁸

Beyond the eminently reactive nature of the EU’s action in the face of the Ukrainian invasion, security and defense policy, even before the Ukrainian invasion, shows a rapid process of Europeanization and rapid progress in terms of a common vision of threats and security. A key element is the adoption of the “Strategic Compass” in March 2022.¹⁹⁹ This document, similar to a national defense “white paper,” is the first of its kind, and work began in November 2020. The final version of this document was modified to take into account the consequences of the invasion of Ukraine. It integrates a strategic context assessment based, for the first time, on classified information, and 72 proposals for action.²⁰⁰

Despite the trauma of Ukraine, the document envisions an incremental process of strengthening military capabilities, in many cases with measures to be implemented between 2025 and 2030, with improvements in efficiency and complementarity of spending, and increased EU action in four “strategic domains” for access to the global economy: air, maritime, space, and cyber. Moreover, the document confirms what was already established in the 2016 Global and Security Strategy, and reinforced by the invasion of Ukraine: the EU, instead of seeking a global role, opts for strategic “retrenchment” or “shrinkage,” and will devote more attention to the arc of instability stretching from the Arctic to Eastern Europe to North Africa.²⁰¹

¹⁹⁷ Bergmann, M. (2022). Europe’s Geopolitical Awakening. *Foreign Affairs*. Retrieved from: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/europe/2020-08-20/europes-geopolitical-awakening>

¹⁹⁸ European Commission (2022). Statement by President von der Leyen on further measures to respond to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Retrieved from: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_22_1441

¹⁹⁹ Kolotylo, M. (2022). Strategic Compass – towards secure European Union? *Diritti Comparati*. Retrieved from: <https://www.diritticomparati.it/strategic-compass-towards-secure-european-union/>

²⁰⁰ D. Fiott and G. Lindstrom (2021). Strategic Compass. New bearings for EU security and defence? *European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS)*. Retrieved from: <https://www.iss.europa.eu/content/strategic-compass>

²⁰¹ Z. Paikin and D. Gros (2022). ¿La guerra en Ucrania fortalecerá a la Unión Europea? *Política Exterior*. Retrieved from: <https://www.politicaexterior.com/la-guerra-de-putin-en-ucrania-hara-mas-fuerte-a-la-ue/>

As in the past, this action strengthens the EU within NATO and is geared toward the EU assuming greater security and defense responsibilities. It is again a compromise between different EU perspectives on NATO and the North Atlantic link, including in the post-invasion context of Ukraine. This bond has been reevaluated, but the scenarios opened by the U.S. elections cannot be ignored. Faced with the risk of a moment of rupture in 2024, like the Bush presidencies, with the invasion of Iraq, or Trump's, it would be necessary to continue betting on the EU's strategic autonomy.²⁰²

In energy, the war has shown the risks of heavy dependence on Russian gas, particularly from Germany, and the weaponization of interdependencies by authoritarian leaders, which accelerates the crisis of globalization and marks the return of geopolitics to the international economy²⁰³. It also expresses the failure or limits of an alternative geopolitical strategy based on economic ties – the “change through trade” or *Wandel durch Handel* – in the face of the rise of authoritarian leaders and unredeemed nationalisms. This strategy, promoted by Germany, was based on building a network of interdependencies between Europe and Russia that, through common interests, was supposed to improve understanding with Russia within the “common European house.” Despite the warnings, European vulnerability in the energy field and the risk of coercive use of gas increased after the Russian attacks on Ukraine in 2014, due to the rapid abandonment of coal in the EU and the willingness to shut down nuclear power plants. This has meant an increased commitment to Russian natural gas as a transitional energy, with projects such as the Russian-German Nord Stream 2 pipeline, whose construction was completed in September 2021, having to be suspended without becoming operational.²⁰⁴

In the face of the invasion, the EU adopted the largest sanctions in its history, but these initially did not affect Russian oil and gas imports. The EU, and Germany in particular, do not appear to be able to cope with a total disruption of these supplies²⁰⁵, and while alternatives exist, these include rationing and price hikes, as set out in a plan to move away from dependence on Russian gas drawn up in March 2022 by the International Energy Agency (IEA).

2.5.1 REPowerEU

Between March and May 2022, the Commission drew up the REPowerEU plan to achieve energy independence from Russia as soon as possible, reducing Russian gas consumption by two-thirds by the end of

²⁰² Mützenich, R. (2022). La guerra y el cambio de época en Europa. *Nueva Sociedad*. Retrieved from: <https://nuso.org/articulo/la-guerra-y-el-cambio-de-epoca-en-europa/>

²⁰³ Pisani- Ferry, J. (2022). *The Geopolitical Conquest of Economics. Project Syndicate*. Retrieved from: <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/geopolitics-is-trumping-economics-by-jean-pisani-ferry-2021-09?barrier=accesspaylog>

²⁰⁴ Marsh, S. and Chambers, M. (2022). Germany freezes Nord Stream 2 gas project as Ukraine crisis deepens. *Reuters*. Retrieved from: <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/germanys-scholz-halts-nord-stream-2-certification-2022-02-22/>

²⁰⁵ Anderson, R. (2008). Europe's Dependence on Russian Natural Gas: Perspectives and Recommendations for a Long-term Strategy. *Marshall European Center For Security Studies*. Retrieved from: <https://www.marshallcenter.org/en/publications/occasional-papers/europes-dependence-russian-natural-gas-perspectives-and-recommendations-long-term-strategy-0>

2022 while accelerating the goals of the European Green Pact. As he stressed, “We must become independent of Russian gas, coal, and oil. We cannot rely on a supplier that explicitly threatens us”²⁰⁶. The plan is based on three pillars: first, curbing energy prices, with regulated prices, temporary taxes on profits “falling from the sky” of power companies, which will finance aid to households and small businesses, and a temporary framework of aid to the hardest hit companies. The second is to increase gas reserves to cope with the winter 2022-2023. The third is to accelerate the energy transition by increasing investment in renewables, biogas, and green hydrogen, temporarily keeping coal or nuclear power, and diversifying gas purchases to other countries, such as Qatar, Egypt, Algeria, or, most importantly, the United States. This implies significant changes in energy geopolitics and difficult dilemmas to overcome: while moving toward a more autonomous model based on renewables, the disconnection from Russian gas means greater dependence on the United States, with liquefied natural gas from fracking operations, which is more polluting, and from outside suppliers with dubious democratic credentials.²⁰⁷

In many ways, these emergency measures are reminiscent of true “war economy” plans. They involve heavy government intervention in energy markets and considerable planning efforts. They illustrate, once again, the irruption of geopolitics into the globalized economy and the implications of the coercive use of economic interdependencies. They will also have important fiscal implications. The pandemic has led to the suspension of fiscal rules, the approval of a large reconstruction fund and the issuance of common debt. The war in Ukraine is also an exogenous shock, with asymmetric effects on the costs of sanctions, energy, inflation and refugee assistance. This may require a common European response, which has not yet been adopted, to keep the transformational agenda of the Green Pact alive, finance the energy transition, maintain EU political unity vis-à-vis Russia, particularly on energy and sanctions, and address growing social discontent that, if left unchecked, could lead to political rifts that again strain the European project.²⁰⁸

Ultimately, the Russian attack on Ukraine shows that the adoption of the new economic and social model based on decarbonization, energy transition, and EU strategic autonomy are inseparable. According to Commission Vice President Frans Timmermans, “It is time to address our vulnerabilities and quickly become more independent in our energy choices. Let’s launch renewables at the speed of light. Renewables are a cheap, clean and potentially inexhaustible source of energy, and instead of funding the fossil fuel industry elsewhere, they create jobs here. Putin’s war in Ukraine demonstrates the urgency of accelerating our transition

²⁰⁶ *European Commission* (2022). REPowerEU: Joint European action for more affordable, secure and sustainable energy. Retrieved from: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_1511

²⁰⁷ Storbeck, O. and Sheppard, D. (2022). “Germany fires up coal plants to avert gas shortage as Russia cuts supply”, *Financial Times*, Retrieved from: <https://ceipaz.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/3.JoseAntonioSanahuja.pdf>

²⁰⁸ Draghi, M. and Macron, E. (2021). “The EU’s fiscal rules must be reformed”. *Financial Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ft.com/content/ecbdd1ad-fcb0-4908-a29a-5a3e14185966>

to clean energy”²⁰⁹. Meanwhile, on Monday, December 19, at the summit of energy ministers with only Hungary opposing and the Netherlands and Austria abstaining, a cap on the price of gas was introduced in the amount of 180 euros per Mwh, set to be triggered if a delta of more than \$35, on the international quotation of liquid natural gas, occurs for three consecutive days.²¹⁰

2.6 A war of transition: uncertain scenarios

In 2017, the hypothesis was put forward that the international system was going through a crisis of globalization, and thus of hegemony. It was thus in what Antonio Gramsci called an “interregnum”: “The crisis consists precisely in the fact that the old dies and the new cannot be born: in this interregnum the most varied morbid phenomena occur”.²¹¹ This would be an international system in transition, in which elements of globalization still survive, although it is no longer a historical hegemonic structure and the contours of its successor are not yet defined. The weakening of hegemonic structures that characterizes the crisis of globalization as an “interregnum” has generated favorable conditions for the emergence and rise of nationalist and far-right leaders and forces that challenge the international order, with multiple geopolitical stakes, and systemic instability.²¹²

In this context, the war in Ukraine can be considered an interregnum war²¹³. It is so because of its sudden and in many ways unforeseen outbreak and its military development, which defied most predictions. It is also so because of the uncertainty surrounding its future development and because of the knowledge that its outcome may have far-reaching consequences for the formation of the European security order and, though not definitive, for the formation of the future international order.

For some actors, the Ukrainian war means a return of the West and the North Atlantic axis, but this assumption presupposes a broad military and political defeat of Russia, which could even lead to regime change in the Kremlin, as President Biden himself once said, only to deny it shortly thereafter. This vision and mission has been taken up by more Atlanticist actors, perhaps nostalgic for the “end of history moment.” It was Francis Fukuyama (2022) himself who outlined this scenario in a text that, while prospective in tone, can also be seen

²⁰⁹ *European Commission* (2022). Statement by President von der Leyen on further measures to respond to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Retrieved from: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_22_1441

²¹⁰ *Ekathimerini* (2022). EU countries mull 180eur/MWh trigger for gas price cap, draft shows. Retrieved from: <https://www.ekathimerini.com/economy/1200632/eu-countries-mull-180eur-mwh-trigger-for-gas-price-cap-draft-shows/>

²¹¹ Babic, M. (2020). Let's talk about the interregnum: Gramsci and the crisis of the liberal world order, *International Affairs*. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiz254>

²¹² Babic, M. (2021). “Let’s talk about the interregnum: Gramsci and the crisis of the liberal world order”, *International Affairs*. Retrieved from: <https://academic.oup.com/ia/article/96/3/767/5712430>

²¹³ *EEAS* (2022). Europe in the Interregnum: our geopolitical awakening after Ukraine. Retrieved from: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/europe-interregnum-our-geopolitical-awakening-after-ukraine_en

as a roadmap for this vision. In early March, after Russia's withdrawal from Kiev, Fukuyama took a risk-in his own words, "exposed himself" – by predicting a total defeat of Russia.²¹⁴

Such a defeat would be the result of entering the war without the military capacity to sustain the invasion, under the erroneous assumption that the population would be majority pro-Russian and that the Ukrainian army and government would quickly collapse. Such a defeat, moreover, would be "sudden and catastrophic" when the Russian army's morale and logistics were simultaneously broken. Fukuyama also argued that a diplomatic solution or compromise is not possible because of the costs that the parties have already assumed. The West, for its part, would do well to refrain from establishing a no-fly zone or sending fighter jets, as these are "red lines" for Russia, as this would drag it into war.²¹⁵ However, it should continue to provide critical intelligence, anti-tank and anti-aircraft missiles and drones. Putin, finally, would not survive such a defeat politically, and his fall would also drag with him the populists and nationalists (Zemmour, Salvini, Le Pen, Bolsonaro, Orbán, and even Trump) who have been sympathetic to him and who reflect, in other countries, his positions. For China, such a defeat would be "a good lesson" that would lead it to backtrack on its plans for Taiwan and seek accommodation in the liberal order of the West. Fukuyama concludes, "A Russian defeat will make possible a 'renaissance of freedom' and will banish our fears about the declining state of global democracy. The spirit of 1989 will live on thanks to a handful of brave Ukrainians." More than a prediction, Fukuyama's text reflects a political program with the roadmap and exit scenario from the war proclaimed by the most radical Atlanticists, whether in government, media or think tanks.²¹⁶

2.6.1 War in Ukraine: Geopolitical hurricane

The invasion of Ukraine has been a geopolitical hurricane that has led the U.S., the EU and other European countries to major shifts in their reading of the world and security and defense, particularly in Germany or the Nordic countries that have applied for NATO membership. It should be noted that, at least in the first few months, the unity of purpose and action between the U.S. and the EU, managed to maintain the same unity of purpose and action and within the latter, is unprecedented. Such unity would not have occurred without an event as serious, and as difficult to imagine, as a large-scale invasion of a European country, but perhaps, as Jorge Luis Borges said, at this moment "we are united not by love, but by fear" in the face of events that, if successful, would challenge European integration, the international order, and the global role of the West²¹⁷.

²¹⁴ *Fridrich Ebert Stiftung New York Office* (2022). The Return of the West? Retrieved from: <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/international/19816.pdf>

²¹⁵ *Fridrich Ebert Stiftung New York Office* (2022). The Return of the West? Retrieved from: <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/international/19816.pdf>

²¹⁶ *Fridrich Ebert Stiftung New York Office* (2022). The Return of the West? Retrieved from: <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/international/19816.pdf>

²¹⁷ *La Russia cambia il mondo*. Limes (2022)

First, on the battlefield, the contenders are showing visible signs of fatigue and have entered a costly phase of a war of attrition, in which Russia is making some gains, with many losses, but without substantial changes on the battlefield. The resilience of the Ukrainians and the Russian military disaster have led to a continuing reassessment of the goals of Ukraine and its Western supporters, particularly the United States, as in the case of the battle for Kiev. But at this stage of stalemate and attrition in Dombas, one question is even more pressing: what will be the outcome of this war? Even today it is difficult to give an answer on this question. For the West, these are very complex compromises and issues. There is a group of “hawks” betting on more support for Ukraine, including Poland, the United Kingdom, the Czech Republic, the Baltic republics, and some sectors of the U.S. military leadership, as illustrated by Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin’s statements. In a sense, they assume a proxy war, through Ukraine, with Putin’s Russia. Their goal is to defeat Russia and liberate all Ukrainian territory, including Crimea, assuming it is possible²¹⁸. This view is based on the uncertain and dangerous assumption that Russia will accept such an outcome without escalation and without resorting to nuclear weapons. As a tough New York Times editorial (2022) pointed out, military defeat and expulsion of Russia beyond the 2014 borders is an unrealistic and very risky goal, and the issue of territorial cessions to achieve peace cannot be avoided. A subsequent article by President Biden advocates an “independent, free, sovereign, and prosperous Ukraine,” pledges U.S. support, and adds that “I will not pressure the Ukrainian government, publicly or privately, to make territorial concessions,” formally leaving decisions on this issue affecting the outcome of the war in their hands. It is clear, in any case, that the Ukrainian government’s room for maneuver will be largely contingent on Western support.²¹⁹

In the United States, in short, the Biden administration is in a moment of uncertainty. There is an argument within his administration that Russia has in fact already suffered a strategic defeat and will be a shadow of its former self in economic, military and reputational terms, and has failed to prevent NATO enlargement, indeed, the opposite has happened.

A more reflexive stance, such as that advanced by France or Germany, is based on the idea that “Russia cannot win and Ukraine cannot lose,” and modulates support in such a way as to avoid the risk of escalation, both economic and military, and that Ukraine does not have to accept inalienable territorial commitments. However, this clashes with the red lines of both Russia and Ukraine, and, as Ukrainians fear, such a policy results in piecemeal military support that allows them to continue fighting, at great cost, but not to regain territory, not even to reach the ante bellum situation of the eve of the invasion, which Zelensky argues can be called “victory” and kick-start a ceasefire and peace negotiations.²²⁰ An article by Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba, published in June 2022, goes in this direction: he insists on the call for Western military

²¹⁸ Carracciolo, L. (2022). *La Pace è finita: così ricominciamo la storia in Europa*. Feltrinelli

²¹⁹ Biden, J. R. (2022). President Biden: What America Will and Will Not Do in Ukraine. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/31/opinion/biden-ukraine-strategy.html>

²²⁰ Trofimov, Y. (2022). Ukraine Fears Defeat in East Without Surge in Military Aid. *Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/ukraine-fears-defeat-in-east-without-surge-in-military-aid-11655092861>

assistance, but links it to a negotiated way out of the war, since without such assistance Ukraine will not be able to come to the negotiating table. In a veiled way, Kuleba suggests that negotiations can be conducted on the basis of the February 23 situation and how that situation should be acceptable to Putin; he also outlines a much worse alternative scenario for Russia, with Western support, if the Kremlin does not accept that option. On the other hand, the European Commission's June 2022 proposal to designate Ukraine as a candidate country to have an EU membership horizon, which Russia has not explicitly opposed, could be a good compromise to get Ukraine to give up NATO membership, as Russia has requested.²²¹

Internationally, this return of the West to a position of primacy seems to have neither the reach nor the recognition that Fukuyama proclaims. As Amitav Acharya (2022) points out, the unity and steadfastness of these months of war may not last, and instead of revitalizing the West, the Russian invasion of Ukraine may accelerate its decline or level the playing field with the non-Western world.²²²

As noted above, the West does not enjoy the support of the global South, particularly China, whose future role will be decisive in shaping the international order in one direction or another. Moreover, convergence between the United States and Europe should not be taken for granted²²³. As the war drags on, asymmetries in cost-sharing between the two sides and within Europe worsen, and disagreements on how to resolve them emerge, this unity could break down. A key element is the situation in the United States, where the Biden administration, while internally facing heavy problems due to the many fault lines opened by the intervening heavy rift between the Democratic and Republican parties with former President Trump seeking revenge “in spite of financial investigations and accusations of coupism,” which, by the way, was not achieved in the November elections, is busy fending off the attempt by Russia and China to redefine the international order to their advantage. Thus, while in Europe it has succeeded in strengthening the NATO bloc, in Asia in an anti-China function the new Quad formula stands out, nations ready to lend their support to the US should China try to invade Taiwan. At the moment Biden has succeeded in compacting a broad anti-Russian front by moving on the following directives: strong economic-military cohesion with Europe, heavy sanctions on Moscow and sending arms to Kiev, support for Zelensky's negotiating attempts involving Ankara and Jerusalem, dialogue with Beijing to find a solution to achieve a cease-fire in Ukraine.²²⁴

However, if we were to determine today who is profiting most from the war in Ukraine, we would not be wrong in pointing to Turkey as the country that sees, in this time frame, its role in the international chessboard increased. The strategic idea that Erdogan is achieving is to return to being a hegemonic presence in the

²²¹ McGee, L. (2022). Why Ukraine's longshot bid to join the EU is likely to enrage Putin. *CNN*. Retrieved from: <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/06/16/europe/ukraine-nato-membership-putin-analysis-cmd/index.html>

²²² Acharya, A. (2022). The Return of the West? *The Multiplex World*. Retrieved from: <https://multiplexworld.com/2022/06/05/the-return-of-the-west/>

²²³ *La Guerra Globale: il conflitto russo-ucraino e l'ordine internazionale*. Corriere della Sera (2023)

²²⁴ La fine della pace. *Limes editon* (2022)

Mediterranean. Thus, its ties with NATO and the US ensure it a significant and leading role in the interlocution with Russia on which it depends for energy supplies albeit with the prospect favored by Putin himself of being able to become the platform where all energy sources coming not only from Russia but also from Azerbaijan and even Qatar can flow and then be routed to Europe²²⁵.

Cleverly extricating himself from adhering to sanctions against Moscow, Erdogan has become a key player in the negotiation of grain exports from Ukraine by managing to make possible the transportation and delivery of that primary commodity to North Africa, the Middle East and Italy, averting the risk of a food crisis in the poorest countries on the planet. But his project is much more ambitious, because it rests on the conviction that the conflict between Moscow and Kiev will lead to an irremediable rift between East and West destined to last in Europe and the Mediterranean. In this way it would thus enable Ankara to extend its influence from the Bosphorus to Gibraltar, from North Africa to the Bab el-Mandeb Strait just as the link with Qatar constitutes the bridgehead for operations to the Persian Gulf. It is also noteworthy to record its active presence in more negotiating tables beyond that of increased engagement in Ukraine: from the demand in Helsinki and Stockholm to expel Kurdish opponents in exchange for support for their entry into NATO, to the tug-of-war with Moscow and Tehran to extend Syrian Kurdish territory under Turkish control to the delivery of armed drones to Kiev.²²⁶

The future global economic scenario will also be decisive. The war in Ukraine is also being fought within societies, in the area of fuel, energy and food prices. In the second half of 2022, there has been a serious deterioration in socio-economic conditions in Western societies and around the world: reduced growth, rising energy and food prices, and a high risk of stagflation. This will have direct social and electoral effects and is also one of the scenarios in which Russia is operating. Societal fatigue and tensions in the international economy may also affect support for Ukraine²²⁷.

The war in Ukraine, as indicated, has also led to a rapid and radical reassessment of the EU's relationship with the United States and its position in NATO, with unprecedented levels of cooperation and coordination. This joint action, illustrating the reactivation of the North Atlantic axis, which is regaining strategic centrality, can be seen in politico-diplomatic issues, sanctions, defense policy, military aid to Ukraine, and energy supply, given the risks posed by Europe's heavy dependence on Russian gas and oil. The role of the United States is decisive in the military field, directly and through NATO, with weapons and intelligence that the EU alone

²²⁵ Wilks, A. (2022). As Russia's war in Ukraine drags on, Turkey's role expands. *Al Jazeera*. Retrieved from: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/11/15/how-turkey-positions-itself-during-the-war-in-ukraine>

²²⁶ *PBS NewsHour* (2022). Turkey President Erdoğan on Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the future of NATO. Retrieved from: <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/turkey-president-erdogan-on-russias-invasion-of-ukraine-and-the-future-of-nato>

²²⁷ *La Guerra Globale: il conflitto russo-ucraino e l'ordine internazionale*. Corriere della Sera (2023)

could not provide; and in the energy sector, directing more liquefied natural gas (LNG) to the EU to replace Russian gas²²⁸.

However, the renewed transatlantic relationship that spurred the invasion of Ukraine cannot be read simplistically in terms of strategic subordination. In an apparent paradox, this is accompanied by a visible strengthening of the EU and its capabilities. This is demonstrated by the equally unprecedented unity of action within the EU-27. In the face of skeptical views about the EU, the vigorous deployment of sanctions and other measures in the days after the invasion—including the decision, for the first time, to provide direct military assistance—is also a sign of the EU’s material and symbolic relevance and capacity, and has given rise to a renewed sense of purpose about Europe, its importance to its citizens and its place in the world, as well as a clear desire for autonomy or strategic sovereignty in defense, energy or strategic supply chains and resources.²²⁹ In short, the war represents a much larger strategic shift for Europe than for the United States, in terms of access to energy sources, trade ties, foreign relations, and even pattern and identity.

In such a project, the EU, as Jürgen Habermas (2022) has suggested, cannot and should not give up its historical baggage, values, and post-heroic ethos for reasons of legitimacy and internal consensus. The EU certainly cannot make its own the bellicose ardor found elsewhere, particularly in the reborn Atlanticism assumed in the United States or in Eastern and Northern Europe, and even in Ukraine itself. But having its own project in this interregnum scenario means making decisions about the price to be paid in terms of political and economic autonomy, energy and even defense. It is an urgent task for the European Union to seek a security architecture beyond its participation in NATO and a model for long-term relations with Russia that cannot be based either on a chronic state of war or on the naturalization of a new “iron curtain” that is highly militarized and securitized, very expensive and, in the long run, ineffective in providing security.²³⁰ The need for a new security architecture in Europe beyond NATO, mutual trust-building, arms control, and conventional and nuclear disarmament are imperatives that have been abandoned in recent years, either through deliberate intention to dismantle the post-Cold War network of agreements or through neglect or inattention. These issues now imperatively define a new peace and security agenda to which Europeans themselves and the EU institutions must respond with greater strategic autonomy. Even so, the prevalence of the national interest over the EU interest must be recorded in action. However, while it is true that the issue of security is now on the agenda following Putin’s military aggression against Ukraine and the consequent demand for NATO protection by European countries, one cannot neglect to consider the more obvious change in the global

²²⁸ *La Guerra Globale: il conflitto russo-ucraino e l'ordine internazionale*. Corriere della Sera (2023)

²²⁹ Mützenich, R. (2022). La guerra y el cambio de época en Europa. *Nueva Sociedad*. Retrieved from: <https://nuso.org/articulo/la-guerra-y-el-cambio-de-epoca-en-europa/>

²³⁰ Tooze, A. (2022). “The second coming of Nato. The alliance has been revived – but it can’t save the West”, *The New Statesman*. Retrieved from: <https://www.newstatesman.com/international-politics/geopolitics/2022/06/nato-summit-the-second-coming>

geopolitical framework characterized by the challenge between the U.S., or rather the West, and China, which has thrown down the gauntlet for global leadership²³¹.

Evidence of this, the multilateral summit in Samarkand, Uzbekistan, which followed the relaunch of the BRICS, launched the previous July, where the ambition to revive strategic competition with Washington aimed at laying the foundations of a new multilateral arrangement designed to downsize the role of the West in the world, became clear. In the meeting of Brics leaders mentioned above, Xi Jinping called on Brazil, Russia, India and South Africa to look beyond their current growth difficulties, aiming to “broaden the organization” to include Argentina and Iran as well in order to create a community of countries corresponding to a “supply chain of interests” with the aim of distancing India from the Western camp by offering New Delhi the alternative of sitting with Beijing in the control room of a network of privileged trade among the most populous populations on the planet.²³²

2.6.2 G20 Bali

On Nov. 15 and 16, heads of state of the world’s largest economies gathered in the annual G20 Summit, this year held in Bali, Indonesia. As much as the Summit’s motto “Recover Together Recover Stronger” emphasizes themes dear to Indonesia, the herald of developing countries, the War in Ukraine and the competition between Great Powers reigned supreme during the Summit days. Probably the greatest success of the G20 lies precisely in the group’s ability to include a passage in the Final Declaration firmly condemning Russian aggression in Ukraine, emphasizing that threats to use a nuclear weapon are unacceptable and that, at the present time, is not the time for war. There is no denying how the inclusion of such a passage as an outcome of a summit that also included Russia (through Foreign Minister Lavrov), is an achievement of the Indonesian presidency. One can also perceive a strong coordination and participation of India in that formulation, especially in reference to the last sentence, which echoes Indian President Modi’s warning to Vladimir Putin given at the Summit in Samarkand²³³. And it is precisely India that is one of the most prominent players in the hot days of Bali, evidenced by the fact that each country took care to carve out a moment of bilateral dialogue with President Modi in order to strengthen cooperation and elevate relations with an emerging Great Power in the years to come: ironic as it may seem, in the face of New Delhi’s need to condemn Russian aggression,

²³¹ *La Russia cambia il mondo*. Limes (2022)

²³² Navbahor, I. (2022). Ukraine War Overshadows SCO Summit in Uzbekistan. *VOA*. Retrieved from: <https://www.voanews.com/a/ukraine-war-overshadows-sco-summit-in-uzbekistan-/6745871.html>

²³³ Fraioli, L. (2022). Gli effetti del G20 di Bali sul clima. *La Repubblica*. Retrieved from: https://www.repubblica.it/green-and-blue/2022/11/16/news/cop27_effetti_g20_bali_clima-374783549/

even Kremlin diplomacy did not see fit to object, for fear of alienating an indispensable partner in terms of both energy supplies and armaments.²³⁴

Net of Indonesia's moderate success and India's increasingly preponderant role, the undisputed star of this G20 was the first vis-a-vis meeting between Biden as U.S. President and Xi Jinping. In light of the deterioration of relations between the two superpowers in recent years, both in trade and especially in security matters (recall the Chinese reaction to Congress Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan last August), it was noted how the strategic competition between China and the United States may be slipping toward a rivalry in its own right, with tones often referred to as "cold war." The outcome of the bilateral summit between the two heads of state, described by both as "frank" and "direct," shines through slightly encouraging signs: first, the common intention not to slide into a rivalry in the proper sense, in the wish to seek common ground on major global challenges (security, environment), and the mutual rejection of the use of the nuclear threat. Second, both say they have drawn certain "red lines" that cannot be crossed, in an attempt to bring such a "rivalry" back into the tracks of a "competition," which assumes there are nonetheless rules and principles that apply to both competitors; both then expressed willingness to strengthen channels of official dialogue, and in this regard Biden announced that he would send Secretary of State Blinken to Beijing in the coming months²³⁵. The U.S. president also said he had provided some reassurances to Beijing, particularly regarding Taiwan and North Korean missile tests. Regarding Taiwan, Biden reiterated how the United States will oppose any unilateral change in the status quo, stressing that while his administration opposes forced annexation by the People's Republic, it will also oppose Taiwanese attempts to officially proclaim independence from the mainland. Regarding the North Korean nuclear threat, Biden reassured Xi that should the United States protect its allies (South Korea and Japan) from dangerous missile tests by Pyongyang, possible actions and operations in this regard should not be viewed by Beijing as a threat to the People's Republic.²³⁶

It thus seems clear that today the enemy to be beaten for the U.S. is not so much Russia but rather China, also because the excessive weakening of the Russian Federation would increase the power of Chinese influence in the European area as well. This also justifies American resistance to supplying too many weapons to Zelens'kyj in order to avoid a totally disastrous outcome of the conflict for Russia, which in such an eventuality would also be forced to play the card of the atomic arsenal harmful to the whole planet.²³⁷

²³⁴ *G20 Indonesia* (2022). G20 BALI LEADERS' DECLARATION. Retrieved from: https://www.g20.org/content/dam/gtwenty/gtwenty_new/about_g20/previous-summit-documents/2022-bali/G20%20Bali%20Leaders%27%20Declaration,%2015-16%20November%202022.pdf

²³⁵ Fraioli, L. (2022). Gli effetti del G20 di Bali sul clima. *La Repubblica*. Retrieved from: https://www.repubblica.it/green-and-blue/2022/11/16/news/cop27_effetti_g20_bali_clima-374783549/

²³⁶ *The White House* (2022). G20 Bali Leaders' Declaration. Retrieved from: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/11/16/g20-bali-leaders-declaration/>

²³⁷ *La Russia cambia il mondo*. Limes edition 2022

If this is the basic scenario, however, the situation instead of proceeding in a linear manner at the beginning of the new year, still appears far from being able to reach a peace talk. Taking into account, that the condition posed by Ukraine is only that of an unconditional withdrawal of Russian troops from their territory; while that of Moscow is not to give up the geographic areas already occupied in the Donbas also because such a solution is opposed by the Russian constitution, which stipulates the absolute necessity of defending the annexed territories by all means. So much so that the proposal for a cease-fire, put forward by Putin to celebrate the Orthodox Christmas anniversary, was rejected as it was considered, especially by the U.S., to be aimed solely at reorganizing troops and devising new attack strategies²³⁸.

²³⁸ Bianchi, A. (2022). I cinque scenari con cui potrebbe concludersi la guerra in Ucraina. *EuropaToday*. Retrieved from: <https://europa.today.it/attualita/scenari-conclusione-guerra-ucraina.html>

Chapter III: Sanctions: Types and Effects

The sanctions imposed by the European Union (EU) on Russia in the context of the conflict in Ukraine have been widely criticized for their alleged lack of real effectiveness. In 2014, the EU established the first sanctions, which failed to break the Kremlin's objectives in relation to the annexation of Crimea and the occupation of Donetsk and Lugansk provinces.

However, Russia has prepared for further retaliation in the future, such as the EU sanctions packages imposed in 2022 following Russia's military invasion of Ukraine. This chapter analyses the context of the restrictive measures imposed, comparing those of 2014 with those of 2022, to assess the real impact they had.

3.1 What sanctions has the EU adopted so far?

Almost a year after the start of the Russian-Ukrainian war, many analysts are questioning the real effectiveness of the multiple sanction measures imposed by the West on the Russian Federation. The question is complex and requires a detailed analysis of the various aspects related to this issue.

First of all, it should be pointed out that the sanctions package we are going to analyze follows other measures already adopted since 2014. In fact, after the annexation of Crimea by Russia²³⁹, the EU, in condemning the illegal annexation, adopted various sanctioning measures including: the freezing of individual assets, the freezing of trade and investment in infrastructure, transport, telecommunications, oil and gas energy and tourism. In July of the same year, other measures included restrictions on refinancing for five state-owned banks, three companies active in the energy sector and three in the defence sector. In addition, an embargo on military equipment to and from Russia was imposed, as well as a ban on the export of certain goods and a requirement for prior authorization for the export of materials and technologies in the energy sector, as well as a ban on the export of materials and technologies for exploration and extraction of oil and gas in waters deeper than 150 metres.

Subsequently after the poisoning of Skripal and Navalny, the EU reacted in 2019 by ordering the freezing of assets and blocking of contracts, a ban on access to the EU for some Russian officials in connection with the attack.²⁴⁰

²³⁹ Hellyatt, H. (2022). Russia took Crimea from Ukraine in 2014. Now, Kyiv is fighting back. *CNBC*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/08/18/russia-took-crimea-from-ukraine-in-2014-now-kyiv-is-fighting-back.html>

²⁴⁰ Bali, M. (2018). The Impact of Economic Sanctions on Russia and its Six Greatest European Trade Partners: a Country SVAR Analysis. *ФІНАНСИ І БІЗНЕС*. Retrieved from: <https://shs.hal.science/halshs-01918521>

3.1.1 Sanctions 2014

The first sanctions imposed by the EU on Russia, as a consequence of the conflict in Ukraine, took place in March, April and May 2014. They involved banning Russian citizens from being issued entry visas to the EU and freezing their assets within European territory. The sanctions specifically targeted a list of individuals and entities that carried out actions that specialized or endangered security in Ukraine and obstructed the work of international organisations. Subjects were added to this list over time, reaching 177 individuals and 48 entities in 2021.²⁴¹

Another important part of the sanctions focused exclusively on Crimea, limiting the investments that EU citizens could make on the peninsula and banning the export of certain goods, technologies and services. Parallel to the sanctions, the EU launched its diplomatic team with the specialized of the Normandy Quartet and provided economic assistance to Ukraine in an attempt to reduce its dependence on Russia. In terms of international diplomacy, Russia was expelled from the G8 in March 2014.²⁴² In fact, 2014 was a crucial year for Russian diplomacy. In that year, the Ukrainian region of Crimea was annexed back to Russia in contravention of international law. The main consequence of this episode, which further sunk the Ukrainian crisis already exacerbated by secessionism in the eastern regions, was Russia's exclusion from the G8, the forum of the world's top eight economies. The leaders of the G7, the group of seven countries with the world's most developed economies, decided to suspend the Russian government's participation in the G8 following the serious international crisis that had developed around the annexation of Crimea to Russian territory. Russia had joined the group-which for this reason had become G8 from G7-in 1997, mainly for political reasons. In addition, in a joint communiqué released at the end of a two-hour closed-door meeting, the heads of government of France, Germany, Italy, the United Kingdom, Japan and Canada announced the suspension of the G8 meeting scheduled in Sochi, Russia, for next June, and added that they would hold a meeting in Brussels at the same time (but without Russia). The joint statement, also published in Italian on the government website, specifies that Russia's suspension from the G8 will last until the Russian government changes its attitude within the group²⁴³.

In July 2014, the scope of sanctions was expanded, limiting Russia's access to EU capital markets and banning imports of arms and dual-use goods and imports of equipment and technology related to oil extraction or exploration. This was a turning point in European sanctions policy, as from then on the EU merely renewed

²⁴¹ Sánchez, A. (2016). Política comercial exterior de la Unión Europea y las sanciones a Rusia. *Dialnet*. Retrieved from <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=5690525>

²⁴² Korhanen, L. (2019). Economic Sanctions on Russia and Their Effects. *CESifo Forum*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ifo.de/DocDL/CESifo-Forum-2019-4-korhanen-economic-sanctions-december.pdf>

²⁴³ ISPI (2021). Storia del G20, un paese alla volta: Russia. Retrieved from: <https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/storia-del-g20-un-paese-alla-volta-russia-31868>

sanctions every six months and added individuals and entities to the sanctions list, unlike the US, which imposed new ones. The six-monthly sanctions review clause was introduced by Germany, which is the EU member state that exports the most to Russia and thus suffers the most from sanctions.²⁴⁴

The political aim of the sanctions was never for Russia to return Crimea and leave Ukrainian territory completely, but rather for the Russian government's actions to go no further²⁴⁵. From the above, it can be deduced, that if the EU had wanted to crack down on Vladimir Putin's regime, it would have imposed other, harsher sanctions, instead of merely curtailing trade in certain products and limiting the access of certain actors in the Russian economy to EU capital markets. The logical question to ask is: why did the EU not opt for stronger sanctions that would have really damaged the Russian economy? There are several factors that answer this question.²⁴⁶

First of all, imposing sanctions on a small country is not the same as imposing sanctions on a country that is on equal footing and able to react. Russia has proven to be a global military power, present in many parts of the world and with an aggressive foreign policy, capable of expelling ambassadors from its territory. Moreover, it has an immense territorial extension and is rich in strategic resources, which all countries need²⁴⁷. Secondly, Russia and the EU have very close trade relations. In the period from 2011 to 2014, Russia was the EU's third largest trading partner, behind only the US and China. On the other hand, several EU countries, such as France and Germany, were Russia's main trading partners²⁴⁸. This mutual dependence explains, for example, why the US can impose more restrictive sanctions against Russia, since without such dependence, sanctions do not affect Russia as much²⁴⁹.

Another key factor is energy resources, as oil and gas production accounts for half of all Russian exports and almost a third of Russian budget revenues²⁵⁰. A ban on exporting energy resources²⁵¹ to the EU would have been the most important sanction to sink the Russian economy, but the EU would have faced a serious problem, as it has a worrying dependence on Russian oil and gas²⁵².

²⁴⁴ Ahn, D. P. and R. D. Ludema (2019), "The Sword and the Shield: The Economics of Targeted Sanctions". *CESifo Working Paper*. Retrieved from: <https://docslib.org/doc/7586132/economic-sanctions-on-russia-and-their-effects>

²⁴⁵ Ferrero, R. (2020). Las sanciones de la UE hacia Rusia en el contexto del conflicto ucraniano. *Revista CIDOB d'Afers Internacionals*. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.24241/rcai.2020.125.2.187>

²⁴⁶ Barsegyan, G. (2019), "Sanctions and Countersanctions: What Did They Do?". *BOFIT*. Retrieved from: <https://www.econstor.eu/handle/10419/216248>

²⁴⁷ BBC (2021). Cómo Putin logró restaurar el estatus de Rusia como potencia global tras el colapso de la URSS hace 30 años. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-internacional-59671737>

²⁴⁸ Sánchez, A. (2016). Política comercial exterior de la Unión Europea y las sanciones a Rusia. *Dialnet*. Retrieved from <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=5690525>

²⁴⁹ Bret, C. (2021). European Union / Russia. Sanctions, what next?. *Institut Jacques Delors*. Retrieved from: https://institutdelors.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/PP260_210322_SanctionsRussie_Bret_EN.pdf

²⁵⁰ Russell, M. (2022). Western sanctions and Russia. What are they? Do they work?. *European Parliamentary Research Service*. Retrieved from: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2022/698930/EPR_S_IDA\(2022\)698930_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2022/698930/EPR_S_IDA(2022)698930_EN.pdf)

²⁵¹ McWilliams, B., and Sgaravatti, G. (2022). L'Europa può vivere senza il gas russo?. *Il Grand Continent*. Retrieved from: <https://legrandcontinent.eu/it/2022/03/06/leuropa-puo-vivere-senza-il-gas-russo/>

²⁵² Polo, M. (2022). Sul gas l'Europa ha un problema. *Lavoce*. Retrieved from: <https://www.lavoce.info/archives/93576/sul-gas-leuropa-ha-un-problema/>

Russia was not interested in sanctions on oil and gas exports either, as it would have lost its main buyer and would have had to sell its resources in other markets of the world, where buyers are not willing to pay the same price as European countries. In short, the EU ruled out sanctions with short-term effects (import bans) and opted for a strategy with long-term effects, which consists of reducing Russia's oil production and extraction capacity by banning the export of equipment and technology. The strategy will take effect in a few years, when infrastructure and machinery will become obsolete and oil projects, such as those Russia has in the Arctic, will have to be suspended. Until this happens, Russia will have no problem extracting energy resources from underground.²⁵³

3.1.2 Impact of Sanctions in 2014

One might think that sanctions contributed to slowing the growth of the Russian economy, but in reality, the key factors were the drop in oil prices, structural problems in the Russian economic model and the depreciation of the ruble, which had been dragging on for years. However, Putin managed to strengthen the Russian economy following the sanctions and countermeasures by implementing the import substitution system, which consists of replacing all imports that Russia no longer receives with domestically sourced products.²⁵⁴

The main advantage of this policy is to improve the quality of products manufactured in Russia, as the state invests large amounts of money in developing local agriculture and production. In this way, the country's domestic consumption of commodities is covered, employment rates increase, surplus products generated can be exported and dependence on other countries is reduced.²⁵⁵ Thanks to import substitution, domestic agribusiness production in Russia has grown by 31% since 2014 and the trade balance has begun to balance. It is also fair to say that the success of this policy has been accompanied by the invaluable help of Belarus, which has increased its imports of products from the European single market tenfold each year, with the more than likely aim of acting as an intermediary with Russia in an attempt to circumvent trade sanctions.²⁵⁶

However, import substitution also has disadvantages. One example is dual-use (military and civil) products such as electronic circuits, turbines or tools for repairing and assembling machinery, which are very important for a country's military industry. The ban on exporting these products to Russia has led to the postponement

²⁵³ Consejo Europeo, Consejo de la Unión Europea. Medidas restrictivas de la UE contra Rusia por sus actos en Ucrania (desde 2014). Retrieved from: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/es/policies/sanctions/restrictive-measures-against-russia-over-ukraine/>

²⁵⁴ Barsegyan, G. (2019), "Sanctions and Countersanctions: What Did They Do?". *BOFIT*. Retrieved from: <https://www.econstor.eu/handle/10419/216248>

²⁵⁵ Chernysheva, A.; Degtereva, E.; Trofimova, A. (2019). Forming market instruments of import substitution strategy in Russia as a result of the sanctions policy related to events in Ukraine. *Opción*. Retrieved from: <https://produccioncientificaluz.org/index.php/opcion/article/view/27453>

²⁵⁶ Russell, M. (2022). Western sanctions and Russia. What are they? Do they work?. *European Parliamentary Research Service*. Retrieved from: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2022/698930/EPR_S_IDA\(2022\)698930_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2022/698930/EPR_S_IDA(2022)698930_EN.pdf)

of some war machine construction projects. As a result, the Kremlin had to rely on domestic production and the purchase of dual-use products from the Asian market. This change has affected the quality of Russian armaments, especially in the aerospace and aviation sectors, which rely on electronic components and microchips for their navigation systems²⁵⁷. Another example is the Sputnik V vaccine for Covid-19, which had to be produced elsewhere because Russia did not have the necessary production capacity. Due to these production problems and the complexity of the vaccine production process, Russia reneged on supply contracts with Argentina, Iran and Guatemala.²⁵⁸

Import substitution therefore risks reducing the efficiency of the Russian economy and raising prices. While the agri-food sector has improved its domestic production capacity, other sectors have not been able to create competitive products for the Russian market. This type of protectionism improves the country's resistance to sanctions, but prevents it from benefiting from the competitive advantages and economies of other countries²⁵⁹.

Furthermore, the fact that the energy sector was excluded from the sanctions meant that Russia continued to increase its gas and oil exports to Europe, even embarking on pipeline construction projects such as Nord Stream 2, which connects Russia to Germany via the Baltic Sea; TurkStream, which connects Russia to Turkey via the Black Sea; and Siberian Power I, which connects Russia to China.²⁶⁰ Consequently, sanctions have not had a significant impact on EU-Russia trade.

In conclusion, we can say that EU sanctions have not been effective in curbing Russia's economy and external action. The US played a very important role in pressuring the EU to impose sanctions to please the Ukrainians and look good to the rest of the international community. This is why we can say that there has been no real interest in sanctioning or monitoring compliance with sanctions. For example, Russia circumvented many of the embargoes on the export of goods from the European market thanks to Belarus, which acted as an intermediary.²⁶¹

However, even if the sanctions had not been effective, it would not have been appropriate to suspend them because it would have been seen as a sign of weakness and failure, undermining EU values and objectives.²⁶² Furthermore, the 2014 sanctions demonstrated that EU Member States can reach unanimous agreements on

²⁵⁷ Russell, M. (2022). Western sanctions and Russia. What are they? Do they work?. *European Parliamentary Research Service*. Retrieved from: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2022/698930/EPR_S_IDA\(2022\)698930_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2022/698930/EPR_S_IDA(2022)698930_EN.pdf)

²⁵⁸ Crozet, M. and Hinz, J. (2019), Friendly Fire: The Trade Impact of the Russia Sanctions and Countersanctions. Retrieved from: <https://matthieucrozet.weebly.com/uploads/6/0/2/7/60271695/sanctionsep.pdf>

²⁵⁹ Rossi, E., De Arcangelis, G., & Mariani, R. (2020). Le sanzioni alla Russia: effetto economico e scopo politico. *Etica ed Economia*. Retrieved from: <https://eticaeconomia.it/le-sanzioni-alla-russia-effetto-economico-e-scopo-politico/>

²⁶⁰ Russell, M. (2022). Western sanctions and Russia. What are they? Do they work? *European Parliamentary Research Service*. Retrieved from: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2022/698930/EPR_S_IDA\(2022\)698930_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2022/698930/EPR_S_IDA(2022)698930_EN.pdf)

²⁶¹ Christie, E. H. (2016), "The Design and Impact of Western Economic Sanctions against Russia", *RUSI Journal*. Retrieved from: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03071847.2016.1193359>

²⁶² Bret, C. (2021). European Union / Russia. Sanctions, what next?. *Institut Jacques Delors*. Retrieved from: https://institutdelors.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/PP260_210322_SanctionsRussie_Bret_EN.pdf

CFSP and maintain them over time, as sanctions were renewed every six months with the unanimous approval of the Member States.²⁶³

3.2 Sanctions 2022 from February to December

Russia's military offensive in Ukraine provoked rejection from a large number of countries, which came to the conclusion that diplomatic channels were no longer sufficient to resolve the conflict and that the only viable option to curb Putin's aspirations was the imposition of new sanctions. The fact that sanctions were imposed in bloc by several states is crucial in isolating the Russian economy and generating such discontent among the population that it could lead to the fall of the current government²⁶⁴. If only one country had imposed sanctions, the desired effect could not have been achieved. However, in this section there will be an analysis of the restrictive measures adopted by the EU alone and how they compare to those of 2014, placing the time frame of the study between 23 February 2022 (first sanctions package) and 8 April 2022 (fifth sanctions package).²⁶⁵

In February 2022, the EU imposed unprecedented sanctions against Russia in response to the unprovoked and unjustified invasion of Ukraine on Feb. 24, 2022 and the illegal annexation of the Ukrainian regions of Donetsk, Luhansk, Zaporizhzhia and Kherson. They are in addition to existing measures imposed on Russia since 2014 following the annexation of Crimea and the failure to implement the Minsk agreements. The new sanctions include targeted restrictive measures (individual sanctions) that are targeted at individuals who are responsible for supporting actions that undermine Ukraine's territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence or individuals who benefit from such actions and economic sanctions that undermine to hinder Russia's ability to continue aggression.

3.2.1 First Sanctions Package

After mobilizing troops along the Ukrainian border for several months on the charge of conducting military tests and training, Russia took a further step on 21 February 2022 by 62pecializin the Ukrainian provinces of Donetsk and Luhansk, which are not controlled by the Ukrainian government, as independent. The parliaments of the two provinces voted to ratify treaties of friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance with Russia, allowing the latter to deploy its troops in these areas.

²⁶³ Belin, M. and J. Hanousek (2019), "Which Sanctions Matter? Analysis of the EU/Russian Sanctions of 2014", *CEPR Discussion Paper*. Retrieved from: <https://cepr.org/publications/dp13549>

²⁶⁴ Barbati, M. (2022). Pace e politica. Far tacere le armi, far parlare la diplomazia. *Micromega*. Retrieved from: <https://www.micromega.net/pace-e-politica-far-tacere-le-armi-far-parlare-la-diplomazia/>

²⁶⁵ *European Council, Council of the European Union* (2023). EU sanctions against Russia explained. Retrieved from: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/restrictive-measures-against-russia-over-ukraine/sanctions-against-russia-explained/>

The EU realized that Ukraine's territorial integrity and sovereignty had been violated and, on 23 February, imposed the first sanctions package on Russia. When specializ this, it should be kept in mind that at that time Russia had not yet attacked Ukraine militarily and, consequently, the degree of severity of the sanctions was proportional to the violation in question.²⁶⁶

The package was divided into three groups of restrictive measures: targeted sanctions, specific sanctions for the Lugansk and Donetsk oblasts, and financial sanctions: The targeted sanctions refer to the expansion of the sanctions list created following the 2014 conflict. The list included 351 members of the State Duma, who voted in favour of asking Putin to specializ the independence of Lugansk and Donetsk, and 27 other individuals including politicians, oligarchs, businessmen, bankers and high-ranking military officers. It should be noted that inclusion on the list entails the freezing of funds and assets held by the individual on EU territory and a ban on travel to EU member states²⁶⁷. These types of sanctions followed the continuity of 2014, as they are a mere copy of what the EU has been doing for the past few years, i.e. renewing sanctions every six months and including new individuals and entities on the sanctioned list. Therefore, they were neither a surprise nor a threat to the Kremlin. Secondly, the EU imposed specific sanctions on the Lugansk and Donetsk oblasts, consisting of a ban on importing goods into Europe from these oblasts, providing them with financial assistance, purchasing real estate or entities located on their territory, exporting goods or technology, and providing them with tourist services.²⁶⁸

In this case, the EU tried to get Russia to back down and revoke its recognition of the independence of Donetsk and Luhansk, thus respecting international law and the Minsk agreements. Clearly, these sanctions were not effective, as Russia ignored them and continued to pursue its aspirations, this time military²⁶⁹.

Finally, the EU applied financial sanctions restricting the access of Russia, its government and the Russian Central Bank to EU capital market financing. Excluded from this restriction, however, are loans and credits intended to finance the unbanned export or import of non-financial goods and services, i.e. both the export and import of energy resources. In other words, we are back to the tone of the 2014 sanctions that sought to restrict Russia's access to EU capital markets, leaving out the energy sector due to its importance for many EU member states. In conclusion, the first sanctions package was a continuation of the 2014 sanctions, opting for moderate restrictive measures with the clear aim of deterring Russia from continuing to violate Ukraine's

²⁶⁶ *European Council, Council of the European Union (2022)*. History - EU restrictive measures against Russia in relation to Ukraine. Retrieved from: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/it/policies/sanctions/restrictive-measures-against-russia-over-ukraine/history-restrictive-measures-against-russia-over-ukraine/>

²⁶⁷ *Il sole 24 Ore (2022)*. Tutte le sanzioni contro la Russia: l'Ue congela i beni di Putin e Lavrov. Retrieved from: <https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/le-sanzioni-dell-occidente-contro-russia-AE6ncCGB>

²⁶⁸ *Confindustria (2022)*. Il primo pacchetto di sanzioni UE. Retrieved from: https://www.confindustria.it/wcm/connect/eff43400-2c5c-4609-b26f-fba552ce3835/Nota+Crisi+Ucraina+-+Russia+-+primo+pacchetto+sanzioni+UE+24+febbraio+2022.pdf?MOD=AJPERES&CONVERT_TO=url&CACHEID=ROOTWORKSPACE-eff43400-2c5c-4609-b26f-fba552ce3835-nZgzVgc

²⁶⁹ Feltri, S. (2022). Dalla Crimea al Donbass: perché in otto anni le sanzioni alla Russia non hanno mai funzionato. *Domani*. Retrieved from: <https://www.editorialedomani.it/politica/mondo/dalla-crimea-al-donbass-perche-otto-anni-di-sanzioni-alla-russia-non-hanno-funzionato-gfcox0h1>

territorial integrity and sovereignty. In this way, the EU reserved the bulk of the sanctions for the eventuality of an escalation of the conflict, as has since occurred.²⁷⁰

3.2.2 Second Sanctions Package

On 24 February 2022, Russia crossed the red line and began its military incursion into Ukrainian territory with the aim of “64pecializing6464 and denazifying Ukraine, as well as prosecuting those who have perpetrated numerous bloody crimes against civilians, including citizens of the Russian Federation”²⁷¹.

The day after the invasion began, the EU responded by approving the second sanctions package. The speed of the response suggested that the EU had already prepared these sanctions in advance, in case the conflict escalated. Vladimir Putin and Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov were added to the list of sanctioned persons, along with other members of the Russian National Security Council, other members of the State Duma, and all Belarusian citizens who supported Russian aggression. This is the first change we can observe from the 2014 sanctions, as these were not imposed directly against Putin and Lavrov, but against their close circle.²⁷²

In addition, the EU opted for new economic sanctions, further restricting the access of Russian banks and companies to EU financial markets. It restricted “the listing and provision of services related to shares of Russian state-owned entities on EU trading venues” and banned European banks from accepting deposits from Russian citizens exceeding EUR 100,000.

On the other hand, much of the second sanctions package focused on exports. In particular, the export of technology and dual-use goods that could contribute to the improvement of Russia’s military, defence and security system (e.g. semiconductors) was banned, as well as the export of goods for oil refining, so that Russia cannot repair or 64pecializ its oil industry.

Another measure was to ban the sale of aircraft, spare parts and aerospace equipment to Russia, as well as the provision of repair or overhaul services related to this industry. This particularly concerns them, since more than half of the active commercial aircraft of Russian airlines are leased from Western companies. Moreover, most of the spare parts required for aircraft and engine maintenance are produced by companies outside Russia²⁷³. Added to this is the problem of Russia’s dependence on foreign companies to operate air transport, being the country with the largest land area on the planet and needing aircraft to transport goods and people

²⁷⁰ M.Brüggemann and A.Lippert (2023). EU authorized new sanctions against Russia. *TaylorWessing*. Retrieved from: <https://www.taylorwessing.com/en/insights-and-events/insights/2022/02/neue-eu-russland-sanktionen-im-zuge-der-ukrainekrise>

²⁷¹ R. Treisman (2022). Putin's claim of fighting against Ukraine 'neo-Nazis' distorts history, scholars say. *NPR*. Retrieved from: <https://www.npr.org/2022/03/01/1083677765/putin-denazify-ukraine-russia-history>

²⁷² S. Mann and O. König (2022). EU agrees on second wave of significant sanctions against Russia. *Sanctions and export controls update*. Retrieved from: <https://sanctionsnews.bakermckenzie.com/about-the-blog/>

²⁷³ Brailsford, D (2022). How long can Russian airlines maintain their aircraft? *IBA*. Retrieved from: <https://www.iba.aero/insight/how-long-can-russian-airlines-maintain-their-aircraft/>

and, in general, for the functioning of the economy. Putin had no choice but to sign a law whereby all Western aircraft chartered by Russia could be registered in the country and thus confiscated.

Finally, the EU partially suspended the visa facilitation agreement with Russia. The suspension of the agreement meant that Russian diplomats, businessmen and officials were prohibited from acquiring citizenship or residence permits of member states through specializing or investment residence programmes. The purpose of this sanction was to prevent Russian citizens with high purchasing power from acquiring citizenship of one of the EU Member States and, consequently, European citizenship, which would give them access to European financial systems.²⁷⁴

In short, even this second sanctions package did not add the measures that could have hurt the Russian economy the most, such as the ban on importing energy resources from Russia or the expulsion of Russian banks from the SWIFT interbank messaging system. However, we see how the EU has started to tighten economic sanctions, compared to 2014, and broaden the range of restrictive measures, such as those related to visa policy and the ban on the export of aerospace products and technologies. As in the first package, the EU decided not to apply the harshest sanctions and to follow a progressive strategy, as forecasts indicated that Russia would continue to increase troop deployments and the EU needed to save resources in order to have a better negotiating position in the future.²⁷⁵

3.2.3 Third Sanctions Package

Shortly after the launch of the second sanctions package, the EU decided to impose the third package to be issued on different dates. On 28 February 2022, the EU granted aid worth EUR 500 million to Ukraine on the basis of the European Peace Fund. This sum is intended to finance the supply of weapons and war machines to strengthen the resistance of the Ukrainian armed forces, the first time the EU has supplied lethal weapons to a third country.

The second part of the third sanctions package was issued on 1 March 2022 and consisted of the suspension of the broadcasting activities of the stations Russia Today and Sputnik until Russia stopped its offensive in Ukraine and the Russian media stopped disinformation campaigns aimed at creating false news against the EU and its member states.²⁷⁶

²⁷⁴ *European Commission* (2022). Commission proposes full suspension of Visa Facilitation Agreement with Russia. Retrieved from: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_5346

²⁷⁵ Otten, R. (2022). Ukraine conflict: What is Swift and why is banning Russia so significant? *BBC*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-60521822>

²⁷⁶ *European Council, Council of the European Union* (2022). History - EU restrictive measures against Russia in relation to Ukraine. Retrieved from: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/it/policies/sanctions/restrictive-measures-against-russia-over-ukraine/history-restrictive-measures-against-russia-over-ukraine/>

For years, Russia has been specializing neighbouring countries by manipulating information and using it as propaganda against certain European political parties, especially during elections.

Undoubtedly, the third part of the third sanctions package was the most important and the most innovative compared to the 2014 sanctions because, as we announced earlier, one of the measures that could most harm Russia was the expulsion of its banks from the Society for World Interbank Financial Telecommunication (SWIFT) system. This system is the banks' main tool for making interbank payments, investments, transfers and other similar transactions, but it is not used to handle securities or funds. Most international transactions take place through SWIFT, as more than 11,000 financial institutions in over 200 countries are connected and almost all transfers are made in dollars, the main currency of international trade. The success of the system is largely due to its security, as messages sent are encrypted and once a transfer has been made, it cannot be interrupted. In addition, messages are transmitted within seconds anywhere in the world and the fees per transfer are very low.²⁷⁷

The EU also decided to exclude seven Russian banks from the SWIFT system, along with all legal persons or entities established in Russia that own more than 50 per cent of one of the sanctioned banks. This means that the sanctioned Russian banks cannot disclose the origin and destination of the transfers they make. However, not all Russian banks have been disconnected from SWIFT, but only some and not for all types of transactions. The disconnected banks can still use the system to report transactions related to the sale of energy resources to European countries, as both Russia and the EU rely heavily on SWIFT to buy and sell oil and gas, which are traded in dollars²⁷⁸.

It would be logical that banks disconnected from SWIFT could circumvent the ban by using connected banks as intermediaries or by connecting to other interbank messaging systems. However, any alternative to SWIFT is not feasible, as it entails many costs, including for Russia. For example, the Cross-Border Interbank Payment System (CIPS), which is China's interbank messaging system, connects only 1,304 financial institutions from 104 different countries and can only be used to make payments in yuan, a rare currency for international transactions²⁷⁹. Similarly, the Financial Message Transfer System (SPFS), which is the Russian system, is only connected to about 400 banks and only operates during business hours from Monday to Friday, whereas SWIFT operates 24/7.

The only real option for Russian banks remains to use some sort of two-way messaging system, by phone, fax or mobile applications such as WhatsApp. The transaction verification process would then have to be done manually, requiring a group of people to process all payments and to send faxes and phone calls for each

²⁷⁷ Blenkinsop, P. (2022). EU bars 7 Russian banks from SWIFT, but spares those in energy. *Reuters*. Retrieved from: <https://www.reuters.com/business/finance/eu-excludes-seven-russian-banks-swift-official-journal-2022-03-02/>

²⁷⁸ Alonso, N.S. (2022). Reservas de oro y divisas, menos deuda y diversificación: así se ha preparado Rusia para las sanciones internacionales. *Newtral*. Retrieved from: <https://www.newtral.es/reservas-capital-rusia-preparado-ucrania-sanciones-ue/20220228/>

²⁷⁹ Verón, N. and Chag, F. (2022). Why did China build its Cross-Border Interbank Payment System and what does it mean for the dollar? *Peterson Institute for international economics*. Retrieved from: <https://www.piie.com/events/why-did-china-build-its-cross-border-interbank-payment-system-and-what-does-it-mean-dollar>

transaction. This system would have several disadvantages, as it would entail high costs, would not be error-free and would have security problems²⁸⁰.

As if Russia's problems with the SWIFT blockade of some of its banks were not enough, the EU also banned transactions with the Russian Central Bank relating to the management of reserves and obliged member states to refuse Russian aircraft 'permission to land, take off or fly over EU territory'. The freezing of the Russian Central Bank's foreign reserves is extremely important because, as we have seen above, the country prepared for the economic isolation sanctions for years by accumulating a large international currency reserve.²⁸¹ The freezing of the Russian Central Bank's foreign reserves is an extremely important measure because, as we saw earlier, the country prepared for years for economic isolation sanctions by accumulating a large stock of international currency reserves to support and specialize the value of its currency. However, many of Russia's reserves are located in European countries and the United States, so freezing these assets means losing almost half of Russia's available reserves, or 55.2% (\$350 billion). The main consequences of the freezing of Russia's foreign reserves are the depreciation of the rouble, inflation, and an increase in the price of imports from Russia that have not been banned, such as those from China. The Kremlin responded with countermeasures banning foreign and domestic currency transfers out of Russia.²⁸²

On the other hand, it is worth noting that Russian oil and gas imports were once again excluded from the third sanctions package. As we have already analyzed, Russia is the main European supplier of oil, gas, coal and timber. Oil imports are more diversified and, if Russia were to cut off supplies, the EU could find other options such as Saudi Arabia or Iran. However, the EU is heavily dependent on Russian gas and has no similar or cheaper alternatives, as Russia, due to its geographical proximity, can supply gas directly through pipelines already in operation (lower transportation costs make gas cheaper)²⁸³.

The EU strategy in this context is not to sanction Russian exports of energy resources, but to gradually stop buying them. The first step was taken by Germany on 22 February 2022, when German Chancellor Olaf Scholz suspended Nord Stream's certification process, withdrawing a binding opinion from October 2021 that the pipeline posed no threat to the state's security of supply²⁸⁴. It is worth mentioning that Nord Stream is a gas pipeline, owned by the Russian state-owned Gazprom, connecting Ust-Luga (Russia) to Greifswald (Germany), crossing the exclusive economic zone of Finland, Sweden and Denmark. Its importance lies in the

²⁸⁰ Bergin, T. (2022). Explainer: Russia could work around SWIFT ban but with high costs. *Reuters*. Retrieved from: <https://www.reuters.com/markets/europe/russia-could-work-around-swift-ban-with-high-costs-2022-03-07/>

²⁸¹ Albanese, C. and Follain, J. (2022). EU Approves Banning Transactions With Russian Central Bank. *Bloomberg*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-02-27/eu-approves-banning-all-transactions-with-russian-central-bank?leadSource=verify%20wall>

²⁸² Verón, N. and Kirschenbaum J. (2022). Now is not the time to confiscate Russia's central bank reserves. *Bruegel*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bruegel.org/blog-post/now-not-time-confiscate-russias-central-bank-reserves>

²⁸³ Magnani, A. (2022). Petrolio, oro, gas: a che punto sono le sanzioni Ue alla Russia. *Il Sole 24 ORE*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/petrolio-oro-gas-che-punto-sono-sanzioni-ue-russia-AEyWcbiB>

²⁸⁴ Belkin, P.; Ratner, M.; Welt, C. (2022). Russia's Nord Stream 2 natural gas pipeline to Germany halted. *Congressional Research Service*. Retrieved from: <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF11138>

fact that it has a transport capacity of 55 bcm of gas per year, doubling the capacity of the existing Nord Stream pipeline to 110 bcm per year and proportionally increasing Russia's economic benefits. In fact, the main reason for building Nord Stream 2 was to bypass Ukraine in the Russian gas transport route to Germany. In this way, Ukraine would not be able to benefit from the application of a tariff for the passage of gas through its territory.²⁸⁵

In addition to the suspension of the Nord Stream 2 certification process, which was an independent act of Germany as a sovereign state, the European Commission launched the REPowerEU plan, with the goal of making member states completely independent of Russian fossil fuels by 2030. The plan aims to replenish the EU's gas reserves by winter (they must be 90 per cent by 1 October each year) and reduce Russian gas imports by two-thirds. To compensate for the gas shortfall, the Commission has proposed three basic pillars.²⁸⁶

The first and most important is the diversification of gas supplies by increasing imports of liquefied natural gas. This type of fossil fuel is obtained by cooling gas to 160 degrees Celsius below zero, turning it into a liquid state. Liquefied gas is easy to transport with LNG carriers, but the problem is that it is more expensive than pipeline gas because, in addition to the transport costs, it must be returned to its natural gaseous state in a regasification plant once it reaches its destination. In any case, the US and the EU have reached an agreement to increase the supply of liquefied natural gas by 15 bcm by the end of 2022 to 50 bcm per year by 2030. This does not mean that there will be a shift towards the use of US liquefied gas at the expense of Russian conventional gas, because the US consumes 80% of the gas it produces and exports only 10% in the form of liquefied gas. Moreover, if the US were to increase its liquefied gas exports beyond this limit, EU countries would have to build more regasification plants, which would mean having time that they do not have, according to the EU's climate targets.²⁸⁷

The second pillar of the REPowerEU plan aims to accelerate the production of biogas and renewable hydrogen and to double biomethane production to 35 billion m³ by 2030.

The third pillar proposes to increase the use of renewable energy as quickly as possible by implementing the Fit for 5572 proposals, to improve energy efficiency and thus to reduce gas consumption by 30 per cent by 2030.

In conclusion, the Commission's plan could be seen as yet another sanction, as it seeks to prevent Russia from continuing to finance the war in Ukraine, thanks to the revenue it gets from gas sales to the EU, and to prevent the Kremlin from using gas as an element of extortion when negotiating agreements.²⁸⁸

²⁸⁵ Pita, C.; Maqueda, A. (2022). El suministro de gas a Europa, en el foco del conflicto entre Rusia y Ucrania. *Newtral*. <https://www.newtral.es/suministro-gas-europa-conflicto-rusia-ucrania/20220121/>

²⁸⁶ Pita, C.; Maqueda, A. (2022). El suministro de gas a Europa, en el foco del conflicto entre Rusia y Ucrania. *Newtral*. <https://www.newtral.es/suministro-gas-europa-conflicto-rusia-ucrania/20220121/>

²⁸⁷ Doménech, E. (2022). El gas natural licuado de EEUU y la guerra de Ucrania. *Newtral*. Retrieved from: <https://www.newtral.es/gas-natural-licuado-eeuu-guerra-ucrania/20220305/>

²⁸⁸ Liboreiro, J.; Pitchers, C. (2022). EU will slash imports of Russian gas by two thirds by 2023. *Euronews*. Retrieved from: <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2022/03/08/eu-will-slash-imports-of-russian-gas-by-two-thirds-by-2023>

3.2.4 Fourth Sanctions Package

The fourth package, issued on 15 March 2022, aimed to reduce Russia's arms financing capacity. To this end, the EU imposed restrictions on rating activities, banned imports of Russian steel products and restricted exports of luxury goods and industrial equipment and technology to Russia. In addition, famous Russian oligarchs such as Roman Abramovich (known to be the former President of Chelsea Football Club), German Khan and Konstantin Ernst (CEO of Channel One Russia) were added to the list of sanctioned persons.

All the sanctions packages, including the fifth one discussed below, were accompanied by extensions of the sanctions list. As of April 2022, the list already included 1,091 persons and 80 entities. These measures aim to undermine the wealth enjoyed by the oligarchs and powerful people who helped Putin gain the office of President in 2000. However, most of them can withstand the sanctions, as their fortunes are scattered in tax havens around the world.²⁸⁹

3.2.5 Fifth Sanctions Package

The war in Ukraine has become increasingly heated, as evidenced by the accusations of war crimes against Russia in connection with the execution of civilians in the Ukrainian city of Bucha. Furthermore, Putin reacted to the EU's strong sanctions by signing an executive order for foreign companies buying Russian gas to use the rouble as payment currency, thus supporting the value of the national currency. The only way to buy Russian gas in another currency is to open a current account with Gazprombank, so that the bank can later change the currency into roubles and the Kremlin can receive payments in its own currency.²⁹⁰

Faced with this situation, the EU imposed its fifth sanctions package on 8 April 2022, banning states from importing coal from Russia, although the ban does not take effect until 22 August, allowing states to look for alternative suppliers. Coal suppliers are easily replaceable, as coal, being a sedimentary rock, does not require any special treatment or infrastructure for its transport, unlike, for example, gas. So much so that the Verein der Kohlenimporteure even stated that Germany could replace all Russian coal imports with other suppliers within a few months. Among the likely suppliers are the United States, which, according to data from the U.S. Energy Information Administration, has increased coal production by 7% in 2022 and exports by 4%. Other suppliers are Colombia, Australia and South Africa²⁹¹.

To put the Russian coal import ban in context, it is good to know that the EU has reduced coal consumption in recent decades to meet climate targets. For their part, Member States have gone from consuming 1.2 billion

²⁸⁹ *European Commission* (2022). Ukraine: EU agrees fourth package of restrictive measures against Russia. Retrieved from: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_1761

²⁹⁰ Liboreiro, J. (2022). Poland, Ireland and the Baltics push for EU sanctions on Gazprombank and Russian diamonds. *Euronews*. Retrieved from: <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2022/09/23/poland-ireland-and-the-baltics-push-for-eu-sanctions-on-gazprombank-and-russian-made-diamo>

²⁹¹ Blandón, D. (2022). Europa busca carbón en medio de nuevas sanciones contra Rusia: ¿quién podría suplirlo? *France 24*. Retrieved from: <https://www.france24.com/es/programas/econom%C3%ADa/20220406-europa-busca-carbon-rusia-sanciones>

tonnes of coal in 1990 to 427 million tonnes in 2020²⁹². Coal production has decreased faster than its consumption, so the EU has had to increase imports. However, coal currently accounts for only 13% of electricity production, as the EU's environmental policies aim precisely at discouraging the use of coal as an energy resource, as it is highly polluting.

It is worth noting that in early 2022, some EU countries increased their purchases of Russian coal for power generation due to its low cost and rising oil and gas prices, making it possible to reopen coal mines and power plants²⁹³. However, this is only sustainable in the short term, as it does not make sense to invest money in coal transport and production in the medium to long term, while the Commission pushes for strict policies to reduce coal use.

According to McWilliams et al. (2022), 45 per cent of EU coal imports come from Russia, as do 70 per cent of imports of thermal coal used to generate electricity. The ban on these imports represents a loss of EUR 4 billion per year for Russia, the first direct EU sanction imposed on the Russian energy sector. Although this is a significant measure, it is less so when compared to the restriction of gas and oil imports, as only 6% of the EU's energy imports are solid fossil fuels such as coal. For example, the EU pays EUR 15 million per day to Russia for coal, while it pays EUR 850 million for gas and oil.²⁹⁴

In addition to the restrictions on Russian coal, the fifth sanctions package also banned the road transport of Russian goods to the EU and the access of Russian ships to EU ports. Other measures include a ban on the provision of cryptocurrency escrow services to Russian citizens – if their total value exceeds €10,000 – and a restriction on the supply of jet carbide and fuel additives to the Russian aerospace sector.²⁹⁵

3.2.6 Sixth Package

The EU Council decided on 3 June 2022 to impose a sixth economic and individual sanctions package against both Russia and Belarus.

The objectives of the sixth package are to limit the Kremlin's ability to finance the war, to ban the import of Russian oil into the EU, to exclude other large Russian banks from the SWIFT international payment system, to sanction those responsible for the actions that occurred in Bucha and Mariupol, and to sanction disinformation actors who contribute to Russian propaganda.²⁹⁶

²⁹² Keating, D. (2022). With its Russian coal ban, the EU blocks a fuel it wasn't using much. *Energy Monitor*. Retrieved from: <https://www.energymonitor.ai/sectors/power/with-its-russian-coal-ban-the-eu-blocks-a-fuel-it-wasnt-using-much>

²⁹³ Pandey, A. (2022). How can the EU survive without Russian coal? *DW*. Retrieved from: <https://www.dw.com/en/how-can-the-eu-survive-without-russian-coal/a-61379128>

²⁹⁴ McWilliams, B. (et al.), (2022). Can Europe manage if Russian oil and coal are cut off? *Bruegel*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bruegel.org/2022/03/can-europe-manage-if-russian-oil-and-coal-are-cut-off/>

²⁹⁵ *European Commission* (2022). Question and answers on the fifth package of restrictive measures against Russia. Retrieved from: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_22_2333

²⁹⁶ *European Commission* (2022). Russia's war on Ukraine: EU adopts sixth package of sanctions against Russia. Retrieved from: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_2802

The oil import ban is a particularly heavy measure when one considers that in 2021 alone the European Union imported EUR 48 billion of crude oil and EUR 23 billion of refined oil products from Russia. The measure is mitigated for European countries that are particularly dependent on Russian pipelines, which will be able to benefit from a temporary exemption until a new Council decision and continue to use the pipelines for their own internal consumption, but will not be able to resell Russian crude oil and oil products to other EU countries or third countries. Bulgaria is allowed until 2024 to import by sea, while Croatia until the end of 2023 will be able to import Russian vacuum gas oil, necessary for the operation of its refinery.²⁹⁷

In addition to the measures in the energy field, it is forbidden to directly or indirectly provide Russian companies with a whole range of services (accounting, auditing, including statutory auditing, and tax consultancy services) including administrative and management consultancy and public relations services to the Russian government and to legal persons and entities or bodies established in Russia.

Excluded from the Swift Sberbank, two other major Russian banks, and one Belarusian bank in order to consolidate Putin's financial isolation. Also suspended were the broadcasting activities of three channels (Rossiya RTR/RTR Planeta, Rossiya 24/Russia 24 and TV Centre International), considered to be means of disinformation and propaganda in the hands of the Kremlin.²⁹⁸

3.2.7 Seventh Package

On July 21, 2022, the seventh package of sanctions against Russia was published in the OJEU (Official Journal of the European Union). This seventh package, called "maintenance and alignment," aims to strengthen the implementation of the measures already in place, prevent their circumvention, and extend their scope. Unlike the sixth package, which was the result of a long and contentious negotiation, the new measures were agreed upon quickly and by written procedure.

The seventh package introduced the import of gold and jewellery articles containing gold (which, after energy products, are the most significant export item). Moreover, certain lists of goods and technologies subject to a ban on transfer or export to or for use in Russia are supplemented and/or replaced the scope of the ban on access to EU ports of vessels registered under the Russian flag is extended to locks, in order to prevent circumvention of the measure and the prohibition on accepting deposits is extended to deposits from legal

²⁹⁷ *Dentons* (2022). EU: sixth package of sanctions against Russia. Retrieved from: <https://www.dentons.com/en/insights/alerts/2022/june/15/eu-sixth-package-of-sanctions-against-russia>

²⁹⁸ *European Commission* (2022). Russia's war on Ukraine: EU adopts sixth package of sanctions against Russia. Retrieved from: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_2802

persons, entities or bodies established in third countries and majority owned by Russian nationals or natural persons resident in Russia.²⁹⁹

It provides that Member States may specialise the release of frozen economic resources if this is necessary in order to prevent or mitigate an event that could have serious and significant effects on the health and safety of persons or on the environment.³⁰⁰ It is provided that the competent authorities of the Member States may specialise the release of certain frozen funds or economic resources belonging to the entities referred to in entries Nos. 53, 54, 55, 79, 80, 81, 82 and 108 of Annex I to Reg. (EU) No 269/2014, or the making available to such entities of certain funds or economic resources, under such conditions as they deem appropriate, and after having determined that such funds or economic resources are necessary for the purchase, importation or transport of agricultural products and foodstuffs, including wheat and fertilisers³⁰¹. Moreover, the list of Russian individuals and entities affected by sanctions is extended.

3.2.8 Eighth Package

The EU adopted its eighth sanctions package against Russia on 6 October 2022. Donetsk, Lugansk, Kherson and Zaporizhzhia are the four regions whose illegal annexation by Russia led to the adoption of what is the EU's eighth sanctions package. Among the measures adopted by the EU-27 is a cap on the price of Russian oil. Unless it offers a price equal to or lower than the set price, the transport of oil and its derivatives will not be allowed. The aim of this measure, in line with previous ones, is to reduce Russian revenues to finance the war with Ukraine.³⁰²

However, this measure, precisely because it is one of the most important, has caused some reluctance in some EU countries. Hungary was one of the countries that rejected it, as well as Greece, Malta and Cyprus, which feared a possible loss of market share to their competitors. Negotiations with the latter three to meet their demands were described by Brussels as “a forceful EU response to the illegal annexation of Ukrainian territories”.³⁰³

²⁹⁹ *White and Case* (2022). EU's 7th Package of Russia sanctions targets gold, Sberbank and fine-tunes existing sanctions. Retrieved from: <https://www.whitecase.com/insight-alert/eus-7th-package-russia-sanctions-targets-gold-sberbank-and-fine-tunes-existing>

³⁰⁰ *Studio Legale Padovan* (2022). 7° PACCHETTO SANZIONI UE: NUOVE RESTRIZIONI DI CARATTERE MERCEOLOGICO E SOGGETTIVO. Retrieved from: <https://studiopadovan.com/blog/2022/7-pacchetto-sanzioni-ue-nuove-restrizioni-di-carattere-merceologico-e-soggettivo/>

³⁰¹ *CGTN* (2022). Kiev y la Unión Europea trabajan en séptimo paquete de sanciones contra Rusia. Retrieved from: <https://espanol.cgtn.com/n/2022-07-03/HEJGEA/Kiev-y-la-Union-Europea-trabajan-en-septimo-paquete-de-sanciones-contra-Rusia/index.html>

³⁰² *Commissione Europea* (2022). Ucraina: l'UE approva l'ottavo pacchetto di sanzioni nei confronti della Russia. Retrieved from: https://italy.representation.ec.europa.eu/notizie-ed-eventi/notizie/ucraina-lue-approva-lottavo-pacchetto-di-sanzioni-nei-confronti-della-russia-2022-10-06_it

³⁰³ *Liberatore, F.* (2022). Sanzioni: ottavo (non) pacchetto. *Istituto per gli studi di politica internazionale*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/sanzioni-ottavo-non-pacchetto-36429>

In addition, bans on imports and exports of Russian products such as steel, machinery, chemicals, plastics and cigarettes worth EUR 7 billion were extended.

The EU also sanctioned those involved in schemes to circumvent the sanctions. Some of the personalities sanctioned by the EU include Alexandr Dugin, an ultranationalist philosopher whose ideology is defended by Vladimir Putin and was used to justify the invasion of Ukraine, Alan Lushnikov, a majority shareholder of the Russian arms manufacturer JSC Kalashnikov Concern, or some artists and musicians who participated in Russian propaganda acts.

The intention is that this new package will further erode Russia's coffers and weaken its position in a war that Kiev is also winning on the battlefield.³⁰⁴

3.2.9 Ninth package

The Council of the European Union launched the 9th sanctions package against the Russian Federation in response to the war of aggression against Ukraine in December. The sanctions measures are aimed at targeting the Russian economy and its ability to sustain the conflict.

The ninth package imposes new controls and restrictions on exports of dual-use goods and technologies, as well as goods and technologies that can contribute to the technological enhancement of Russia's defence and security sector: drone engines, chemical and biological equipment, riot control agents and electronic components. The EU also expanded the list of entities related to Russia's military and industrial system with 168 new listings, for a total of 410 listed entities.³⁰⁵

Regarding restrictions on aviation and space-related products, the bans apply to both manned and unmanned aircraft, which means that from now on there will be a ban on the direct export of drone engines to Russia and to any third country that might supply them to Russia.

New export bans extend to other industrial goods and technologies, such as toy drones, complex generators, laptop computers and computer components, printed circuit boards, radio navigation systems, radio controls, aircraft engines and engine parts, camera equipment and lenses.³⁰⁶

The adopted measures do not affect trade in agricultural and food products, including grain and fertilisers, between third countries and Russia. In the light of the Union's firm stance to avoid and combat food insecurity

³⁰⁴ Liberatore, F. (2022). Sanzioni: ottavo (non) pacchetto. *Istituto per gli studi di politica internazionale*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/sanzioni-ottavo-non-pacchetto-36429>

³⁰⁵ *European Commission* (2022). Ukraine: EU agrees ninth package of sanctions against Russia. Retrieved from: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_7652

³⁰⁶ Gallego, D. (2022). La UE adopta su noveno paquete de sanciones contra Rusia. *AA*. Retrieved from: <https://www.aa.com.tr/es/mundo/la-ue-adopta-su-noveno-paquete-de-sanciones-contra-rusia/2765964>

in the world and to avoid disruptions in the payment channels for agricultural products, a new exemption was introduced to release goods and make funds and economic resources available to individuals who played a significant role in international trade in agricultural and food products, including grain and fertilisers, prior to their listing.

The EU sanctioned two more Russian banks and added the Russian Regional Development Bank to the list of entities subject to a total transaction ban. These new coercive measures provide for the cessation of licences to Russian television channels such as NTV, Russia 1, REN TV and Piervy Kanal while prohibiting investments in the Russian mining sector.³⁰⁷ Nearly 200 more people and organizations were added by the EU to the list of those whose assets were frozen. As was previously reported, these individuals include members of the Russian Armed Forces, officers, State Duma and Federation Council members, ministries, officials in Ukraine's seized territories, political parties, and defense industry firms³⁰⁸.

Moreover, as was previously mentioned, the EU also imposed penalties on Belarus for its involvement in the invasion of Ukraine and Iran for its deployment of drones in the Russian war against Ukraine.

3.3 Belarus

The package of sanctions adopted by the EU against Belarus for its involvement in the war in Ukraine includes measures similar to those adopted against Russia, but which take into account the specifics of the evolution of the situation in the country after the fraudulent Presidential elections in 2020.³⁰⁹

The individual sanctions target political and economic supporters of the Belarusian regime and personalities responsible for the repression of the opposition. The measures affect more than 200 Belarusian individuals and entities. The financial sanctions include, for example, in addition to the restrictions on the financing of certain banks already in place, a ban on transactions on the assets and reserves of the Belarusian Central Bank and the disconnection of several Belarusian banks from the SWIFT system.³¹⁰

Economic sanctions, in particular import bans in key sectors for the Belarusian economy, such as hydrocarbons, potash, transport and raw materials.

³⁰⁷ *European Commission* (2022). Ukraine: EU agrees ninth package of sanctions against Russia. Retrieved from: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_7652

³⁰⁸ *Sputnik* (2022). La UE adopta el noveno paquete de sanciones antirrusas. Retrieved from: <https://sputniknews.lat/20221216/la-ue-adopta-el-noveno-paquete-de-sanciones-antirrusas-1133633915.html>

³⁰⁹ *European Council, Council of the European Union* (2022). EU restrictive measures against Belarus. Retrieved from: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/restrictive-measures-against-belarus/>

³¹⁰ *GOV.UK* (2022). Introduction of additional sanctions against Belarus. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/notice-to-exporters-202220-introduction-of-additional-sanctions-against-belarus/nte-202220-introduction-of-additional-sanctions-against-belarus>

Since the beginning of the crisis, sanctions have been adopted in close coordination with international allies and partners, in particular the UK, the US and other G7 countries, which apply their own sanctions regimes.

311

Belarus is mired in a severe economic crisis due to Western sanctions for its support of Russia's invasion of Ukraine. In the first half of 2022, Belarusian GDP fell by 6%.³¹² Economic aid from the Kremlin is considered insufficient.

In 2022, Belarus lost more than 50,000 jobs.³¹³ In July, the number of active workers fell to just over 4 million – an all-time low for the country – due in part to the heavy emigration of those who do not want to live under war conditions and the early retirement of many others. The figures were released by Satio, a centre specializing in economic planning³¹⁴.

Rising prices and falling real wages are causing severe impoverishment of the population. According to Satio, for more than half of Belarusians, savings are sufficient for at most one month in case of loss of income, and even the most menial jobs are taken for fear of losing everything. Unemployment benefits in Belarus are about USD 10 per month.³¹⁵

The economies of Russia and Belarus were impacted in various ways since Minsk had a lower starting point than Moscow. Lev Lvovsky, an economist of the Beroc research center, thinks Belarusians are suffering from the sanctions policy far more than their “big brothers.” According to him, “since our economy is smaller but far more open than Russia's,” the sanctions against Belarus are merely outwardly appearing to be less harsh. Belarus does not have a sizable internal market, as Lvovsky emphasizes: “It is important for us to preserve international linkages; furthermore, we were subject to sanctions for a year before those placed on Russia, with cumulative impact, while Moscow continues to export gas and oil.”³¹⁶

An important element has been the sale of potash, which used to pass through the Lithuanian port of Klaipėda, but now Lithuania has denied the Belarusians transit through its territory and has to pass through China via long rail transports.

³¹¹ *European Council, Council of the European Union (2022)*. EU relations with Belarus. Retrieved from: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eastern-partnership/belarus/>

³¹² Rozanskij, V. (2022). Minsk asks Moscow for money. *Pime Asianews*. Retrieved from: <https://www.asianews.it/news-en/Minsk-asks-Moscow-for-money-56616.html>

³¹³ Rozanskij, V. (2022). Minsk asks Moscow for money. *Pime Asianews*. Retrieved from: <https://www.asianews.it/news-en/Minsk-asks-Moscow-for-money-56616.html>

³¹⁴ Rozanskij, V. (2022). La crisis económica de Minsk es peor que la de Moscú. *Pime Asianews*. Retrieved from: <https://www.asianews.it/noticias-es/La-crisis-económica-de-Minsk-es-peor-que-la-de-Moscú-56616.html>

³¹⁵ *Asinta* (2022). Belarus. Retrieved from: <https://www.asinta.com/countries/employee-benefits-in-belarus/>

³¹⁶ Rozanskij, V. (2022). Minsk asks Moscow for money. *Pime Asianews*. Retrieved from: <https://www.asianews.it/news-en/Minsk-asks-Moscow-for-money-56616.html>

3.4 Iran

The European foreign ministers, meeting in Brussels, also sanctioned Iran for supplying Iranian drones to Russia with which Moscow would then strike Ukraine, missiles that are banned under sanctions the same Security Council has imposed on Iran in the past. Two entities in particular have been hit, Qods Aviation Industries, which produces the drones supplied to Russia, and the Revolutionary Guards Air Force. In this context, some European countries, such as Sweden, would like to extend sanctions against Iran. The EU decided to impose an asset freeze and travel ban on Mohammad Hossein Bagheri, chief of staff of the Iranian Armed Forces and a senior military figure in Iran, and also targeted Brigadier General Saeed Aghajani, who heads the drone command of the Iranian Revolutionary Guards' elite aerospace force, and Hojjatollah Qoreishi, who is believed to have collaborated with Russia on drone deliveries. The sanctions also hit Shahed Aviation Industries, whose Shahed-136 drones inflicted serious damage on Ukrainian forces³¹⁷.

Iran, however, categorically denied that it supplied drones to Russia in the war in Ukraine. This was stated by Iran's ambassador to the United Nations, Amir Said Iravani³¹⁸. While the EU and the United States claim to have evidence that Iran supplied Shahed-136, cheap drones that explode upon landing and are blamed for causing five deaths in the capital Kiev and destroying civilian infrastructure³¹⁹.

This situation is not easy because Brussels wants to continue to play the role of mediator between Tehran and Washington on the Iranian nuclear issue. In fact, most European governments strongly supported the 2015 Iran nuclear deal, but with the stalling of talks to revive the agreement and Tehran's support for Russia in the war in Ukraine, tensions have increased. In fact, the signing of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), also known as the Iran Nuclear Deal, was announced on July 14, 2015. The understanding was reached by Iran and the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (China, France, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) plus Germany and the European Union. Under the agreement, Iran agreed to dismantle much of its nuclear program and open its facilities to international inspections. All, in exchange for reductions in international sanctions, for relief equivalent to billions of dollars. Then, in 2018, President Trump withdrew the United States from the deal, claiming it had done nothing to slow Iran's missile program. Only a year later, Iran began to ignore the agreed restrictions. While as of

³¹⁷ *Al Jazeera* (2022). EU sanctions Iran over protest crackdown and Russia drone sales. Retrieved from: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/12/12/eu-sanctions-iran-over-protest-crackdown-and-russia-drone-sales>

³¹⁸ *Iran International* (2022). EU, UK Sanction Iranian Generals Over 'Drones Used By Russia'. Retrieved from: <https://www.iranintl.com/en/202210200368>

³¹⁹ *Al Arabiya* (2022). Sanctioned Iran general Bagheri mocks EU, tells bloc to 'buy coal' with his assets. Retrieved from: <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/middle-east/2022/10/24/Sanctioned-Iran-general-Bagheri-mocks-EU-tells-them-to-buy-coal-with-his-assets->

2021, both Washington and Tehran have said they want to return to the original agreement, but they still seem far from finding a compromise³²⁰.

3.5 Procedure for Adopting and Reviewing EU Sanctions

The set of sanction measures adopted against Russia and its oligarchs also requires clarification of the procedure by which the various sanctions are identified and applied.

Indeed, the restrictive measures are determined by the CFSP (Common Foreign and Security Policy Council) on the basis of the proposal made by the Union Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security. It is the task of the Council's preparatory bodies to initiate the preparatory and discussion phase on the individual measures to be taken. The Council Working Party responsible for the geographical region, the Foreign Relations Counsellors Group and, where necessary, the Political and Security Committee as well as the Permanent Representatives Committee are involved in this work.³²¹

Once the preparatory and analytical phase of the individual proposals has been completed, the Council must adopt the decision unanimously. If the measures to be adopted also include sanctions of an economic or financial nature, in this case a regulation must be adopted by the Council. This regulation lays down the exact scope of the measures and how they are to be implemented. Given the binding nature of the regulatory act, it is binding on any person or entity within the European Union. With the publication of the Official Journal of the European Union, the Council Decision enters into force.³²²

Furthermore, it must be considered that the persons and entities affected by the sanctions have the possibility of submitting a review of the decision affecting their interests to the Council in order to have it lifted, by producing the necessary supporting evidence. Moreover, the possibility of appealing against the Council's decision before the General Court of the European Union in accordance with the conditions laid down in Article 275, second paragraph, and Article 263, fourth and sixth paragraphs, of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union is also provided for.³²³

³²⁰ *Le Trattative* (2022). Accordo nucleare con l'Iran: il riassunto. Retrieved from: <https://www.lettrattative.it/2022/09/accordo-nucleare-iran-riassunto.html>

³²¹ *European Council* (2022). Adoption and review procedure for EU sanctions. Retrieved from: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/adoption-review-procedure/>

³²² *European Council* (2022). Adoption and review procedure for EU sanctions. Retrieved from: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/adoption-review-procedure/>

³²³ *European Council* (2022). Adoption and review procedure for EU sanctions. Retrieved from: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/adoption-review-procedure/>

3.6 Effectiveness of sanctions

Despite the countless sanctions packages that the West has adopted against Russia and the predictions of failure of its economy in the short term by the European and American institutions, the International Monetary Fund points out, as previously mentioned, that in 2022 Moscow entered the ranking of the world's 10 economies, placing ninth before Italy, Brazil and South Korea in terms of gross domestic product. The President of the European Commission Ursula Von der Layen appears to have been partly contradicted from statements made in April 2022, when in an interview with the German newspaper *Bild* she stated that: "every week the sanctions go deeper into the Russian economy: exports have plummeted by 70%, 700 Russian aircraft have lost their licences due to a lack of spare parts and software updates. Hundreds of large companies and thousands of experts are turning their backs on the country. According to current forecasts, the gross domestic product in Russia will collapse by 11%.³²⁴ Russia's national bankruptcy is only a matter of time". Instead, as the IMF attests in a context of worldwide recession, the Eurozone countries seem to be the ones most affected by the economic slowdown. And indeed, while it is indisputable that the sanctions adopted against Russia have produced their effects on the economy of the federation, at the same time the collapse that had been predicted at the level of the institutions of the western world has not occurred. On the contrary, it can be considered that the sanctions played a decisive role in the slowdown of industrial production in European countries due to the high cost of energy and raw materials, which also affected the growth of inflation.³²⁵

There is no doubt that Moscow's economy has also been affected by the global slowdown and Western sanctions, however as mentioned above and recently reiterated by Russia's Finance Minister Siluanov, Russia's GDP decline in 2022 stood at 3 %, with predictions that it could still fall in 2023.

It is also worth noting that some of the Asian countries, which have not openly condemned the Russian invasion, such as India, replaced the UK in the world's top 5 economies in 2022, ranking fifth with a GDP of USD 3468.6 billion. Therefore, the Monetary Fund's data seem to hit the mark, according to which those most exposed to the recession expected in 2023 are precisely the European Union and the United States, to which China is added due to zero Covid policies. It seems, therefore, that Russia is holding its own, some Asian countries are advancing, thus contributing to a new economic and geopolitical configuration of the planet.³²⁶

³²⁴ Hilgenstock, B. (2022). How have sanctions impacted Russia? *Bruegel*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bruegel.org/policy-brief/how-have-sanctions-impacted-russia>

³²⁵ *Sky TG24* (2022). Le sanzioni alla Russia funzionano? Gli effetti sull'economia finora. Retrieved from: <https://tg24.sky.it/economia/2022/04/14/sanzioni-russia-economia>

³²⁶ *Sky TG24* (2022). Le sanzioni alla Russia funzionano? Gli effetti sull'economia finora. Retrieved from: <https://tg24.sky.it/economia/2022/04/14/sanzioni-russia-economia>

3.7 What impact have the sanctions had on Russia?



Figure 1. Real GDP growth

Source: IMF DataMapper

Inflation in Russia has exceeded 13%. The economic well-being of Russian citizens has worsened: per capita GDP at constant prices, i.e. adjusted for inflation, has fallen from USD 28,104 to USD 27,166 at purchasing power parity. In Italy, by way of comparison, it rose from 42,044 to 43,386 dollars, in Germany from 53,484 to 54,249 euros.³²⁷

The considerable strengthening of the rouble against the dollar, as a result of capital control measures, the support of the Central Bank, and the fact that the country has continued to receive huge payments in rouble for its hydrocarbons, has however meant that the value of the gross domestic product in billions of dollars (at current prices and at purchasing power parity to make it comparable with that of other countries) has risen to 2,133 billion, surpassing Italy's 1,996 billion, and placing Moscow among the world's ten largest economies. But it must be considered that inflation has meanwhile exceeded 13%.³²⁸

³²⁷ Efremova, A. (2022). Dopo sei mesi di guerra (e sanzioni) in Russia mancano materie prime. Dalla carne ai tessuti, fino ai farmaci: le persone cercano alternative. *Il Fatto Quotidiano*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2022/08/26/dopo-sei-mesi-di-guerra-e-sanzioni-in-russia-mancano-materie-prime/6770831/>

³²⁸ United States Department of State (2023). The Impact of Sanctions and Export Controls on the Russian Federation. Retrieved from: <https://www.state.gov/the-impact-of-sanctions-and-export-controls-on-the-russian-federation/>

As has emerged in recent months, the sanctions have led to a serious shortage of raw materials and essential goods in Russia, halting the production of entire sectors and complicating the lives of the population, but they have not strangled the country's economy, which depends predominantly on gas and oil exports. And the European Union alone, according to the Russia Fossil Tracker of the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (Crea), has paid Moscow over 135 billion euro in compensation since the beginning of the invasion. And the effects of the embargo on Russian crude arriving by tanker, in force since 5 December, have yet to be seen. The 'default', which according to European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen was 'only a matter of time' in April 2022, seems far off.³²⁹

The sanctions weighed particularly heavily on wholesale trade, which fell -22.6%, retail trade -9.1%, freight transport -5.5% and to a lesser extent on manufacturing -2%. On the other hand, the sectors of construction +6.7 % and agriculture +6.2 % showed positive signs.

From all the sanctions adopted against Russia, it can be deduced that compared to the initial objectives aimed at hitting people and entities close to Putin, the target has gradually changed, as revealed by a joint survey by Reuters and the Royal United Service Institute, a London-based defence think tank, which highlights that at present, more than economic sanctions, the huge supplies of weapons that have allowed and continue to allow Russian attacks to be successfully dealt with are working. The Russian economy is certainly weakened by the multiple sanctions taken against it, but it is certainly not on its knees and does not lack capital.³³⁰

The aforementioned investigation reveals that the aim is now to target Russia's ability to procure weapons-useful military technology. This, as Russia enjoys a global supply chain of computer components and other electronic devices also from the West with triangulation schemes passing through Turkey, China and even Estonia. This is evidenced by the pressure Ukraine is putting on the Western countries of Leopard 2 tanks for the resumption of the battle on the ground that will take place after the end of winter.³³¹

3.8 Consequences for the Italian and European economies

The objective of the sanctions is clear: to isolate Moscow economically and financially with respect to the rest of the world, and the target seems to have been only partially achieved, at least from the impact one year after the Ukrainian invasion.

³²⁹ Efremova, A. (2022). Dopo sei mesi di guerra (e sanzioni) in Russia mancano materie prime. Dalla carne ai tessuti, fino ai farmaci: le persone cercano alternative. *Il Fatto Quotidiano*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2022/08/26/dopo-sei-mesi-di-guerra-e-sanzioni-in-russia-mancano-materie-prime/6770831/>

³³⁰ *Council of Europe* (2022). Impact of sanctions on the Russian economy. Retrieved from: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/infographics/impact-sanctions-russian-economy/>

³³¹ *United States Department of State* (2023). The Impact of Sanctions and Export Controls on the Russian Federation. Retrieved from: <https://www.state.gov/the-impact-of-sanctions-and-export-controls-on-the-russian-federation/>

But what about the damage these sanctions will cause to the Italian and European economies? We cannot estimate the impact that sanctions will have on the Russian economy without also examining the backlash that these sanctions will have on our production systems. First of all, there will be direct consequences for companies that export to Russia, but in this situation Europe's exposure is limited, if we think that Moscow only accounts for 2% of the EU's total exports, and for Italy it is worth even less, i.e. only 1.6%. Instead, far heavier will be the bill presented by the energy sanctions. Indeed, since 24 February, the day the invasion of Ukraine began, the price of gas and oil has risen sharply, with peaks of around 25% and 70% respectively, which, fortunately to date, have partially receded.³³²

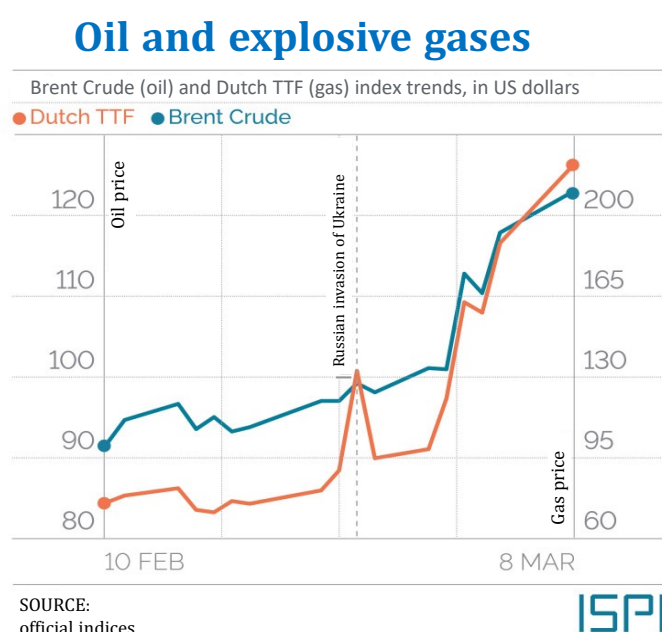


Figure 2: Oil and explosive gases index trends

Source: ISPI

Not to mention the other raw materials, both agricultural and mining, suffice it to say that the price of wheat has jumped from 263 to 395 euros per tonne. To all this we can finally add the countermeasures taken by Russia. First of all, the decision to draw up a black list of hostile countries, in which Italy is also included, authorising Russian companies to pay creditors from their included waste paper, or, Moscow's ban on exporting over 200 products from raw materials to manufacturing sectors to the West.³³³ At the moment, however, gas and oil remain excluded from the sanctions and are vitally needed both by Europeans, as we still

³³² Redeker, N. (2022). Same shock, different effects. *Jacques Delors Centre*. Retrieved from: <https://www.delorscentre.eu/en/publications/economic-consequences-ukraine>

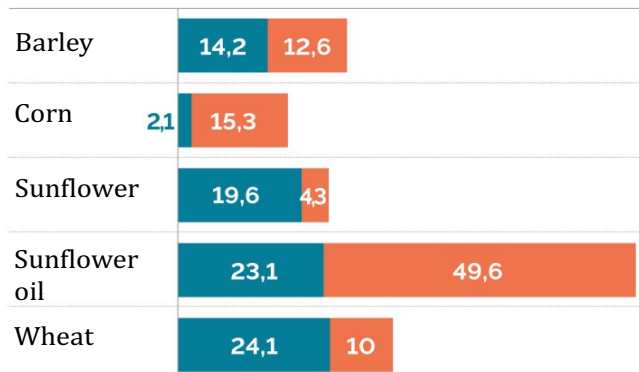
³³³ Darvas, Z. (2022). Economia: l'inflazione cede il passo (alla recessione)? *ISPI*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/economia-linflazione-cede-il-passo-alla-recessione-37059>

cannot do without Russia's energy sector, and by Moscow, which in the last few days, thanks to soaring prices, has been cashing in Euro 1 billion per day from gas exports.³³⁴

Russia-Ukraine: the grain hot front

Shares of Russia and Ukraine in global trade 2018-2020, in %

● Russia ● Ukraine



Source:
IFPRI, UN Comtrade

ISPI

Figure 3: Shares of Russia and Ukraine in global trade 2018-2020, in %

Source: ISPI

Drawing scenarios at this time is very difficult, as we do not know how the situation will evolve in the near future. The escalation of sanctions and counter-sanctions has continued, e.g. Canada, the US and the UK have blocked oil imports from Russia. A simple move from their point of view, given the low dependence on Russia for energy supplies, but one that puts further pressure on energy prices in the short term. In addition, EU countries have banned exports of certain products, such as luxury goods, to Russia and revoked Moscow's most-favoured-nation status in the World Trade Organisation, with the result that import duties on Russian goods will rise from 7% to 35% on average.³³⁵

³³⁴ Darvas, Z. (2022). Economia: l'inflazione cede il passo (alla recessione)? ISPI. Retrieved from: <https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/economia-linflazione-cede-il-passo-alla-recessione-37059>

³³⁵ ISPI (2023). Gli italiani e la politica internazionale. Retrieved from: <https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/gli-italiani-e-la-politica-internazionale-37296>

Trade with the EU: the difference between being favored or not

EU average tariff applied or potential depending on most-favored-nation clause

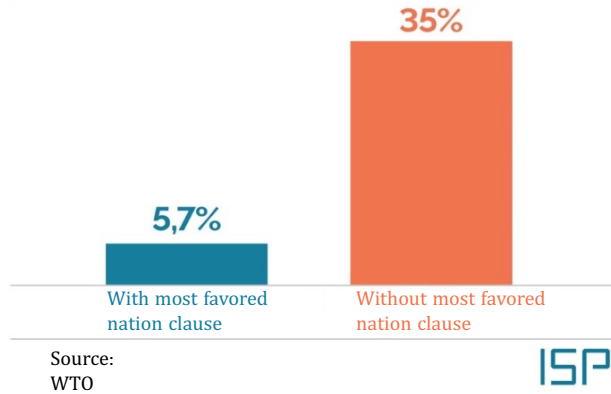


Figure 4: EU average tariff applied on most-favored-nation clause

Source: ISPI

What is certain, then, is that the post-pandemic recovery in Europe, already partly held back by rising inflation in recent months, will slow down even further; for example, the ECB's latest estimates state that in 2022 GDP growth in the Eurozone could be more than one percentage point slower than expected: + 2.3% (in the worst case scenario), instead of + 3.7%.³³⁶

³³⁶ ISPI (2023). Gli italiani e la politica internazionale. Retrieved from: <https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/gli-italiani-e-la-politica-internazionale-37296>

Eu: how much does the crisis weigh?

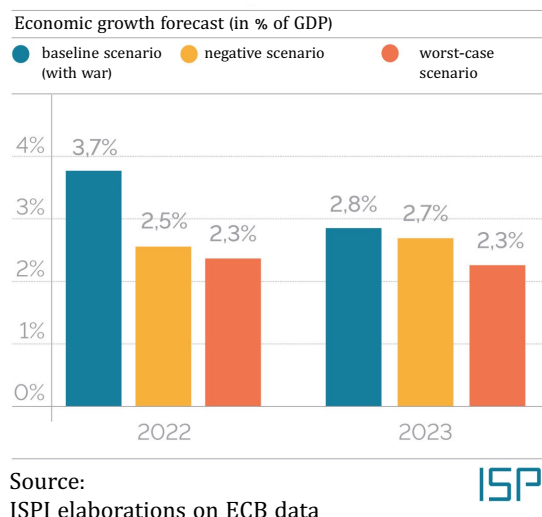


Figure 5: Economic growth forecast (in % of GDP)

Source: ISPI

In short, the scenario that more and more economists are envisaging is one of stagflation, a context in which high inflation combined with low growth creates a deleterious mix for the entire economic system.³³⁷

As previously analysed, Russia has been heavily hit by sanctions with almost immediate effect, but thanks to skyrocketing gas prices it is collecting money that is helping the Russian economy to resist, and as a result the effects in Europe will soon be felt with further increases in energy and food prices. The game in the short term might be different, as Russia is heavily dependent on trade with the EU, which with 34% of exports is its main market.³³⁸

³³⁷ ISPI (2022). Europa: Economia di guerra. Retrieved from: <https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/europa-economia-di-guerra-34191>

³³⁸ Tentori, D. (2022). Come fare a meno della Russia. ISPI. Retrieved from: <https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/come-fare-meno-della-russia-34882>

Russia: the possible backlash of sanctions

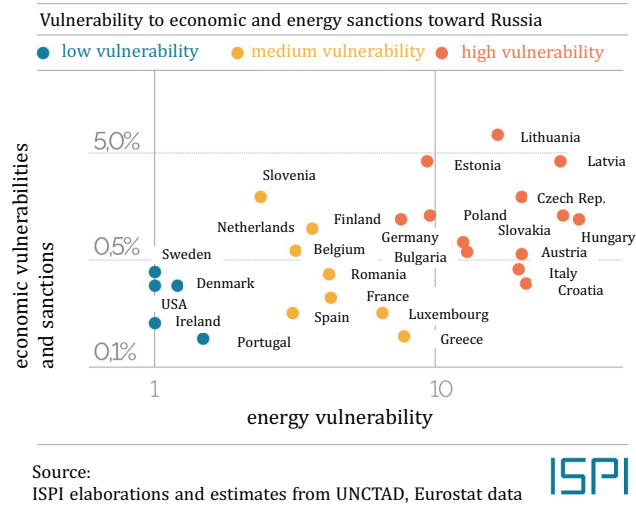


Figure 6: Vulnerability to economic and energy sanctions toward Russia

Source: ISPI

Moscow is hoping for China's rescue, but the exclusion of most international markets risks inflicting heavy damage on an economy with major structural problems, including a low level of diversification and an ageing and shrinking population.³³⁹ Quoting the famous phrase of Prussian general Carl Von Clausewitz:

"War is but the continuation of politics by other means. War is therefore not merely a political act, but a true instrument of politics, a continuation of the political process, a continuation of it by other means".³⁴⁰

In this case, one could say that the economy is the continuation of war by other means. Certainly, we will all come out of the current situation damaged, or perhaps, because in wars there is always someone who gets rich.

³³⁹ Darvas, Z. (2022). Economia: l'inflazione cede il passo (alla recessione)? ISPI. Retrieved from: <https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/economia-linflazione-cede-il-passo-alla-recessione-37059>

³⁴⁰ Miyata, F. (2021). THE GRAND STRATEGY OF CARL VON CLAUSEWITZ. U.S. Army War College. Retrieved from: <https://warroom.armywarcollege.edu/articles/grand-strategy-clausewitz/>

Chapter IV: Taiwan is not Ukraine: the invasion of Formosa is no more feasible today than it was in the past.

With Russian troops marching into the interior of Ukraine, the parallel with Taiwan is inevitable. A few hours after the first Russian armoured vehicles entered the border crossing at Armiansk (in Crimea), the PRC authorities announced military manoeuvres on its southern coast. To the dismay of the world, the timing of the announcement seemed anything but coincidental. However, the hypothetical invasion of Taiwan is a less feasible and less desirable endeavour than it might seem at first glance.

4.1 Historical background

The escalating military tension between China and Taiwan in recent days responds to a historical context that has developed over more than seven decades. The territory has operated autonomously from Beijing since 1949, when nationalist members of the Kuomintang fled to the island after being defeated in the Chinese Civil War of 1949.³⁴¹

US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan on 3 August 2022 has raised tensions between the island and China to levels not seen in decades, to the point where a new conflict is feared.³⁴² But why does China claim sovereignty over Taiwan?

The island of Taiwan historically belongs to China and its population has always been ethnically Chinese. In fact, only 160 kilometres separate the territory from mainland China. However, a series of wartime events that marked China in the first half of the 20th century have caused it to drift away from the power of Beijing to the present day.³⁴³ To understand its political peculiarity, we have to go back to 1927. At that time, a civil war began in China between the Kuomintang nationalists, in power in the Republic of China since 1912, and the communists, who had only recently formed a party.³⁴⁴

This conflict for power in Beijing and the rest of China was a long way off for the island of Taiwan, which at that time had been under Japanese rule for more than 30 years and would remain under Japanese presence

³⁴¹ Brown, D. (2022). China and Taiwan: A really simple guide. *BBC*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-59900139>

³⁴² Tan, S.-L. (2022). U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi meets Taiwan's president despite China's warnings. *CNBC*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/08/03/-us-house-speaker-nancy-pelosi-meets-taiwans-president.html>

³⁴³ Maizland L. (2022). Why China-Taiwan Relations Are So Tense. *Council on Foreign Relations*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/china-taiwan-relations-tension-us-policy-biden>

³⁴⁴ *The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica* (2018). Chinese Civil War | Summary, Causes, & Results. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/event/Chinese-Civil-War>

until 1945, but over time the clash between nationalists and communists became fundamental to understanding what Taiwan is today.³⁴⁵

Chinese control over Taiwan would not come until 1945, when Japan was defeated in the Second Sino-Japanese War. Since the invasion of Manchuria by the Japanese army, nationalists and communists had put aside their differences to fight the invader and the common enemy, but once expelled, hostilities returned between the two sides.³⁴⁶

The difference was that in 1947, the Communists led by Mao Zedong had multiplied their strength with the support of the Soviet Union. While Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang saw its power gradually decline in several regions of China³⁴⁷.

The Nationalists were supported by the United States, but from 1949 their situation became irreversible in the face of the advance of Mao's troops and Chiang Kai-shek was forced, together with more than 1.5 million of his soldiers and Kuomintang members, to retreat to the island of Formosa, now known as Taiwan³⁴⁸. Formosa's name dates back to the 16th century, when the island was sighted by Portuguese sailors and marked on their maps as Ilha Formosa, "the Beautiful"³⁴⁹.

Mao managed to gain the entire mainland, but failed to storm Taiwan. However, despite the military defeat on the mainland, the United States was steadfast in defending its Kuomintang allies and deployed its navy in the Taiwan Strait to deter Mao's precarious communist army³⁵⁰.

It was at this point that the political paths of Beijing and Taipei began to diverge. Mao formed the People's Republic of China and Chiang Kai-shek declared his power over the Republic of China from Taiwan with the aim of one day regaining the mainland. But this never happened.³⁵¹

The situation changed radically from 1971 onwards. The United States and Mao's People's Republic of China began to share an adversary: the Soviet Union³⁵². This began to bring the interests of Beijing and Washington

³⁴⁵ *The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica* (2018). Chinese Civil War | Summary, Causes, & Results. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/event/Chinese-Civil-War>

³⁴⁶ Brown, D. (2022). China and Taiwan: A really simple guide. *BBC*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-59900139>

³⁴⁷ Baum, R. (2017). The Great Leap Forward: The Great Failure of Mao Zedong in China. *Wondrium Daily*. Retrieved from: <https://www.wondriumdaily.com/great-leap-forward-mao-zedong/>

³⁴⁸ *Asia for Educators*. Taiwan and U.S.-China Relations Since 1949. Retrieved from: http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/china_1950_us_china.htm

³⁴⁹ *Island Folklore*. The Island's Many. Retrieved from: <https://islandfolklore.com/about/taiwan/names/>

³⁵⁰ Maizland L. (2022). Why China-Taiwan Relations Are So Tense. *Council on Foreign Relations*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/china-taiwan-relations-tension-us-policy-biden>

³⁵¹ Brown, D. (2022). China and Taiwan: A really simple guide. *BBC*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-59900139>

closer together. A context that favoured the fact that, from October 1971, the United Nations recognised only Mao's People's Republic of China and not Chiang Kai-shek's Republic of China as the legitimate representative of China³⁵³.

And only eight years later, in 1979, the United States also recognised the government in Beijing as the only legitimate government. At this point no one thought it possible for the Kuomintang to regain power on the mainland and it was in Washington's interest to have Communist China on its side in the cold war against the USSR³⁵⁴.

Since the 1970s, fewer and fewer nations in the world recognised Taiwan as a state and its presence in international organisations such as the International Olympic Committee or the WHO gradually disappeared³⁵⁵.

However, the US continued to maintain a strong alliance with Taipei through a close commercial and military relationship, and warned Communist China that any attempt to invade Taiwan would pose a serious challenge to US interests. Indeed, guiding the “unofficial” relations between the US and Taiwan since 1979 is the Taiwan Relations Act³⁵⁶. It makes clear that the US decision to establish diplomatic relations with the PRC is based on the prospect of a peaceful determination of Taiwan's future. At the same time, the US has followed a policy of "strategic ambiguity" regarding the defence of Taiwan should cross-strait war break out. This "strategic ambiguity" served as a double deterrent to prevent both the PRC's seizure of Taiwan by force and Taiwan's proclamation of independence *de jure*³⁵⁷.

In recent years, the US Congress' support for Taiwan has been reinforced by growing hostility towards China. Some scholars and members of Congress have invoked "strategic clarity"³⁵⁸ as a deterrent to any Chinese military actions in the Taiwan Strait. Members of Congress such as Republican Claudia Tenney openly call for a review of the US policy of “one China” and the defence of Taiwan. In November 2021, Senators Josh

³⁵² *Encyclopedia.com* (2023). Chinese Civil War, U.S. Involvement. Retrieved from: <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/chinese-civil-war-us-involvement>

³⁵⁴ Dávila, A. T., Morales, A. C., & Le-Fort, M. P. (2001). La República Popular China y el Conflicto con Taiwán: Un Estrecho Margen de Maniobra. *Estudios Internacionales*. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41391659>

³⁵⁵ *ORF* (2022). Taiwan's Battle for Diplomatic Space. Retrieved from: <https://www.orfonline.org/research/taiwans-battle-for-diplomatic-space/>

³⁵⁶ Goldstein, S. M., & Schriver, R. (2001). An Uncertain Relationship: The United States, Taiwan and the Taiwan Relations Act. *The China Quarterly*. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3451110>

³⁵⁷ Willasey-Wilsey, T. (2022). US Policy on Taiwan and the Perils of ‘Strategic Ambiguity’. *Royal United Services Institute*. Retrieved from: <https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/us-policy-taiwan-and-perils-strategic-ambiguity>

³⁵⁸ Clarke, M., & Sussex, M. (2021). Why ‘Strategic Ambiguity’ Trumps ‘Strategic Clarity’ on Taiwan. *Royal United Services Institute*. Retrieved from: <https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/why-strategic-ambiguity-trumps-strategic-clarity-taiwan>

Hawley and James Risch proposed a Taiwan Armament Bill and a Taiwan Deterrence Bill to the Senate Foreign Policy Committee to provide billions of dollars in aid loans for Taiwan's defence³⁵⁹.

But Beijing continued to regard Taiwan as part of the People's Republic of China. In the 1980s, an attempt was made to include Taiwan in the “one country, two systems” model, like Hong Kong and Macao used to be, but the Taiwanese government refused³⁶⁰.

Moreover, since 1997, the situation has become more complex. That year, Taiwan ceased to be a democracy and only three years later, the Kuomintang, a party that still considers itself Chinese, lost the elections to the Democratic Progressive Party, a party that rejected the idea of returning to the mainland to regain power from Beijing and that seeks Taiwan's self-determination as a nation³⁶¹.

Seven decades later, a paradox has arisen in Taiwan. Although the initial goal of those who fled to the island to escape the communists was to return to the mainland, many of their descendants no longer feel Chinese, but Taiwanese. An effect of so many years of detachment from China. But this is something Beijing will not tolerate³⁶². Beijing is used to forcibly suppressing any attempt at secession in what it considers part of its territory. That is why gestures such as Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan, which makes her look like an independent political player, are a red line for Xi Jinping's government, which aspires to tacit control over Taiwan. The question now is whether or not this will happen in the short term³⁶³.

4.2 China 2049

The ultimate goal for the realisation of the Chinese Dream is 2049, the centenary of the founding of the People's Republic of China. By that year, according to the party leadership, China should be a fully developed modern socialist power in all respects, surpassing the United States and redesigning international relations according to its own vision³⁶⁴. The global China 2049 initiative has been exposed during the sixth plenum of the 19th central Committee of the communist party of China. For Xi Jinping, this resolution is very important, because with this initiative it implies that he will be the one to make China strong. This initiative defines goals

³⁵⁹ Han, B. (2022). Pentagon bill includes US\$10 billion in grants and loans for Taiwan arms sales. *South China Morning Post*. Retrieved from: <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3202466/pentagon-bill-includes-us10-billion-grants-and-loans-taiwan-arms-sales>

³⁶⁰ Fu, Z. (1996). CHINA'S PERCEPTION OF THE TAIWAN ISSUE. *UCLA. Journal of International Law and Foreign Affairs*. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45302054>

³⁶¹ Maroulis, S. (2022). Civil War of China: Chinese Communist Party vs Kuomintang. *Pacific Atrocities Education*. Retrieved from: <https://www.pacificatrocities.org/blog/civil-war-of-china-chinese-communist-party-vs-kuomintang>

³⁶² Wingfield-Hayes, R. (2022). Defiant Taiwan's identity is moving away from China. *BBC News*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-63196482>

³⁶³ Chotiner, I. (2022). The Provocative Politics of Nancy Pelosi's Trip to Taiwan. *The New Yorker*. Retrieved from: <https://www.newyorker.com/news/q-and-a/the-provocative-politics-of-nancy-pelosis-trip-to-taiwan>

³⁶⁴ ODI . Global China 2049 Initiative. Retrieved from: <https://odi.org/en/about/our-work/global-china-2049-initiative/>

to be achieved in the next hundred years, especially by 2049, including the reunification of Taiwan with the people's Republic and in 2050 he declared China will reach carbon neutrality.³⁶⁵

The midpoint of this grand plan is the year 2035. Under the circumstances, it seems likely that Xi Jinping, who is likely to retain his positions as President and General Secretary of the CCP for another 10 years, intends to move the ball significantly closer to the unification goal by the end of his term in 2032. In terms of concrete policy, this will most likely translate into action on three fronts³⁶⁶.

China's first and most obvious step is to build up its regional military capabilities in view of reunification. The People's Liberation Army is already fully capable of carrying out missile attacks on targets in the west. Apparently, more needs to be done in terms of acquiring landing ships for an assault on the east coast and building the capacity to control the surrounding seas and airspace³⁶⁷.

Regardless of China's capabilities, it is thought that a full-fledged military assault on Taiwan is not imminent. For the time being, Beijing simply intends to demonstrate its overwhelming strength to the Taiwanese people through exercises and manoeuvres. This is the first strategic front³⁶⁸.

Secondly, China will intensify its psychological warfare, with an almost constant barrage of disinformation aimed at sowing chaos in Taiwanese society, undermining Taiwan's democracy, and damaging the Tsai administration's position.³⁶⁹ Beijing has always recognized the value of utilizing information to influence both local and international audiences, and it holds the information space to be on par with any future conventional military power. The People's Republic of China (PRC) employs cyber and misinformation campaigns to obtain results favorable to its long-term strategic goals in accordance with its military and political philosophy. Information warfare is in fact handled by China's Strategic Support Force Network Systems Department, which also has responsibility for electronic, psychological, and cyberwarfare. In fact, for example on August 4, 2022, an ongoing information operations (IO) campaign was identified, several months before Nancy Pelosi's visit. This operation exploits a network of at least 72 sites, including 59 domains and 13 subdomains, which spread news via suspicious social profiles to promote China's political interests in North America, Europe, Asia and the Middle East. The sites mainly present themselves as independent news organizations

³⁶⁵ Sui, C. (2022). Will China Try to Take Taiwan in Xi's Third Term? *VOA*. Retrieved from: <https://www.voanews.com/a/will-china-try-to-take-taiwan-in-xi-s-third-term-/6801580.html>

³⁶⁶ Dong, J. (2020). China | Understanding the 14th Five-Year Plan and the 2035 long-term development target. *BBVA Research*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbva.com/en/publicaciones/china-understanding-the-14th-five-year-plan-and-the-2035-long-term-development-target-3/>

³⁶⁷ *La riscoperta del futuro*. Limes (2021)

³⁶⁸ *BBC* (2022). Taiwan: China attack not imminent, but US watching closely, says Gen Milley. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-62022308>

³⁶⁹ Nemoto, R., & Ryugen, H. (2022). China intensifies disinformation, cyberattacks on Taiwan: report. *Nikkei Asia*. Retrieved from: <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Taiwan-tensions/China-intensifies-disinformation-cyberattacks-on-Taiwan-report>

and publish content in 11 language³⁷⁰s. The promoted content openly opposes the United States and its allies and seeks to create a favorable image of China internationally. In addition to supporting pro-government views regarding Xinjiang and Hong Kong, the campaign aims to discredit personalities who express positions critical of Beijing. Cyber attacks, combined with missile exercises, provide a preview of what an invasion by China might entail. In the event of a military assault on Taiwan, Beijing would first launch a debilitating cyber security attack on the island's key infrastructure, such as its power grid. A direct military invasion would cost lives and mobilize U.S. forces to defend Taiwan; instead, according to Chen Yi-fan, Assistant Professor in the Department of Diplomacy and International Relations at Tamkang University, cyber attacks could sow chaos and weaken Taiwan's defenses, potentially making the invasion less costly for Beijing.

Another recent example, concerns the visit of U.S. House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi to Taiwan. Beyond the reactions this visit triggered against China, including the large-scale military exercises around the island that Beijing set up, Chinese cybercrime, in order to target the U.S., also reached out to Taiwan's 7-11 supermarket chain with the display on the screens of some branches of the words "Pelosi, warmonger, get out of Taiwan!"³⁷¹. The protest against Pelosi's visit to the island involved not only 7-11 supermarkets, but also government websites belonging to the presidential office, ministries of foreign affairs and defense, and infrastructure, all the way to screens at train stations. According to the Taiwanese government, which did not directly blame the Chinese government, the attack came from China and Russia³⁷².

The third front is harassment and economic aggression. China has long been implementing economic sanctions against Taiwan (without necessarily referring to them as such) in the form of fines on Taiwanese companies and subsequent embargoes on specific goods. In fact, recently China imposed new trade sanctions on Taiwan by banning the import of citrus fruits, frozen bamboo shoots and two types of fish from the territory, as well as the export of sand to the island³⁷³. So far, the embargoes have been limited to banning imports of non-essential agricultural products; Beijing has stopped short of restricting imports of chips and semiconductors, on which Chinese industry is heavily dependent³⁷⁴.

³⁷⁰ Farmer, B. (2022). China's cyber assault on Taiwan. *CBS News*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/china-cyber-assault-taiwan-60-minutes-2022-10-09/>

³⁷¹ Wang, Y.-H. (2022). 'Old Witch', 'Pelosi get out of Taiwan!': Public billboards hacked on US Speaker's visit. *The Observers*. Retrieved from: <https://observers.france24.com/en/asia-pacific/20220803-old-witch-pelosi-get-out-of-taiwan-public-billboards-hacked-as-us-speaker-visits>

³⁷² Santarelli, M. (2022). Cina, attacchi cyber e disinformazione su Taiwan (e USA): prove tecniche di invasione. *Agenda Digitale*. Retrieved from: <https://www.agendadigitale.eu/sicurezza/cina-attacchi-cyber-e-disinformazione-su-taiwan-e-usa-prove-tecniche-di-invasione/>

³⁷³ *Swissinfo.ch*. (2022). China impone nuevas sanciones a Taiwán sobre arena, cítricos, soja y pescado. Retrieved from: https://www.swissinfo.ch/spa/china-eeuu_china-impone-nuevas-sanciones-a-taiwán-sobre-arena--cítricos--soja-y-pescado/47799348

³⁷⁴ *The National Bureau of Asian Research* (2022). China's Sanctions Strategy and Its Implications. Retrieved from: <https://www.nbr.org/publication/chinas-sanctions-strategy-and-its-implications/>

The purpose of all these measures is to convince the Taiwanese people that the status quo, let alone independence, is an unsustainable path and that the only concrete way forward is unification with mainland China³⁷⁵.

Xi Jinping's regime has redoubled its efforts on all three fronts, constantly tightening the screws. The big question is what Beijing will do when it realises that its strategy is not working. It will most likely respond by increasing military pressure. Unfortunately, this increases the risk of incidents and spontaneous clashes that could lead to a rapid escalation³⁷⁶.

4.3 Why does the US care so much about Taiwan?

In recent months, international newspapers have often talked about Taiwan. This was especially the case when US President Joe Biden said that the United States was prepared to use force to defend Taiwan from a possible Chinese invasion³⁷⁷. More generally, in these months of war in Europe, it has been difficult to avoid a comparison between Ukraine and Taiwan, as both appear to be focal points of an international order that is undergoing a certain transition at the end of the American unipolar phase. In the eyes of an international, and particularly Western, public shocked by the Russian invasion, the parallelism may be unavoidable. Just as Ukraine refuses to be re-integrated into the Russian world, to look instead to NATO and the European Union, Taiwan rejects a reunification with China that Beijing, on the contrary, considers inevitable and necessary³⁷⁸. In this scenario, both Ukraine and Taiwan thus emerge as the new geopolitical frontiers of a global clash between democracies and autocracies. Or, reversing the perspective, as the battlegrounds of a clash between a hegemonic, globalist and imperialist West on the one hand, and an anti-imperialist front aiming at the creation of a multipolar and democratic international order on the other³⁷⁹.

In fact, the comparison was rather criticised, but Biden's words on the defence of Taiwan were based on a comparison with the Ukrainian situation. At the press conference, a reporter asked Biden: "You didn't want to get involved in the Ukrainian conflict for obvious reasons, but would you be willing to get involved militarily to defend Taiwan if something like that happened?" He replied, without hesitation: "Yes" then added: "this is the commitment we have made"³⁸⁰.

³⁷⁵ La riscoperta del futuro. *Limes* (2021)

³⁷⁶ Devine, P. (2022). Strategic Ambiguity Isn't Working to Deter China on Taiwan – It Will Invade Anyway. It's Time to Commit. *Just Security*. Retrieved from: <https://www.justsecurity.org/82912/strategic-ambiguity-isnt-working-to-deter-china-on-taiwan-it-will-invade-anyway-its-time-to-commit/>

³⁷⁷ Hale, E. (2021). Do the US and China have a 'Taiwan agreement'? *Al Jazeera*. Retrieved from: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/10/8/do-the-us-and-china-have-a-taiwan-agreement>

³⁷⁸ Tocci, N. (2022). Taiwan has learned a lot from the war in Ukraine — it's time Europe caught up. *POLITICO*. Retrieved from: <https://www.politico.eu/article/taiwan-lesson-war-ukraine-russia-china-europe-catch-up/>

³⁷⁹ Colby, E. A. (2022). Why Protecting Taiwan Really Matters to the U.S.? *Time*. Retrieved from: <https://time.com/6221072/why-protecting-taiwan-really-matters-to-the-u-s/>

³⁸⁰ Ayson, R. (2022). What does Biden mean on Taiwan?. *The Interpreter*. Retrieved from: <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/what-does-biden-mean-taiwan>

The US has no formal defence commitment to the Taiwanese government, but Biden's answer shows that, as analysts have known for some time, the US would be more inclined to commit militarily to the defence of Taiwan than to the defence of Ukraine. It means, in effect, that to defend Taiwan they would be ready to go to war with China³⁸¹.

In reality, analysts are quite divided as to how much this will really materialise when the time comes, i.e. whether the US will really be ready to take military action against China if and when it invades Taiwan. However, the hypothesis remains remote: at the moment there are no concrete indications that China might invade Taiwan³⁸², and no one expects there will be in the coming years. But as the Economist wrote a year ago, Taiwan is “the most dangerous place in the world”³⁸³, or one of the: the assumption is that if war breaks out between great powers, it will break out over Taiwan, an island of 23 million inhabitants off the coast of China.

There are several reasons why the US is prepared to risk a war with China to defend Taiwan. Most are strategic, historical, economic and military: among other things, if China were to gain Taiwan, it would greatly increase its military influence over the Pacific Ocean. It would encompass what is currently the 22nd largest economy in the world and take over Taiwan's crucial microprocessor industry, which is unique in the world and strategic for global technological development³⁸⁴.

In addition to these more concrete reasons, there is one related to ideology. It is certainly not the most important one, nor the one that will shift decisions for or against military intervention, but it is one of the most interesting and peculiar. The fact is that Taiwan is not only “the most dangerous place in the world”, as the Economist wrote, but also, according to various studies, the most democratic and free place in the whole of Asia³⁸⁵. This fact carries considerable weight in the reasoning of American (and to some extent Western) politicians and experts, who have played a key role in encouraging democracy in Taiwan and turning it into a successful model in contrast to Chinese state authoritarianism³⁸⁶. In fact, Taiwan is also a benchmark in terms of rights. It can undoubtedly be considered among the most developed Asian democracies, if not the most developed in the entire region. And it is also the first place in all of Asia where same-sex marriages are allowed after

³⁸¹ Ayson, R. (2022). What does Biden mean on Taiwan?. *The Interpreter*. Retrieved from: <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/what-does-biden-mean-taiwan>

³⁸² Dominiguez, G. (2022). What would be the signs China is preparing to invade Taiwan? *The Japan Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2022/10/18/asia-pacific/signs-china-invasion-taiwan/>

³⁸³ Kwan, R. (2021). 'Most dangerous place on Earth': Taiwan Twitter derides The Economist's latest cover story, *Hong Kong Free Press HKFP*. Retrieved from: <https://hongkongfp.com/2021/04/30/most-dangerous-place-on-earth-taiwan-twitter-derides-the-economists-latest-cover-story/>

³⁸⁴ Gil, T. (2019). Por qué EE.UU. "está comprometido por ley" a facilitar armas a Taiwán en claro desafío a China, *BBC News Mundo*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-internacional-48944773>

³⁸⁵ Dall'Aguzzo, M. (2022). Perché Taiwan è così importante per Cina e Stati Uniti. *Startmag*. Retrieved from: <https://www.startmag.it/mondo/taiwan-cina-cosa-succede/>

³⁸⁶ Patrick, S. (2023). Four Contending U.S. Approaches to Multilateralism. *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. Retrieved from: <https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/01/23/four-contending-u.s.-approaches-to-multilateralism-pub-88852>

legalization in 2019. From Hong Kong to Myanmar, Thailand to the Philippines, many pro-democracy activists look to Taipei as an example to follow. The political regimes of Taiwan and China are two interesting examples of the processes of political change. Starting from a common cultural-political-historical core (i.e., the Chinese Empire and its successor, the Republic of China), Taiwan managed to emerge from the authoritarianism of Chiang Kai-shek and his son Chiang Ching-kuo to move toward democracy at the end of the last century, while the People's Republic of China maintains its totalitarian, one-party communist regime established in 1949. The fragile international personality and the dispute with China over national reunification are obstacles to the consolidation of Taiwan's democracy³⁸⁷.

However, if the US intervenes militarily, it will not do so solely out of a disinterested defence of democratic values. But the fact that Taiwan is a democracy and the manner in which it has become one does matter. As Taiwanese President Tsai Ing-wen wrote in an essay in *Foreign Affairs*, if Taiwan were to fall, “it would mean that in today's global competition of values, authoritarianism would be ahead of democracy”³⁸⁸. Biden, too, has often described the political and economic competition between the US and China as a clash between democracy and authoritarianism³⁸⁹.

4.4 Taipei's stance towards the war in Ukraine

From its earliest stages, the Russian invasion of Ukraine allowed the global administration led by President Tsai to raise Taiwan's international profile and raise public awareness in Asia-Pacific democracies and Europe about the growing tensions with Beijing. In the years immediately preceding the conflict, particularly since 2018, the Tsai administration has been committed to presenting Taiwan as the last bastion in defence of democracy in the region, espousing the vision of a free and open Indo-Pacific introduced by Japan during Shinzo Abe's premiership and energetically publicized by the United States since the Trump presidency.³⁹⁰ In the case of Europe, the Tsai administration has instead sought to exploit the gradual deterioration of Sino-European relations, accelerated during the Covid-19 pandemic, with a manoeuvre conducted on two fronts. Taipei has deepened, with moderate success, its unofficial relations with those Central and Eastern European countries, in particular Lithuania, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, which have profoundly rethought their bilateral relations with Beijing. Beyond this regional perimeter, Taipei has also sought to deepen relations with the EU and its major member states in the wake of Brussels' recent plans to re-industrialise the continent and attract investment from Taiwanese semiconductor giant TSMC³⁹¹.

³⁸⁷ Lamperti, L. (2022). Perché Taiwan è così importante? *Wired Italia*. Retrieved from: <https://www.wired.it/article/taiwan-cina-stati-uniti-microchip/>

³⁸⁸ Ing-wen, T. (2021). Taiwan and the Fight for Democracy. *Foreign Affairs*. Retrieved from: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/taiwan/2021-10-05/taiwan-and-fight-democracy>

³⁸⁹ Kroenig, M. (2020). The Power Delusion. *Foreign Policy*. Retrieved from: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/11/11/china-united-states-democracy-ideology-competition-rivalry-great-powers-power-delusion/>

³⁹⁰ Memorial Italia (2023). *Guerra Globale- Il conflitto russo-ucraino e l'ordine internazionale*. Corriere della sera.

³⁹¹ Feng, J. (2022). Today Ukraine, Tomorrow Taiwan: Americans Fear China Will Copy Russia. *Newsweek*. Retrieved from: <https://www.newsweek.com/today-ukraine-tomorrow-taiwan-americans-fear-china-will-copy-russia-1682128>

On this basis, the Tsai administration has therefore firmly and convincingly supported Ukraine³⁹² since the beginning of the conflict and unambiguously criticised Russian actions through statements by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the TECRO representative in the US³⁹³ (Taiwan Economic and Cultural Representative Office, Taiwan's de facto embassy in the country) Hsiao Bi-khim, and the president herself³⁹⁴. In addition to this rhetorical support, Taipei immediately joined the US, the majority of US allies inside and outside NATO, and EU member states in sanctions against Moscow. By blocking the export of semiconductors produced on the island to the Russian Federation, the Tsai administration thus made a concrete contribution to the Western countries' effort to damage the country's economy and the capabilities of Moscow's weapons industry in the medium term³⁹⁵. These measures were accompanied by the provision of material support to Ukraine, driven in the early months of the conflict by contributions from local companies and private citizens. As a result, drones, ammunition, medical equipment, as well as USD 45 million in humanitarian funds arrived from Taiwan to Ukraine in the first five months of the war. Additional funds of USD 56 million were also pledged by Foreign Minister Joseph Wu at the end of October³⁹⁶.

³⁹² *Reuters* (2022). Taiwan 'proud' of its efforts to help Ukraine, says President Tsai. Retrieved from: <https://www.reuters.com/world/taiwan-proud-its-efforts-help-ukraine-says-president-tsai-2022-09-20/>

³⁹³ *Focus Taiwan* (2023). Taipei blasts Moscow over support of Beijing's Taiwan claim. Retrieved from: <https://focustaiwan.tw/politics/202301040009>

³⁹⁴ Memorial Italia (2023). *Guerra Globale- Il conflitto russo-ucraino e l'ordine internazionale*. Corriere della sera.

³⁹⁵ Alena Popova. (2023). Russia can't replace Western chips — so it gets them illegally. *The Hill*. Retrieved from: <https://thehill.com/opinion/technology/3833248-russia-cant-replace-western-chips-so-it-gets-them-illegally/>

³⁹⁶ Jennings, R. (2022). Why Taiwanese are Donating Food, Money and Medical Supplies to Ukraine. *VOA*. Retrieved from: <https://www.voanews.com/a/why-taiwanese-are-donating-food-money-and-medical-supplies-to-ukraine-/6487801.html>

4.5 Taiwan is not Ukraine



Figure 7: Taiwanese AH-64 Apache and CH-47 Chinook helicopters on parade in Taipei on October 5, 2022

Source: The New York Times

In geopolitical jargon, the term “black swan”³⁹⁷ is used to refer to an unexpected and unpredictable event that has a lasting impact on a large scale. A “grey rhinoceros”³⁹⁸, on the other hand, is an event that is foreseen with devastating consequences, but only materializes or becomes credible after a prolonged series of warnings.

In this sense, the outbreak of open war in Europe, in the form of a direct invasion of one sovereign state by another, was clearly a “black swan” until the middle of last decade. But with the annexation of Crimea and the escalation of the conflict in the Donbas, the idea of Moscow choosing to launch a direct attack on Ukraine has become more plausible. Is the same true for Taiwan?

³⁹⁷ Mokrane, M. (2022). Ukraine: the blackest of black swan events. *Professional Real Asset*. Retrieved from: <https://www.patrizia.ag/en/news-detail/default-4361dfa8a7/>

³⁹⁸ Goldkorn, J. (2022). Gray rhinos and risk awareness in China and the U.S. — Q&A with Michele Wucker. *The China Project*. Retrieved from: <https://thechinaproject.com/2022/10/21/gray-rhinos-and-risk-awareness-in-china-and-the-u-s-qa-with-michele-wucker/>

The two cases are in no way extrapolable or similar in their strategic or political approaches. Despite Beijing's rhetoric and continued manoeuvres in the waters of the Straits, there is no indication that the People's Republic of China (PRC) wants to carry out an attack on Formosa. This is due to numerous factors³⁹⁹.

First of all, one must consider the ideological basis of the Communist Party of China. The People's Republic of China does not recognize the Republic of China as an independent state. Instead, it regards the island as an autonomous province under its own sovereignty, placing the peaceful reunification of the country among the main goals of the Communist Party of China. A consequence of this principle of territorial unity is the one-China policy whereby a country that has institutional relations with Beijing can have none with Taipei. This policy has led to Taiwan's gradual diplomatic isolation, ousted from the United Nations by a 1971 resolution and now recognized by only 13 states after Nicaragua's decision to sever relations in favor of the People's Republic of China⁴⁰⁰.

President Xi Jinping seems, to date, intent on pursuing reunification through trade and political levers, without resorting to military intervention, seeking to maintain a reputation as a peaceful power. This is not just a domestic and foreign policy strategy: harmony⁴⁰¹, understood as the management of diversity and conflict, is a cardinal principle of Chinese tradition as opposed to chaos that must be avoided. Political instability, both domestically and internationally, turns out to be an obstacle to Xi Jinping's aspirations and goals. This is also one of the reasons why China finds itself taking an ambiguous stance toward Russian aggression in Ukraine: on the one hand, it does not want to undermine relations with Russia by condemning the invasion; on the other hand, it is concerned about instability in the region, which is moreover affected by the New Silk Road projects⁴⁰².

At the same time, it is not only the principle of harmony and stability that discourages the Chinese Communist Party from carrying out an armed attack on Taiwan: the link with the United States, and in particular the Taiwan Relations Act entered into in 1979, is a factor that Beijing cannot underestimate for its future plans. The Taiwan Relations Act does not provide for direct armed intervention by the U.S. should Taiwan be attacked, but for the provision of arms and services necessary for the country to be able to defend itself. The need to ensure national and international stability, and the Taiwan-U.S. bond, are deterrent factors for military

³⁹⁹ CNN (2022). ¿Por qué el caso de Taiwán y China no es igual al de Ucrania y Rusia? Retrieved from: <https://cnnespanol.cnn.com/2022/03/03/caso-taiwan-china-ucrania-rusia-orix/>

⁴⁰⁰ Binda, M. (2022). Perché è improbabile che Taiwan sia il prossimo fronte di un conflitto. *Futuranetwork.eu*. Retrieved from: <https://futuranetwork.eu/geopolitica/702-3154/perche-e-improbabile-che-taiwan-sia-il-prossimo-fronte-di-un-conflitto>

⁴⁰¹ *Communication (2016)*. What You Need to Know About: Chinese Harmony Theory. Retrieved from: <https://communication.binus.ac.id/2016/03/14/what-you-need-to-know-about-chinese-harmony-theory/>

⁴⁰² Binda, M. (2022). Perché è improbabile che Taiwan sia il prossimo fronte di un conflitto. *Futuranetwork.eu*. Retrieved from: <https://futuranetwork.eu/geopolitica/702-3154/perche-e-improbabile-che-taiwan-sia-il-prossimo-fronte-di-un-conflitto>

intervention by China. Both states, however, are closely watching what is happening in Ukraine, ready to seize on any changes in future geopolitical horizons⁴⁰³.

Taiwanese government spokesman Lo Ping-Cheng called on Feb. 28, 2022, to refrain from drawing parallels between the Taiwanese and Ukrainian cases, saying that any comparison would amount to a "cognitive warfare" strategy that Beijing is deploying to "undermine Taiwan's morale"⁴⁰⁴. For his part, PRC Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin criticized the "alarmist attitude" of politicians in Taipei and those in the United States who have been criticized for their "alarmist attitude." Western media claimed that the People's Navy maneuvers had been planned for months. When asked about the unfortunate timing of the announcement, Wang stated bluntly, "Taiwan is not Ukraine".⁴⁰⁵

And it certainly is not. With a GDP of \$785 billion⁴⁰⁶, Taiwan is one of the twenty largest economies in the world. Established as one of the world's leading technology centers, it has greater strategic and economic importance than Ukraine. It is the eighth largest trading partner of the United States by total trade volume (Ukraine is 67th) and is also better prepared to resist aggression.⁴⁰⁷

Earlier this year, its annual defense budget was around \$16.9 billion⁴⁰⁸, to which will be added another \$8.7 billion over five years for the purchase of drones, smart sea mines, HIMARS high-mobility artillery systems, M-1 Abrams tanks and 100 Harpoon guided missile systems⁴⁰⁹. These items will be integrated as part of the overlay of the current national defense policy, known as "Fortress Taiwan," promoted by current President Tsai Ing-Wen and the previous U.S. ⁴¹⁰. administration. Through this policy, Taipei has reduced the number of ground troops and invested more in increasing the reaction and combat capabilities of the air force and navy.

⁴⁰³ *Foreign Affairs* (2022). Should the United States Pledge to Defend Taiwan? Retrieved from: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/ask-the-experts/should-united-states-pledge-defend-taiwan>

⁴⁰⁴ *Reuters* (2022). «Taiwan says inappropriate to link its situation to Ukraine's». Retrieved from: <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/taiwan-says-inappropriate-link-its-situation-ukraines-2022-02-28>

⁴⁰⁵ *Reuters* (2022). «China says Taiwan is "not Ukraine" as island raises alert level». Retrieved from: <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/taiwan-says-must-raise-alertness-over-ukraine-crisis-2022-02-23>

⁴⁰⁶ *Statista* (2022). «Taiwan: Gross domestic product (GDP) in current prices from 1986 to 2026». Retrieved from: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/727589/gross-domestic-product-gdp-in-taiwan/>

⁴⁰⁷ *Foreign Trade* (2022). «Top Trading Partners - February 2022», United States Census Bureau. Retrieved from: <https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/statistics/highlights/toppartners.html>

⁴⁰⁸ *ShieldSquare* (2022). Taiwan Defense Market Highlights. Retrieved from: <https://www.globaldata.com/data-insights/aerospace-and-defence/taiwan-defense-market-budget-assessment-and-drivers-2022/>

⁴⁰⁹ Cheung, E. and Chang, W. (2022). «Russia's invasion of Ukraine sparks concern in Taiwan over readiness for conflict with China», *CNN*. Retrieved from: <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/03/17/asia/taiwan-military-reservists-china-fears-intl-hnk/index.html>

⁴¹⁰ *Asia Sentinel* (2022). Taiwan Turning Itself into a Fortress. Retrieved from: <https://www.asiasentinel.com/p/taiwan-turning-itself-fortress>

Such efforts may pale in comparison to the \$230.2 billion that the PRC⁴¹¹ currently spends, but the reform undertaken by Taiwanese forces is clearly aimed at adapting them to their real needs and helping troops take advantage of the tactical advantages that geography offers them.

Unlike Ukraine, which shares more than 2,000 km of border with Russia, Taiwan (or Formosa) is separated from mainland China by 130 km of sea. From its capital, Taipei, authorities govern the last remnants of the Republic of China, embodied in a hundred or so islands and atolls scattered across the South and East China Seas⁴¹². Heavily militarized, their garrisons are equipped with radar systems, fast-reaction ships, artillery batteries and guided missiles. By themselves, they constitute its outer wall of protection and its main early warning system.

An invasion fleet from the mainland would have to overcome these obstacles and pass through the Formosa Strait, one of the most heavily monitored and traveled waterways in the world. The crossing would take at least two to three days from most starting points, and the ships would be within range of the defenders' guided missiles and submarines from the moment they left port⁴¹³.

In addition, Taiwan itself has geographical conditions that make it particularly difficult to assault. With an area of 35,808 square kilometers (slightly larger than Belgium), it has a north-south length of 394 km and an east-west length of 144 km at its widest point⁴¹⁴. Covered by mountains in the eastern two-thirds, more than 90 percent of its 24 million inhabitants are concentrated in the plains of the western third and far north. It has a particularly rugged terrain. Its mountain ranges are home to 164 peaks more than 3,000 meters high, causing clouds carried by ocean currents to be trapped along its coasts, covering them with low clouds for much of the year.⁴¹⁵ It is hit by typhoons all the time between July and October and, being on the Pacific Ring of Fire, also regularly experiences earthquakes. To make matters worse, it has only fourteen beaches that can be used for an amphibious assault, and all are surrounded by cliffs, hills, or densely populated urban centers⁴¹⁶.

As an example of the impediments to be faced, suffice it to say that during World War II the Allied command considered the invasion of Formosa. The plan, known as Operation Causeway⁴¹⁷, estimated that 500,000 men

⁴¹¹ Grevatt, J. and Macdonald, A. (2022). «China increases 2022 defence budget by 7.1 %», *Janes*. Retrieved from: <https://www.janes.com/defence-news/news-detail/china-increases-2022-defence-budget-by-71>

⁴¹² *CountryReports* (s.d.). Taiwan geography, maps, climate, environment and terrain from Taiwan. Retrieved from: <https://www.countryreports.org/country/Taiwan/geography.htm>

⁴¹³ Lamperti, L. (2022). I 6 scenari di un'invasione di Taiwan da parte della Cina. *Wired Italia*. Retrieved from: <https://www.wired.it/article/taiwan-invasione-cina-scenari/>

⁴¹⁴ Copper, J. C. (2023). Taiwan-History, Flag, Map, Capital, Population, & Facts. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Taiwan>

⁴¹⁵ *CountryReports* (s.d.). Taiwan geography, maps, climate, environment and terrain from Taiwan. Retrieved from: <https://www.countryreports.org/country/Taiwan/geography.htm>

⁴¹⁶ Mei, N. S., Jacques, A., & Chung-Pai, C. (2009). Earthquake cycle in Western Taiwan: Insights from historical seismicity. *OUP Academic*. Retrieved from: <https://academic.oup.com/gji/article/178/2/753/625204>

⁴¹⁷ Suci, P. (2022). The US military came up with its own ill-fated plan to invade Taiwan during World War II. *Business Insider*. Retrieved from: <https://www.businessinsider.com/us-had-plan-to-invade-and-capture-taiwan-during-wwii-2022-8?r=US&IR=T>

and a fleet of more than 1,600 ships were needed to storm and occupy the island, which was manned by just 30,000 defenders.

The option was discarded in favor of assaults on Okinawa and Luzon, which were considered easier to take. In the case of Okinawa, the U.S. Navy mobilized a fleet of more than 2,000 ships (including twenty-two aircraft carriers), 450,000 men and 2.2 million tons of supplies for the first wave.⁴¹⁸ Today the PRC Navy has only two aircraft carriers and seventy amphibious ships.⁴¹⁹

The land warfare manuals of most world armies consider a numerical superiority of 3 to 1 necessary for an invading force to prevail over the enemy in a conventional assault. This ratio rises to 5 to 1 if the battle is fought in adverse terrain⁴²⁰. Considering that Taiwan's armed forces maintain an active personnel strength of about 220,000 troops⁴²¹, and that national emergency laws would allow Taipei to double that number in a matter of weeks, an attacking force would need between 400,000 and 1.2 million troops to undertake the campaign with any margin of success⁴²². However, the situation could quickly become more complicated. In Taiwan, military service is compulsory for all men between the ages of 18 and 36 and lasts from four to 12 months depending on the case⁴²³. This model, introduced in the last decade, leaves behind the initial one, under which men between the ages of 18 and 28 served for two years⁴²⁴. Once discharged, recruits join the reserve forces for another eight years. As a result, the territory is estimated to have at least two million reservists⁴²⁵, a figure similar to the total number of active troops in the People's Republic.

In the unlikely event that Beijing opts for a conventional invasion, it would have to stockpile troops, vehicles and supplies (including food, ammunition, medical supplies and fuel) along the coasts of Zhejiang, Fujian and Guangdong for months. Doing so in secret would be impossible and would give time for an allied contingent to deploy to Taiwan as a deterrent⁴²⁶.

⁴¹⁸ Heginbotham, E. and Odell, R. E. (2021). «Strait of crisis? Debating Beijing's threat to Taiwan», *Foreign Affairs*. Retrieved from: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2021-08-09/strait-emergency>

⁴¹⁹ Jensen, B. (2022). Not So Fast: Insights from a 1944 War Plan Help Explain Why Invading Taiwan Is a Costly Gamble. *War on the Rocks*. Retrieved from: <https://warontherocks.com/2022/09/not-so-fast-insights-from-a-1944-war-help-explain-why-invading-taiwan-is-a-costly-gamble/>

⁴²⁰ Mearsheimer, J. J. (1989). Assessing the Conventional Balance: The 3:1 Rule and Its Critics. *International Security*. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.2307/2538780>

⁴²¹ *Intelligence Resource Program*. Army - Taiwan Intelligence & Security Agencies. Retrieved from: <https://irp.fas.org/world/taiwan/army-intro.htm>

⁴²² Leofrigio, M. (2021). La fortezza Taiwan. *Analisi Difesa*. Retrieved from: <https://www.analisdifesa.it/2021/12/la-fortezza-taiwan/>

⁴²³ Cordella, G. (2022). Taiwan, le mosse anti-Cina: servizio di leva più lungo e stipendi quadruplicati ai militari. *Gazzettino*. Retrieved from: https://www.ilgazzettino.it/esteri/taiwan_cina_cosa_succede_guerra_militari_news-7135759.html

⁴²⁴ *Il Post* (2022). Il servizio militare obbligatorio a Taiwan passerà da 4 mesi a un anno per tutti i cittadini maschi con almeno 18 anni. Retrieved from: <https://www.ilpost.it/2022/12/27/taiwan-servizio-militare/>

⁴²⁵ Chung, J. and Wu, S. (2022). «Relax rules to boost reservist numbers: lawmakers». *Taipei Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2022/02/27/2003773863>

⁴²⁶ Lamperti, L. (2022). I 6 scenari di un'invasione di Taiwan da parte della Cina. *Wired Italia*. Retrieved from: <https://www.wired.it/article/taiwan-invasione-cina-scenari/>

Similarly, Taiwan does not have sufficient infrastructure or food reserves to supply such a large invasion force, so all its supplies would initially have to come from the sea. One of the attackers' first objectives would be to neutralize Taiwan's air forces, the various islands' anti-aircraft defenses, and their guided missile systems within the first two days of operations. Only then would it be possible to secure several airfields to facilitate some of the supplies by air⁴²⁷.

4.5 Worst-case scenario: an unlikely D-Day

Despite the unfeasibility of such an undertaking, Beijing has always refused to give up the military option as a last resort⁴²⁸. This forces it to contemplate an attack as a plausible scenario, which raises two main questions: what would such an invasion look like and, if it were to happen, would Washington actually keep its promises?

Of course, Taipei's main asset is its status as a U.S. ally. In 2021, U.S. President Joe Biden declared that Washington would intervene should Taiwan be attacked⁴²⁹. However, successive U.S. administrations have never been explicit about what circumstances or how they would intervene. Nor have they specified what kind of strategies, other than an invasion or overt act of aggression, might qualify as "attack."⁴³⁰ Herein lies the real danger to the territory.

The defense of the island, without foreign support, is now an impossible chimera.⁴³¹ Despite the extraordinary readiness of the Taiwan Armed Forces, this statement unfortunately remains true in one specific context: that of tactical engagement.⁴³² Since the expiration of the the Sino-American Treaty of Mutual Defense⁴³³ and the enactment of the Taiwan Relations Act, the United States has pursued a policy of "strategic ambiguity" that has exasperated Taipei in recent years. Washington is adamant about helping the territory defend itself and

⁴²⁷ *The Economic Times* (2022). Military reserves, civil defense worry Taiwan as China looms. Retrieved from: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/military-reserves-civil-defense-worry-taiwan-as-china-looms/articleshow/93992268.cms>

⁴²⁸ Cheng, E. (2022). China would only use force as a 'last resort' for Taiwan reunification, former PLA official says. *CNBC*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/05/25/force-a-last-resort-for-china-on-taiwan-reunification-former-pla-official-says.html>

⁴²⁹ Sanger, D. (2021). «Biden Said the U.S. Would Protect Taiwan. But It's Not That Clear-Cut». *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/22/us/politics/biden-taiwan-defense-china.html>

⁴³⁰ Miles Yu On Taiwan: America's strategic clarity in defense of Taiwan: The dangerous illusion of strategic ambiguity. *Taipei Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.taipeitimes.com/News/editorials/archives/2022/10/31/2003787992>

⁴³¹ García, I. (2017). «Las Fuerzas Armadas de Taiwán y el programa nuclear de Taipéi». *IEEE*. Retrieved from: https://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_opinion/2017/DIEEE046-

⁴³² Chin-Han Wu, C. (2022). The Taiwan Policy Act and the Future of U.S.-Taiwan Relations. *Stimson Center*. Retrieved from: <https://www.stimson.org/2022/the-taiwan-policy-act-and-the-future-of-u-s-taiwan-relations/>

⁴³³ Huang, D. (2010). The United States and Taiwan's Defense Transformation. *Brookings*. Retrieved from: <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/the-united-states-and-taiwans-defense-transformation/>

has always provided it with the necessary tools. However, it has never included Taiwan in a concise security framework that would assure the country's authorities that U.S. troops will actually come to its aid.⁴³⁴

With the Bush and Obama Administrations' attention focused on the Middle East and Afghanistan, Washington has consistently adopted a policy of restraint aimed at not aggravating relations with the PRC. Beijing took advantage of the situation to launch an unprecedented arms race, boosted its asymmetrical warfare capabilities and maneuvered to further isolate Taiwan in the diplomatic arena. In the face of this situation, Taiwan's former national security cabinet chief, Su Chi, went so far as to declare on several occasions that, in the event of an attack, Taiwan should not expect any help from the United States, arguing that Washington lacked the ability and willingness to do so.⁴³⁵

Logic and foresight therefore dictate that all possible scenarios be considered. In such a situation, the Taiwan Armed Forces have sufficient capabilities to prevent an attacking force from reaching the main island or to repel several waves of landings. However, if PLA (People's Liberation Army) ground forces were able to gain a foothold on Formosa before an allied contingent was deployed there, the defenders would likely end up fighting alone.⁴³⁶

The chances of this happening are slim to none. In the three cross-strait crises (1954, 1958 and 1996) the U.S. Seventh Fleet⁴³⁷, stationed in the Japanese port of Yokosuka, deployed quickly to prevent a direct attack on Taiwan. In addition, 75 percent of the 52,000 U.S. troops stationed in Japan are stationed in Okinawa, less than 600 km to the northeast. While the PLA would take weeks to prepare the invasion force and days to transport it from one side of the Straits to the other, Washington could mobilize a token force of 3,000 troops in one day and send them to Taipei in a one-hour air flight that would meet no opposition. Within days they could be joined by reinforcements, including troops from the new AUKUS alliance and even the JSDF.⁴³⁸

The main fear is that the PLA could use the maneuvers as cover to launch the first two phases of an invasion or, at least, to occupy some of the outlying archipelagos. In this regard, several warnings have been issued in the past year. In the first half of October 2021, PRC aircraft penetrated the Taiwan's air defense identification

⁴³⁴ Keegan, D. (2021). Strengthening Dual Deterrence on Taiwan: The Key to US-China Strategic Stability. *Stimson Center*. Retrieved from: <https://www.stimson.org/2021/strengthening-dual-deterrence-on-taiwan-the-key-to-us-china-strategic-stability/>

⁴³⁵ Wu, D. (2022). «The KMT's Defense Policy: Toward a Symmetric Posture», *The Diplomat*. Retrieved from: <https://thediplomat.com/2022/04/the-kmts-defense-policy-toward-a-symmetric-posture/>

⁴³⁶ Lendon, B. and Liebermann, O. (2023). War game suggests Chinese invasion of Taiwan would fail at a huge cost to US, Chinese and Taiwanese militaries. *CNN Politics*. Retrieved from: <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/01/09/politics/taiwan-invasion-war-game-intl-hnk-ml/index.html>

⁴³⁷ *Office of the Historian*. Milestones: 1953–1960. Retrieved from: <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/taiwan-strait-crises>

⁴³⁸ Scott W. y Mori, S. (2021). «A Taiwan Contingency and Japan's Counterstrike Debate», *The Diplomat*. Retrieved from: <https://thediplomat.com/2021/07/a-taiwan-contingency-and-japans-counterstrike-debate/>

zone (ADIZ) a total of 159 times, with incursions recorded in a single day.⁴³⁹ The U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINDOPACOM)⁴⁴⁰ is therefore focusing its strategy on minimizing risks and "closing windows," but to achieve this goal it will ultimately be critical to deploy troops to the island in that threshold of time when the crisis would take shape without yet mutating into conflict.

Given the capabilities of the PLA, the worst-case scenario for USINDOPACOM would involve, in the first phase, a coordinated attack between aircraft and guided missiles that would obscure much of Taiwanese territory. Over the past year, continued intrusions by PRC aircraft have been a major source of concern for USINDOPACOM⁴⁴¹. People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAF) have provided Beijing with solid information about the adversary's ability to respond. At the same time, a wave of cyber attacks would seek to devastate vital infrastructure, power grids and communication systems. In the confusion, an air force could be dropped on several islands, carrying out sabotage operations along with previously secretly deployed units. With no foreign forces ashore, the PLA's naval force would try to surround Formosa and block ships reaching its ports, while the PLAF would try to neutralize the Taiwanese air force. Only then could a simultaneous landing operation be launched on several beachheads, which, predictably, would meet fierce resistance and could be easily blocked or held back by blowing up the bridges⁴⁴².

The project would be costly and take days, and its success would by no means be assured, but if successful, Taiwan could be isolated. If the attacking forces were to seize or neutralize the Formosa ports and secure key beachheads, Taipei's allies would find it difficult to send supplies to the defenders⁴⁴³. However, such a scenario would require an unprecedented concatenation of intelligence, foresight, and planning errors; even with these elements on the table, the PLA would have very little time to achieve its objectives before an allied contingent could step in to defend the main island.

Moreover, unlike the Ukrainian debacle, which still offers several possibilities of "success" for Russia, a failure in the campaign to gain Formosa would not offer any kind of honorable exit for Beijing; especially if targets in the PRC itself were hit during hostilities or if the United States were to enter the conflict (which is

⁴³⁹ Doyle, G. and Katakam, A. (2021). «The skies over the South China Sea». *Reuters*. Retrieved from: Disponibile en: <https://graphics.reuters.com/TAIWAN-CHINA/byvrjrmgnve/>

⁴⁴⁰ *The White House* (2022). Indo-Pacific Strategy. Retrieved from: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/U.S.-Indo-Pacific-Strategy.pdf>

⁴⁴¹ *The White House* (2022). Indo-Pacific Strategy. Retrieved from: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/U.S.-Indo-Pacific-Strategy.pdf>

⁴⁴² Giuliani, F. (2022). Così la Cina può realizzare un blocco strategico su Taiwan. *InsideOver*. Retrieved from: <https://insideover.ilgiornale.it/guerra/cosi-la-cina-puo-realizzare-un-blocco-strategico-su-taiwan.html>

⁴⁴³ Culver, J. (2022). How We Would Know When China Is Preparing to Invade Taiwan. *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. Retrieved from: <https://carnegieendowment.org/2022/10/03/how-we-would-know-when-china-is-preparing-to-invade-taiwan-pub-88053>

more than likely). The enterprise of gaining Formosa seems even less feasible today than six years ago, being an expensive and extremely risky project in which Beijing would have much to lose and little to gain⁴⁴⁴.

4.6 The plausible crisis

At the moment, PLAN does not have the means to undertake such a campaign. However, this should not lead to optimism. Since 2010, the navy has been the main recipient of defence budgets in a Beijing that plans to have six naval air combat groups by 2035⁴⁴⁵. By 2021, it has become the largest navy in the world, with an estimated 355 active ships.⁴⁴⁶ The Marines are also improving their amphibious operational capabilities and have increased their troop numbers from 20,000 to 100,000 in less than ten years. The PLAN could have 460 ships by the end of the decade⁴⁴⁷, which would make an invasion unnecessary.

Geography, one of Taiwan's great advantages over Ukraine, would thus become an aggravating factor.⁴⁴⁸ A naval blockade would not cause casualties or damage to infrastructure and could reduce Taiwan's ability to react. Moreover, Taiwan's current defence strategy is not designed to deal with a prolonged encirclement, but to deal with a direct attack.⁴⁴⁹

However, a blockade would be tremendously expensive, consume a multitude of resources and take months, if not years, to start producing results. Taiwan could be supplied by air in various ways and the international community would react negatively.⁴⁵⁰

Ukraine offers several valuable lessons in the latter regard. The sanctions imposed by the international community against Russia provide insights into how other states might respond to an act of belligerence by Beijing. Indeed, as early as the early 2020s, many analysts assessed how the PRC could be sanctioned and the country's international trade affected if its leaders decided to go to war.⁴⁵¹

⁴⁴⁴ *Econopoly* (2022). Perché una guerra a Taiwan sarebbe molto peggio dell'Ucraina. Retrieved from: <https://www.econopoly.ilsole24ore.com/2022/07/12/taiwan-guerra-ucraina/>

⁴⁴⁵ Chan, M. (2021). «China has proved it can build warships. It faces another challenge if it wants to catch up with the US», *The Business*. Retrieved from: <https://www.businessinsider.com/china-challenged-to-build-balanced-to-compete-with-us-navy-2021-5>

⁴⁴⁶ Shelbourne, M. (2021). «China Has World's Largest Navy with 355 Ships and Counting, Says Pentagon». *U. S. Naval Institute*. Retrieved from: <https://news.usni.org/2021/11/03/china-has-worlds-largest-navy-with-355-ships-and-counting-says-pentagon>

⁴⁴⁷ *NPR* (2022). China upgrades its naval force with its first indigenous aircraft carrier. Retrieved from: <https://www.npr.org/2022/06/17/1105786322/chinas-upgrades-its-naval-force-with-its-first-indigenous-aircraft-carrier>

⁴⁴⁸ Baron, J. (2022). Taiwan and Ukraine: Parallels, Divergences and Potential Lessons. *Global Asia*. Retrieved from: https://www.globalasia.org/v17no2/cover/taiwan-and-ukraine-parallels-divergences-and-potential-lessons_james-baron

⁴⁴⁹ Sanger, D. E. and Qin, A. (2022). As China Plans Drills Circling Taiwan, U.S. Officials Fear a Squeeze Play. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/03/us/politics/china-exercises-taiwan-fears.html>

⁴⁵⁰ Condon, C. (2022). «Yellen Says U.S. Would Use Sanctions If China Invaded Taiwan». *Bloomberg*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-04-06/yellen-says-u-s-would-use-sanctions-if-china-invaded-taiwan>

⁴⁵¹ Zelikow, P. and Blackwill, R. (2021). The United States, China, and Taiwan: A Strategy to Prevent War. *Council on Foreign Relations*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cfr.org/report/united-states-china-and-taiwan-strategy-prevent-war>

4.7 Removing ambiguities

The specific way in which Washington would respond to a potential crisis will depend on how the crisis occurs and develops. This is because the US has a number of different (and divergent) interests in the region, ranging from deterring the PRC from launching an attack to maintaining “fluid” relations with Beijing. This includes discouraging Taipei from making an official declaration of independence that could lead to an escalation of tensions⁴⁵².

This last point, although unsatisfactory to a large section of the island's society, seems to be one of the central pillars that ensures Taiwan's shielding for the time being. However, if such a project is to be sustained, Washington will sooner or later have to include its defence in a collective regional security agreement that includes Japan, South Korea and the AUKUS alliance⁴⁵³.

The Trump administration has been by far the most lavish in its gestures to dispel doubts about America's determination to defend its territory. During his presidency, sales of military equipment to Taiwan have increased dramatically and, in November 2020, several dozen Marines conducted manoeuvres on the island⁴⁵⁴. In addition, with the passage of the Taipei Act (2020), the US moved to encourage Taiwan's more active participation in the international community, but without changing its status⁴⁵⁵. The strategy was of course condemned by Beijing, but has been taken up by Washington's main partners. In the past three years, we have seen warships from France⁴⁵⁶, Germany⁴⁵⁷, the UK⁴⁵⁸, Canada and Australia plying the Strait and even participating in joint manoeuvres with US and Japanese navies in nearby waters⁴⁵⁹.

⁴⁵² *Asia Society* (2022). Avoiding War Over Taiwan. Retrieved from: <https://asiasociety.org/center-us-china-relations/avoiding-war-over-taiwan>

⁴⁵³ Fatuzzo, V. (2021). Usa-Taiwan: tra ambiguità e chiarezza strategica. *Geopolitica.info*. Retrieved from: <https://www.geopolitica.info/usa-taiwan-tra-ambiguita-e-chiarezza-strategica/>

⁴⁵⁴ Everington, K. (2021). «Pentagon doubles number of US troops in Taiwan under Biden». *Taiwan News*. Retrieved from: <https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/4355230>

⁴⁵⁵ Kuo, M. (2020). Trump and the TAIPEI Act. *The Diplomat*. Retrieved from: <https://thediplomat.com/2020/04/trump-and-the-taipei-act/>

⁴⁵⁶ Benjamin, J. (2021). «French Naval Activity in the South China Sea on the Rise», *The Geopolitics*. Retrieved from: <https://thegeopolitics.com/french-naval-activity-in-the-south-china-sea-on-the-rise/>

⁴⁵⁷ *REUTERS* (2021). «First German warship in almost two decades enters South China Sea». Retrieved from: <https://www.reuters.com/world/first-german-warship-almost-two-decades-enters-south-china-sea-2021-12-15/>

⁴⁵⁸ Gardner, F. (2021). «China warns UK as carrier strike group approaches». *BBC*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-58015367>

⁴⁵⁹ *INFOBAE* (2021). La representante de Taiwán fue invitada a la investidura de Biden como presidente de Estados Unidos por primera vez desde 1979. Retrieved from: <https://www.infobae.com/america/eeuu/2021/01/21/la-representante-de-taiwan-fue-invitada-a-la-investidura-de-biden-como-presidente-de-estados-unidos-por-primera-vez-desde-1979/>

4.8 Conventional invasion is not the scenario Beijing wants

The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is convinced that a peaceful reunification is possible and a matter of time, and is equally aware that the costs of a conflict would far outweigh the benefits of an annexation⁴⁶⁰.

In an interview with CNN in mid-March 2022, the PRC ambassador to Washington, Qin Gang, stated that “Taiwan's future depends only on the peaceful development of cross-strait ties⁴⁶¹”.

If Taiwan is not Ukraine, neither is the PRC Russia⁴⁶². For a country that seeks to occupy a central position in the new world order by trying to convey an image of responsibility, behaving recklessly is not an option. Attacking and occupying a territory on which a democratic system has been built and consolidated would be devastating to its interests. It would cause an unprecedented international backlash and undermine the image of a “peaceful power” that the country has been trying to build for four decades.⁴⁶³ Moreover, causing damage to the infrastructure of a territory that one wants to annex and casualties among the population one wants to absorb would be counterproductive.⁴⁶⁴ The military option in the Taiwan issue is mentioned as a last resort, and only in case the Taipei authorities take a clear and irreversible step towards full separation from China. Projecting such action as a threat of conventional invasion is a strategy aimed more at satisfying nationalist anxieties than solving a real strategic problem. After all, the PRC does not really need Taiwan and has so far benefited greatly from trade relations with the island⁴⁶⁵.

Beijing's main interest, for the time being, seems to be to make the Taiwanese economy dependent on the flow of Chinese capital⁴⁶⁶. A war would be devastating for the economic interests of both sides. Since the 1980s, many Taiwanese companies have relocated much of their production to mainland factories, while the PRC remains partly dependent on Taiwan for high-tech components. In the event of a conflict, Taiwan would suffer complications in the supply of raw materials, while the PRC would lose access to several vital industries, such as semiconductors (95% of which are produced by Taiwanese and South Korean companies).⁴⁶⁷ The situation

⁴⁶⁰ Agi (2022). La Cina e Taiwan, la riunificazione anche con la forza. Retrieved from: <https://www.agi.it/estero/news/2022-08-10/taiwan-cina-avverte-riunificazione-forza-17713292/>

⁴⁶¹ *Xinhua* (2022). The Taiwan Question and China's Reunification in the New Era. Retrieved from: <https://english.news.cn/20220810/df9d3b8702154b34bbf1d451b99bf64a/c.html>

⁴⁶² Scobell, A. (2022). China Is Not Russia. Taiwan Is Not Ukraine. *United States Institute of Peace*. Retrieved from: <https://www.usip.org/publications/2022/03/china-not-russia-taiwan-not-ukraine>

⁴⁶³ Battaglia, M. (2022). Cosa succede se la Cina invade Taiwan. La simulazione. *Formiche.net*. Retrieved from: <https://formiche.net/2022/08/giochi-guerra-usa-difendere-taiwan/>

⁴⁶⁴ Zhang, T. (2022). China Is Not Russia; Taiwan Is Not Ukraine. *The Diplomat*. Retrieved from: <https://thediplomat.com/2022/07/china-is-not-russia-taiwan-is-not-ukraine/>

⁴⁶⁵ Prina Cerai, A. (2022). Le conseguenze economiche di un conflitto su Taiwan. *Formiche.net*. Retrieved from: <https://formiche.net/2022/12/conseguenze-economiche-conflitto-taiwan/>

⁴⁶⁶ Glaser, B., & Mark, J. (2021). Taiwan and China Are Locked in Economic Co-Dependence. *Foreign Policy*. Retrieved from: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/04/14/taiwan-china-economic-codependence/>

⁴⁶⁷ Williams, L. (2022). Why Taiwan matters to China (and the rest of the world). *Investment Monitor*. Retrieved from: <https://www.investmentmonitor.ai/special-focus/ukraine-crisis/taiwan-matters-china-semiconductors-russia/>

should call for caution and stability, especially with the COVID crisis on the continent and the saturation of supply chains. The same applies to the political front.

It is true, however, that in an increasingly interconnected world, it is difficult to drastically separate one region from the other. Although Beijing has in no way supported Russian action in Ukraine, the unique relationship between Xi Jinping and Vladimir Putin has been a source of concern⁴⁶⁸.

For the time being, the main impact of the conflict in Europe for Taiwan is that it has served to strengthen its strategic position, reaffirming its unique status quo.⁴⁶⁹ In an unusual gesture by Western leaders, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson alluded directly to the territory a few days before the invasion, stating that “Western inaction in the face of aggression in Ukraine poses a direct threat to Taiwan's security”⁴⁷⁰. Explicitly invoking Formosa ceased to be an issue for Taiwan. For the PRC to choose to attack Taiwan, two conditions must be present⁴⁷¹: first, a power reversal in the Western Pacific that assures Beijing that the United States will not intervene in defence of the island, and second, a political and social situation, both in Taiwan and in the PRC itself, that prompts it to undertake the project with an acceptable margin of error⁴⁷².

Neither seems plausible in the immediate future. The Chinese Communist Party (CCP) knows that Taiwan is more valuable to Washington in its global agenda than Ukraine can be⁴⁷³. But even with Washington out of the equation, the PLA has not engaged in combat since 1979 and would be faced with Taiwanese armed forces better prepared to resist than ever before.

4.9 Conclusions: The hypothesis of an attack on Taiwan

The only real parallel between the Ukrainian and Taiwanese cases is the shared fear between two democratic societies of being absorbed by a much larger and militarily stronger authoritarian neighbor. The Russian invasion of Ukraine does not mean that the possibility of an attack on Taiwan has increased, let alone become an imminent risk. Relations between the People's Republic and Taiwan follow their own logic and roadmap, regardless of what happens in Europe⁴⁷⁴.

⁴⁶⁸ Wong, T., & Fraser, S. (2022). Putin-Xi talks: Russian leader reveals China's 'concern' over Ukraine. BBC News. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-62912892>

⁴⁶⁹ Major, D. (2023). China is taking lessons from Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Taiwan's foreign minister says. *CBC*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/china-ukraine-russia-taiwan-1.6713413>

⁴⁷⁰ *Reuters* (2022). UK says Western inaction on Ukraine would send dangerous message for Taiwan. Retrieved from: <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russia-wants-inflame-tensions-by-ignoring-planned-peace-talks-kyiv-says-2022-02-19/>

⁴⁷¹ Perriello, M. (2022). La Cina pronta a invadere Taiwan? Dove e come può attaccare. *QuiFinanza*. Retrieved from: <https://quifinanza.it/editoriali/video/cina-usa-attacco-taiwan-esercito/660221/>

⁴⁷² Milliken, D. (2022). UK sees threat to Taiwan if West does not support Ukraine. *Reuters*. Retrieved from: <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uk-pm-johnson-says-west-needs-solidarity-russia-2022-02-18/>

⁴⁷³ Taiwan more important for preserving US' influence than Ukraine — political scientist. (2022). *TASS*. Retrieved from: <https://tass.com/world/1487669>

⁴⁷⁴ Memorial italia (2023). *Guerra Globale: Il conflitto russo-ucraino e l'ordine internazionale*. Corriere della Sera.

The increasing economic development of the People's Republic of China and the growing rivalry with the US for global leadership pose a constant danger to the delicate balance in the strait. For its part, Taiwan, over the last two decades, has been progressively affirmed in terms of the democratization process with the PPD destined to govern the country for many more years, being the majority party with the full support of the youth. The dispute between the two camps is expressed by the PPD in very simple and striking terms “Democracy vs. Autocracy”⁴⁷⁵.

A simplification that while enjoying the plaudits of the Western world, nevertheless seems to ignore the reality and complexity of the problem given the intertwined interests at stake, which not only concern the two main protagonists Formosa and Beijing, but also and above all the USA, which while reaffirming its loyalty to the principle of one China, in fact seems more inclined towards a policy of “one China, one Taiwan”⁴⁷⁶.

Witness the recurring US and Chinese military exercises in the Indo-Pacific area and Speaker Nancy Pelosi's visit to Taiwan strongly opposed by China with threats of retaliation. In order to avert any future danger, it is necessary for the US not only not to support Taiwan's independence, but instead to engage in increasing economic, cultural, and social interactions between the People's Republic of China and the Republic of China that enhance the peaceful ambition⁴⁷⁷. To this end, it would be necessary not to advocate separateness between Taiwan and the PRC on the basis of purely ideological criteria. For, such an approach to the problem would only promote anti-Chinese policies and sentiments harbouring the risk of a cross-strait conflict. Despite political and military anxieties, in the Taiwan Strait, however, economic relations, investment, and commercial and technological developments between the two shores have improved considerably over time. Many analysts argue that the commercial interaction between the two countries has greatly contributed to China's status as a world leader in contemporary trade, also influencing Chinese consumer behaviour, philanthropy, religion, popular culture and law⁴⁷⁸. The Taiwanese investment community has not only created millions of jobs on the mainland, but has also become a crucial segment of global supply chains. Many “made in China” products are manufactured or assembled in Taiwanese investment companies on the mainland before being sold on the global market⁴⁷⁹.

⁴⁷⁵ Ronkin, N. (2023). Stanford Experts Explore the Roles of Taiwan and Ukraine in Countering. *Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies*. Retrieved from: <https://fsi.stanford.edu/news/stanford-experts-explore-roles-taiwan-and-ukraine-countering-autocratic-challenges-democracy>

⁴⁷⁶ Caracciolo, L. (2022). *La Pace è finita: così ricominciamo la pace in Europa*. Feltrinelli

⁴⁷⁷ Memorial italia (2023). Guerra Globale: Il conflitto russo-ucraino e l'ordine internazionale. Corriere della Sera.

⁴⁷⁸ Molinari, M. (2022). *Il ritorno degli imperi*. Rizzoli.

⁴⁷⁹ *The Economist* (2020). Why commercial ties between Taiwan and China are beginning to fray. Retrieved from: <https://www.economist.com/business/2020/11/19/why-commercial-ties-between-taiwan-and-china-are-beginning-to-fray>

The reality described and the economic-commercial synergies between Taipei and Beijing seem, or rather one hopes, to banish the spectre of a conflict between great powers over the Taiwan Strait, despite the continuous upheavals within a political-international order that is still shaken by the sunset of the American unipolar phase, a sunset that began with the great recession of 2007-2009.

Today, the main themes present in the global politics of the modern world: imperialism, self-determination of peoples, sovereignty and territorial integrity push the generalist media and public opinion, even in our country, to observe the crisis between Beijing and Taipei through the lens of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict with the risk of creating profound distortions.⁴⁸⁰

⁴⁸⁰ Major, D. (2023). China is taking lessons from Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Taiwan's foreign minister says. *CBC*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/china-ukraine-russia-taiwan-1.6713413>

CONCLUSIONS

The year 2022 ended with the dramatic reality of the Russian-Ukrainian war, with a tremendous toll of destruction, rubble, and deaths, not only of military personnel but also of innocent civilians. The year 2023, which has just begun, shows no signs that might give hope, if not for peace, at least for a truce that would open space for negotiations involving not only the warring protagonists, but also the other world powers involved in the conflict: the U.S. and Europe in the first place, but also China, which sees its business interests seriously threatened by the continuation of the war.

The need for the involvement of all direct and indirect actors, in order to put an end to the armed confrontation, is made more than evident by the impossibility that to put an end to the clashes, can be Russia and Ukraine, given the sidereal distance between the conditions set by each to start a path aimed at the cessation of hostilities. On the one hand, Russia, does not intend to give up the geographical areas conquered, then annexed to the Federation through a referendum, defined as false in the Western world, since the Russians believe that they must defend them by all means in compliance with the punctual prescriptions contained in their Constitutional Charter. Conversely, Zelens'kyj demands the unconditional withdrawal of the Russian army from all territories formerly belonging to Ukraine, including even Crimea, which was annexed by Russia back in 2014 after the favorable outcome of the popular referendum. Annexation without any official recognition, but consolidated since then as a situation, if not de jure, certainly de facto, in the absence of the fielding of appropriate reactions.

To the impossibility of a diplomatic solution to the Russian-Ukrainian situation, the personal factor of the two actors committed to defend their charisma in their respective countries in order to avoid their own political collapse, also plays a role. In the described scenario, one can well understand not only the rigidity of their respective positions, but also their opposite goals. Zelens'kyj wants, with the military help of the West, not to give up his own territories conquered by the aggressor, but also to gradually sap the resistance of the Russian army, destroy it or weaken the consensus of the new Russian Tsar at the popular level, and before that to arouse the reaction of the Putinian oligarchic circle, in order to isolate the Kremlin chief and cause his ousting. For Zelens'kyj, this would be the real victory not only for Ukraine but also for all European countries, which would thus see threats of future aggression against them and to the integrity of their territories recede. For his part, Putin, cannot leave the field with a retreat of his army, this would mean not only the failure of his leadership, with the consequent end of his political career, but it would also inexorably crack Russia's sense of power. It is also widespread at the popular level, with its probable dissolution, which would open the way for profound changes: that is, a season of great conflicts, first and foremost between the regions that compose it, as well as possible disarticulation of relations between European countries, now composed within the framework of the European Community.

The main question is: What is the goal of the United States, heavily involved in the conflict, with economic and military aid to Ukraine? It seems clear that the current war is a war defined by some as a proxy war in which, except for the noble American intent to defend an attacked country and prevent a Russian victory from setting a serious precedent and thus a threat to the freedom of other European countries, the unstated goal is to weaken the Russian Federation as a world power, but also as an economic and commercial competitor on the European continent. This is also made evident by the fact that some European countries including Germany primarily but not only, have demonstrated a strong dependence on Russian energy resources. While this is true, it should be immediately added, however, that it is certainly not in America's interest to bring Russia to its knees because of the serious problems that would ensue, including the inevitable strengthening of China, which is the real and most feared antagonist of American interests in the world. Evidence of this is the fact that Xi Jinping is watching the Ukrainian conflict through the spyglass, keeping his distance between the parties to the conflict, even though in words he expresses solidarity with Putin, but without any support either economic or military and without playing an effective decisive intermediary role; this is despite the fact that his main interest is in ending the conflict in order to resume full steam ahead with the trade, which with the Silk Road also passes through Ukrainian territory.

Today, therefore, it may well be said that the ongoing conflict is registering a stalemate phase in which there appears to be little or no incidence of the diplomatic intermediations gradually attempted by several parties, notably by Turkey, which, despite being part of NATO, has strong ties, especially of a commercial nature with Putin's Russia, which also wants to endorse Erdogan's aspiration to see its territory become a hub for Russian gas to Europe. A phase, however, in which the slowdown in military operations on the ground, due to the difficult weather conditions brought on by the winter, is registering what many analysts are calling a "technological escalation" with the deployment of increasingly sophisticated weaponry designed to cope with the new course of ground combat that is expected to arrive with the arrival of the spring season. In fact, in this very first month of the year, Zelens'kyj's pressure on the West to receive next-generation tanks the Leopard 2 has grown, a request that has been granted after some hesitation on the part of Germany, which owns the patent of such military assets and which requires the issuance of its authorization for their transfer to Kiev by the countries that have their availability.

However, the so-called "tank alliance" has sent Ukraine about a hundred of these latest-generation war tools, compared to the three hundred requested by Zelens'kyj. At present, it is not known whether the field deployment of these means will be sufficient to turn the fortunes of the war favorably for Ukraine. To date, however, it can be recorded that Russia has interpreted this choice as a further and growing threat against it, reflecting the fact that NATO has waged war directly against the Russian Federation. This in fact as a reaction resulted in an immediate launching of missiles all over Ukrainian territory causing new destruction and more deaths. Demonstrating the technological escalation, there is a further demand for weapons from Zelens'kyj

aimed at obtaining long-range missiles capable of intercepting Russian missiles from areas far from the front. However, Washington's fear remains that the missiles in question could be used to carry attacks directly into Russian territory because this could provoke a Russian reaction of absolute and tremendous severity, involving nuclear weapons with unimaginable risks. Meanwhile, Putin at the 80th anniversary commemoration for the Battle of Stalingrad said "it sounds incredible, but German tanks are threatening us again"⁴⁸¹.

Thus, the Russian president drew, not for the first time, a parallel between the war against Hitler and the invasion of Ukraine, adding also that Russia, today as then, is capable of responding to those who threaten it, indeed more precisely he said that the current war will not be decided by tanks against which he will oppose quite other means. Putin's statement came in conjunction with a visit to the Ukrainian capital by the president of the European Commission during which he announced new financial and humanitarian aid to the country as well as new economic sanctions against Moscow to be enacted by Feb. 24, the first anniversary of the Russian invasion. Among the measures announced was the training of 15,000 more Kiev soldiers, which will bring the total number of Ukrainian troops trained by EU countries to 30,000. Also, on the war crimes prosecution front, he said he would soon open an international center at the Hague, also financed with European funds, to preserve evidence for future trials.

The question therefore appears to be increasingly pressing: when will this war end? Analysts believe that it is difficult to predict this and postpone until next spring any assessment that might result from the outcomes of the new battle on the ground with Ukraine's employment of new military instruments that are more offensive than those used so far, net of course of Putin's unconcealed and recent threats regarding the use of other means to stop the tanks. What is certain is that the war in the absence of decisive diplomatic intermediation, which at present appears evanescent, can only cease with the fulfillment of one of the following scenarios, obviously eradicating from the mind any hypothesis of a nuclear conflict:

1. Outright victory of either side in a decisive battle
2. Internal collapse of the bureaucratic political apparatus of either side
3. Exhaustion of the unilateral forces of one of the two armies in the field.

In the logic of escalation, I would think we can rule out, or rather, it is to be hoped, that this will not happen because it is not possible to predict by what means and at what cost such a decisive event could take place. What we are dealing with here, as defined by Limes magazine, is a "big war," a triangular competition in which whoever loses, loses everything. This applies to both Russia and Ukraine.

⁴⁸¹ Murphy, M. (2023). Ukraine war: 80 years on, we are facing German tanks again. *BBC News*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-64502504>

For Russia, it has already been said, this would be its dissolution with unpredictable political-international consequences, an eventuality that with foresight, America should not wish for because it would greatly benefit rival China, which would expand its power on the Asian front by increasing its political and commercial clout.

Greater chances seem to be had by the other two hypotheses, the first because the long continuation of the war with inauspicious outcomes for the Russian military would weaken Putin's prestige in Russia with the upper hand of those who would immediately aim for his replacement, although today it is difficult to imagine what the profile of his successor might be: more hawkish or more dove-like? In any case, Western chancelleries seem to be banking on this hypothesis. Even a long war of attrition, in which the habituation of Western peoples and the burden on them of economic and even social consequences, would certainly not benefit the Ukrainian cause and for it its President Zelens'kyj.

At some point, it could also receive a stop from the U.S.-now in deep economic recession and some 30 months from now committed to the presidential election front-which would severely undermine the charisma Zelens'kyj now enjoys, in favor of a more pliant presidency inclined to find an honorable compromise with Russia, unthinkable, however, without at least recognition of the Russian annexation of Crimea, which took place in 2014 and is inalienable to Moscow. To such a solution, America and Europe could push for it should the continuation of the war entail unacceptable costs for the people of the old continent.

The other and last hypothesis does not seem peregrine because either the war takes the direction of a nuclear conflict that no one wants, or, the game will have to be played on the field that requires the deployment of more and more military personnel on which more than Ukraine can rely on Russia in relation to the disproportion in the number of inhabitants and therefore of enlisted, unless, the Americans and its allies think of "putting the boots on the battlefield": let's hope not since that would be the end for everyone.

In fact, the events of the first month of 2023 are still favoring the path of increasingly conspicuous arms supply to Ukraine. NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg has also asked South Korea to supply arms to Ukraine, perhaps driven by the need not to deplete the military reserves of European countries. Such a request highlights how the concept of the West is not only geographically valenced, but is also based on the conception of a geopolitical alliance that includes: Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, Japan, and perhaps even India pitted against the rest of the world. In any case, the military escalation demonstrates how it is rooted on the irrefutable assumption that we are in the presence of a blatant violation of international law and the rules governing the rules of the world community, which cannot tolerate any infringement on the freedom and protection of its territory, the inviolability of which is a constitutive element of the rule of law. According to this indisputable point of view, there can be no peace that accepts the principle that one state can unilaterally invade another state for the purpose of expanding its own power by redrawing the borders of another state, as Putin's Russia is doing by reincarnating the tsarist imperial vision.

It is said that the defeat of Ukraine would be the defeat of the entire Western world with the establishment of a principle that would create a level of instability that would make the security of every country precarious. This current opinion also believes that the nuclear option, waved as a threat in the gradual escalation of the war, is actually a non-military option because of the world catastrophe it would procure so as to make it impossible; it is, however, pushing all countries to increase the race to possess nuclear armaments to serve at least as a deterrent to prevent external attacks. So much so that Ukraine is regretting the surrender of such armaments to Russia that took place with the Minsk Treaty, and even Germany, being without them, is in absolute need of the NATO shield, despite the fact that, as already mentioned, relations with the U.S. are not exactly idyllic because of the ties it has established with Russia on energy sources. Those who do not want a surrender of Ukraine because it would be not the result of a negotiation aimed at peace, but a treaty of total surrender to the invader, actually hope that the war may sooner or later lead to the collapse of the Russian establishment and the consequent transition of Russia from an imperialist state to a nation-state. Although, such a wish is more of a hope than a likely portrayal of the future, which could, as already mentioned, see the multiplication of authoritarian states embodied by novice Putin who do not let people bet on a future of stability in that geographic area.

A totally different perspective, compared to the one described so far, also present in the public debate and in part of the popular opinion not only in Italy but also abroad, believes that the continuous and incessant sending of arms to Ukraine does not facilitate the goal of peace at all. With respect to this current of thought, in order to avoid the dangerous development of the current situation, it would be necessary to favor as much as possible, a negotiation that resolves the issues that fuel the conflict today.

To this end, however, it is pointed out that there has so far been a lack of an interlocutor capable of effectively playing the role of mediator to the warring parties. This role has not been played by the U.S., albeit indirectly a party to the dispute, nor effectively by China for the reasons stated above nor even less so by Europe, which has shown and shows that it is unable to speak with one voice by offering space for even conflicting political positions. Erdogan's mediation was spent rather than that of Merkel or Draghi, more significant exponents to represent the voice of the European Community.

Those who adhere to the aforementioned current of thought, point out how in the act has intervened a kind of resignation to war even with the quasi-acceptance of a possible use of nuclear weapons albeit tactical, as if the latter were not capable of bringing disaster and especially accelerating the process of escalation, in a likely catastrophic direction.

Today, by the way, two possible and unfortunate events are overlooked which, if they came true, would terribly mark the fate of the war: the risk of one of the atomic power plants under Ukrainian control being hit, due to the continuous bombardment by the Russian air force, or even a military accident that could trigger an absolute quantum leap in the conflict such as to drag everyone onto entirely new ground where no prediction turns out to be more reliable.

Beyond the sides on either front, it is important in my opinion that the habit of atomic warfare does not also take over; this had not happened even during the Cuban Missile Crisis or in the Gulf Wars.

There is another front, which is at the center of political debate today: that of the pacifists or peacemakers. Those argue that we need to stop sending arms to Ukraine because in the past 12 months, the escalation from the initial sending of vests and rifles has gradually escalated to the supply of the latest generation of tanks, as well as the sending of first medium-range and then longer-range missiles without this in the least initiating a process of opening a real dialogue aimed at a truce, as the first step in addressing a peace discourse. It is also argued by them that, under the given conditions, no agreement is possible without each side giving up something. However, the opposite objection is formulated in the following terms: if no more arms are sent, who wins? The answer is that Putin would win with all the consequences that would follow. In this regard, however, the following question is also legitimate: if we continue to send more and more sophisticated and more and more quantitatively large weapons, who will win? The unstated but certainly hoped-for answer is that Zelens'kyj will win.

The real truth, pacifists argue, is that you want a victory of either side resulting from a military defeat in the field, whatever the cost, including even having to live with the risk of the use of the atomic perhaps starting with that tactic (a soothing term that it is a weapon only a little more powerful than the others) as if we had not already experienced what the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki meant earlier and more recently with certainly lesser, but still worrying effects, the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in 1986. According to them, cultivating the soil of peace could also simply mean that it would be good for the world community not to focus on the military defeat of one side or the other, but on a solution that passes through an honorable agreement for the contending parties that preserves the world from possible catastrophes, as unfortunately already happened for good twice on our continent a century ago. However, in the early days of February 2023, we are witnessing as mentioned earlier, an escalation of the war due to the fact that it seems to be a foregone conclusion that Russia, coinciding with the one-year anniversary of the beginning of "special operation," is preparing for a heavy counter-offensive with the use of 300 thousand soldiers or perhaps more and the use of more sophisticated weapons. Prediction this, which led the West to decide on a new sending of

more powerful weapons to Ukraine. The Pentagon announced a package of \$2.2 billion for the procurement of other weapons, including also long-range missiles, however not such as to reach Russian territory⁴⁸².

For its part, Berlin has authorized its manufacturers to deliver 14 Leopard 1 tanks to Ukraine. Europe has also planned a new €450 million sanctions package. The French-Italian-made Samp-t anti-aircraft defense system will be delivered to Kiev in spring 2023 in line with what Premier Giorgia Meloni said on a visit to Berlin, who said "we are there and we will not fail in our support to reach dialogue. Help Ukraine to bring the actors to the table"⁴⁸³.

Ursula von der Leyen at a press conference announced that the tenth sanctions package is on the way by Feb. 24 with a volume of about 10 billion euros focused on technology but also to combat "the circumvention of the latest sanctions. She also stressed that "the longer range our weapons and the more mobile our troops are, the sooner the brutal Russian aggression will end"⁴⁸⁴. Against this backdrop of increasingly massive, even more technologically advanced, arms deployment, it does not seem to be possible to deny that the war has entered a phase, in which the so-called attempt at deterrence by Western forces seems to be breaking down against the increasingly high and violent tones of the Russian leader, who is constantly raising the bar of confrontation, encouraged also by some recent advances of troops in his army. As was to be expected, with the winter the war has entered a new phase that makes any hope of a truce appear more and more distant as, as the military contingent grows, the margins for the opening of a negotiation shrink more and more.

On the other hand, the current war, beyond its territorial significance, shows obvious and far-reaching signs of what has rightly been called as already mentioned, "big war," a harbinger of disorder and unpredictability, generated by the strong competition between the three great powers-China, Russia and America-seeking supremacy of one over the other. So that, the Russian issue, will be resolved according to one possible prospect, when the Russian Federation makes an end of the Soviet Union. Conversely, China and Russia for their part, might feel safer if the U.S. could break up in a repeat of the great civil war, some signs of which could be seen in the storming of Capital Hill on Biden's assumption of the presidency than the defeated Trump. Scenarios these, only hypothesized, but by no means foreign to the thinking of many, especially with regard to, as repeatedly mentioned, the dissolution of Russia or at least the end of the Putin's autocracy.

In addition to the assumption and/or wish for such radical changes, a few firm points need to be fixed: the first is that the war in Ukraine is inevitably an indirect clash between Russia and the U.S. that arose in 2014 when

⁴⁸² *Il Sole 24 ore* (2023). Ucraina ultime notizie. Pentagono annuncia nuovo invio armi a Kiev da 2 miliardi, inclusi missili a lungo raggio. Retrieved from: <https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/ucraina-ultime-notizie-3-febbraio-2023-AExumdgC>

⁴⁸³ *L'Opinione delle Libertà* (2023). Meloni-Scholz: intesa totale sul sostegno all'Ucraina. Retrieved from: https://www.opinione.it/politica/2023/02/04/redazione_meloni-scholz-kiev-aiuti-di-sta-to-migranti/

⁴⁸⁴ *European Commission* (2023). Statement by President von der Leyen at the joint press conference with Ukrainian President Zelenskyy. Retrieved from: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/STATEMENT_23_546

the Euromaidan uprising prevailed in Kiev followed by the coup that put President Janukovyč on the run, an operation that was somehow supported by the U.S. and Britain despite European mediations. A turn, that one, unacceptable to Putin because it effectively thrust Ukraine into the U.S. orbit, even without joining NATO, while eliminating the buffer state function that that territory in Putin's designs was supposed to play.

The second aspect concerns the new design of the European map with the central eastern part formally, but also substantially, united in NATO and the European Union. The expansion of NATO to the east with the involvement of the Baltic countries has created a de facto wall of containment of Russia from the Baltic Arctic to the Black Sea with Poland as the pivot.

The third point concerns the relations among European countries, which the war has made much more labile and restraining than the unified design of the community. In fact, the war in Ukraine has brought to the forefront the diversity of culture but above all of interests between France and Germany, which is trying, especially because of its trade ties with Russia, to limit the impact of the confrontation with Russia even with a low commitment to arms supply. For its part, Poland, NATO's staunchest ally and Russia's arch-enemy, likens German geo-economic imperialism in the European union to Russian expansionism and is increasingly aiming to acquire greater political-economic strength through its privileged relationship with the US.

However, the importance of a fourth aspect should not be overlooked, which concerns the developments and outcome of this war with respect to China's policies toward the Indo-Pacific region and the Taiwan issue in particular. Especially should the push for independence prevail in that nation according to the "one China, one Taiwan" principle and not the opposite "one China" principle.

As already mentioned, it would be inappropriate to glimpse an absolute parallelism between the events of the events in Ukraine and the prospects of the U.S.- China relationship regarding Formosa. In the former case as amply illustrated, this is an aggression that has taken place against a country Ukraine that has gained independence since 1991, where in regard to Taiwan there can be absolutely no talk of independence, indeed at the state it seems to have to be ruled out in order to avoid an escalation of tension between the U.S. and China. For Taiwan, as mentioned above, at present the concept of independence does not collide with the Beijing vision of one China. The Russian invasion of Ukraine is not the scenario for a future conflict over the Taiwan Strait. First, it is difficult to think that in the event of a Chinese invasion of the island, the cohesion of the Western countries as it arose after the invasion of Ukraine could be realized. This, not only for geographical reasons, but above all because of the role and weight of NATO on the European continent, where the dominance of the U.S. and the economic, political and cultural entanglements manifest an intensity less present in the Southeast Asian area. The above none obviously excludes a relationship that can be considered in the Russia-Ukraine and China-Taiwan relationship, but the only element lies in the fact that in both cases, one is

faced with a world power that wants to exert its expansionist power against a smaller nation even if the same can count on the support of the "American empire" and its NATO allies.

Moreover, it does not mean that the outcome of the conflict between Kiev and Moscow is entirely insignificant on the future of the Taiwan issue. While it is true that the war in Eastern Europe has helped to give re-elevation to the interest of public opinions traditionally disinterested in that scenario, it is also true that the Russian-Ukrainian conflict has not only strengthened the resolve of the Taiwanese people to face a possible invasion but also revived the debate on possible strategies to be adopted by the Taiwan-US axis for the defense of the island. However, at the same time also by the Chinese side to reconsider its approach toward the military option, because of the risks it would entail and especially because of the loss of its current mercantile quotas that show higher GDP and economic-social growth rates than other world powers.

For that matter, the purported parallelism between the Taiwanese case and the Ukrainian case has also been strongly denied by the Taiwanese government because the same message, of possible equivalences, would be conducive to the so-called cognitive warfare strategy designed to undermine Taiwan's morale. However, the fact remains of a permanent tension in that area of the Indo-Pacific, taking into account not only for Taiwan's reasons to see its autonomy from the People's Republic of China recognized, but also for American interests in that area both from a military point of view but also for Taiwan being a region that produces semiconductor materials whose usefulness appears indispensable in the world of telematics.

On the other hand, eliciting a negative reaction from the Beijing government is the fact that just in these early days of February, U.S. Secretary of State Lloyd Austin signed a military agreement with the Philippines for the establishment of nine military bases intended to accommodate American soldiers and which can be used by both the U.S. Navy and Air Force for exercises with allies in the Indo-Pacific. Agreement that could not fail to draw sharp criticism from the Beijing government, which through the voice of its Foreign Minister argued that the White House in doing so "endangers peace and stability in the region." Clearly, that agreement aims to redraw the balance of power in the region in favor of the U.S., not least because of the proximity between the Philippines and Taiwan especially in the event of a Chinese invasion of the island.

There is no doubt that Ukraine today is a laboratory where the United States is testing its strength and resolve not only as a world power but also against possible Chinese adventurism. The concern is that if it relents in the current conflict the need for intervention to save Taiwan becomes much more likely, because Russia would take advantage of it, with perhaps more catastrophic outcomes than can be predicted for the current war.

On a more general geopolitical side, it cannot escape the fact that, the future of the war in Ukraine also passes through the Middle East where one considers the contribution that Iran is offering in favor of Russia. The

drones that are destroying a lot of energy infrastructure and causing destruction and death in many Ukrainian territories come from Tehran, which has also offered Moscow instructors and assistants in maneuvering such unmanned weapons. It is well known, that relations between Russia and Iran have never been idyllic in the past, and yet the Syrian dossier, which has seen Moscow from 2015 onward deploy its military force in support of President Bashar al-Assad's administration against Isis the Al-Nusra Front and the Libyan Syrian Army, has been instrumental in bringing the two countries closer together, supported by Iran both financially and militarily in order to prevent the allied country from changing geopolitical alignment with the risk of seeing Israel's influence grow in that region.

However, to fully understand the reasons why Iran is getting bogged down in the quicksand of the Ukrainian conflict, it is difficult if one does not keep in mind the ongoing clash between Tehran and the Western world. This clash concerns not only the nuclear issue, which has seen a gradual softening of Russian positions from an intransigent stance at the time of the 60% uranium enrichment to much softer, almost condescending positions. Russian support is also essential to at least mitigate Iran's isolation from the Western world over the ongoing brutal repression of popular demonstrations that are increasingly undermining the autocratic regime internally. However, despite the military support for Moscow and the excellent bilateral trade relations that are very useful for Russia to balance the effect of sanctions, an all-out support of Persian ambitions does not seem to be possible. Especially if the escalation of internal dissent should further weaken the power of Ebrahim Raisi.

On a closer inspection, the current theater of war also sees other actors in positions of absolute uncertainty about their attitude toward Russia. In the list of them, one cannot help but include Israel, which is obliged to maintain an open dialogue with Moscow despite its unquestionable deployment in the Western area. Today, Israel is led by Netanyahu, a longtime leader who knows Putin very well and with whom he could usefully play a mediating role. By the way, has already irritated Ukraine, through its Foreign Minister Kuleba, during a phone call between Israeli Foreign Minister Eli Choen and Russian counterpart Sergei Lavrov.

Why does Israel need Russia beyond the contingent parliamentary endorsements of Russophones to Netanyahu? This question can only be answered by reflecting on the overall geopolitical picture. For on the one hand there is to be seen a certain distancing of U.S. policy from the Middle East and on the other hand the welding of the axis between Tehran and Moscow; events, these, that dissuade Israel from abandoning in toto the connection and support of the Russian Federation, which knows Iran well and knows how possibly to influence and manage it. This is even though Israel, unwillingly, has allowed American weapons stored in its warehouses to be sent to Ukraine. All this also unequivocally demonstrates the Middle Eastern centrality-particularly of some of its regional actors-in the current conjuncture of the Russian-Ukrainian war. It makes it clear, in my humble opinion, how rather than the defeat of one of the two warring sides on the battlefield with

the consequences described above, a strategic definition of the overall geopolitical framework would be needed before the continuing race for ever more powerful and sophisticated armaments could plunge the entire world into the abyss of total destruction. It would be good if such a solution could take place before the foreseeable clash of military forces in the early spring that could degenerate with currently unpredictable outcomes the fate of the war and the risk, though not desirable, of the use of so called dirty atomic weapons that would open the way to quite other and undesirable scenarios.

SINTESI

Il presente elaborato ha come scopo principale quello di narrare il conflitto russo-ucraino nel suo dinamico svolgimento e nel contempo indagare, attraverso un excursus storico e geopolitico, i prodromi, che in qualche modo hanno certamente influenzato, anche se non direttamente provocato, l'inizio dell'evento bellico. L'analisi prosegue poi con l'indagine delle varie fasi che il conflitto ha attraversato e sta attraversando, fino allo stallo che attualmente si registra nella campagna militare, che vede impegnate non solo le parti direttamente belligeranti, Russia e Ucraina, ma anche indirettamente altri a partire dagli Usa e dai paesi europei. Una particolare attenzione è stata rivolta anche a cogliere le implicazioni e le conseguenze che dal conflitto russo-ucraino possono discendere al livello del quadro generale geopolitico, nello scenario di una nuova configurazione delle sfere di influenza delle tre principali potenze mondiali: USA, Russia e Cina. La tesi inoltre cerca di verificare se possa parlarsi di un parallelismo tra gli accadimenti russo-ucraini e quelli paventati che riguarderebbero il rapporto Taiwan-Cina, nell'eventualità che quest'ultima decidesse di invadere quella regione. Nelle conclusioni è stato poi considerato anche il ruolo di altri attori internazionali quali Iran e Israele e le ragioni della loro vicinanza alla Federazione Russa.

La tesi si struttura in quattro distinti capitoli, ognuno avente ad oggetto un tema specifico declinato poi nelle sue varie articolazioni e precisamente: il primo riguarda la guerra in Ucraina e la fine della pace in Europa, il secondo concerne il nuovo ordine geopolitico conseguente al conflitto russo-ucraino, il terzo si occupa delle sanzioni applicate alla Russia analizzando anche la tipologia e gli effetti di esse, infine il quarto è dedicato alla questione taiwanese e al possibile intervento militare della Cina.

Il primo capitolo è volto ad analizzare le ragioni del conflitto russo-ucraino, una vicenda complessa su cui occorre indagare con il metodo della razionalità e con la conoscenza delle radici. La crisi ha origini lontane: si parla del 1991, anno in cui è avvenuta la dissoluzione dell'Unione Sovietica e proclamata l'indipendenza dell'Ucraina. Così come per altre ex Repubbliche Sovietiche, la transizione non è stata semplice ed indolore perché sono rimaste aperte ancora oggi, questioni politiche ed identitarie, ma anche legate a rapporti economici e commerciali con la Russia. Analizzando meglio le tappe degli eventi occorre ricordare, che dopo l'indipendenza ucraina avvenuta il 24 agosto del 1991, ricorrenza questa ancora celebrata con la sfilata militare a Kiev, successivamente l'Ucraina è entrata nella Comunità degli Stati Indipendenti (CSI: un'organizzazione internazionale composta da nove delle quindici ex Repubbliche Sovietiche) come membro fondatore e ne è uscita nel 2014. Il 31 ottobre del 2004 si tennero le elezioni presidenziali che hanno visto lo scontro al ballottaggio tra il Primo Ministro in carica Viktor Fedorovyč Janukovyč, sostenuto da Putin e l'ex Primo Ministro nonché capo dell'opposizione Viktor Juščenko appoggiato dall'Unione Europea e dagli Usa. Secondo i risultati ufficiali, annunciati il 23 novembre, l'elezione era stata vinta da Janukovyč, ma il suo rivale ed i suoi sostenitori, così pure molti osservatori internazionali denunciarono le elezioni in quanto inficcate da brogli elettorali. Ciò portò ad una grave crisi politica con numerose manifestazioni di protesta che hanno dato inizio

alla cosiddetta “rivoluzione arancione” per la colorazione delle sciarpe indossate dai manifestanti, che portarono la corte Suprema dell’Ucraina ad annullare i risultati e a ripetere le elezioni. Il ballottaggio assegnò la vittoria a Juščenko con il 52% di voti contro il 44% dell’avversario divenuto quindi Presidente. A seguito dell’elezione di Juščenko e l’avvicinamento dell’Ucraina all’Unione Europea i rapporti con la Russia incrinarono fortemente anche perché l’Ucraina ottenne lo status di economia di mercato da parte dell’Unione Europea. Come ritorsione la Russia, il 1 Gennaio 2006, revocò la concessione di gas a prezzo agevolato e, tramite la compagnia “Gazprom” applicò le tariffe ordinarie, inaccettabili da parte di Kiev. Tale problema assunse un rilievo internazionale anche perché il gas che dalla Russia passava in Ucraina, costituiva il 25 % delle importazioni dei paesi dell’Unione Europea. Nella notte tra il 21 e 22 novembre 2013, all’indomani della decisione del governo di sospendere le trattative per la conclusione di un accordo di associazione tra l’Ucraina e l’Unione Europea, scoppiarono violente manifestazioni filo-europee, concentrate nella capitale Kiev (Euromaidan) che sfociarono nella rivoluzione ucraina del 2014 a cui fece seguito la fuga e la messa in stato di accusa di Janukovyč.

A seguito di una nuova tornata elettorale, il 25 maggio 2014 venne eletto Presidente Petro Oleksijovyč Porošenko, un imprenditore e politico ucraino, filo occidentale ed europeista ricevendo il 54,7 % dei voti espressi al primo turno. Tutto ciò scatenò la reazione di Putin, il quale invase la Crimea e la annettè alla Federazione Russa. Nelle successive elezioni presidenziali del 2019 vinse al primo turno contro Porošenko, Volodymyr Oleksandrovyč Zelens'kyj con il 73% dei consensi, identificandosi come populista (servitore del popolo) ed eletto per combattere la dilagante corruzione, normalizzare la grave situazione nel Donbass e riorganizzare la vita politica e amministrativa, puntando sulla digitalizzazione della pubblica amministrazione e sulla conciliazione tra le aree russofone e quelle a maggioranza ucraina del paese. Dopo l’iniziale tentativo di Zelens'kyj di stabilire relazioni diplomatiche con il Presidente Putin, le tensioni tra i due paesi si acuirono notevolmente poiché le lacerazioni interne conseguenti le proteste dell’Euromaidan e l’esautorazione da parte del Parlamento del Presidente Janukovyč - che avevano in qualche modo dato il via nel 2014 alla guerra nel Donbass con la contrapposizione e l’esercito di Kiev e i separatisti delle regioni di Donetsk e Luhansk, con oltre 14 mila morti - avevano lasciato un solco così profondo da rendere pressoché impossibile un processo di riappacificazione.

Del resto, il clima venne ancor di più avvelenato dall’ondata anti-russa che si sviluppò durante la presidenza di Porošenko con l’abbattimento delle statue in epoca sovietica e il cambiamento della giornata nazionale dell’Ucraina, eventi questi vissuti dalle regioni orientali a maggioranza di popolazione russa e russofona, con sempre maggiore ostilità contro le politiche di Kiev. Fu in tale contesto che il 27 febbraio Mosca inviò i cosiddetti “omini verdi” (truppe senza insegne) a prendere il controllo del governo locale della Crimea, decretandone l’annessione a cui fece seguito, il successivo 16 marzo un referendum sull’autodeterminazione della penisola (non riconosciuto a livello internazionale) che vide la vittoria del sì con il 95,32% dei voti. Tale annessione fu il prodromo della successiva occupazione di alcune aree del Donbass da parte dei filorussi, che chiedevano l’indipendenza dal governo di Kiev che invece reagì con una massiccia controffensiva verso gli

Oblast' di Donetsk e Luhansk, ove l'11 maggio si tenne un doppio referendum con la netta vittoria del fronte indipendentista e filo russo (non riconosciuti da nessuno stato) cui seguì la reazione militare ucraina che di fatto vinse la guerra sul campo. L'accordo di Minsk, per riportare la pace in quei territori, con l'impegno da parte di Kiev di garantire maggiori poteri a quelle regioni non è stato mai rispettato. Questa forse è una delle principali cause che nel progressivo deterioramento dei rapporti tra Ucraina e Russia, accompagnata dalla sempre maggiore espansione della NATO verso i paesi dell'est europeo e dalla guerra nel Donbass, cause queste che hanno certamente influenzato, se non proprio determinato l'invasione russa in Ucraina il 24 Febbraio 2022. Secondo Putin, sarebbe dovuta essere una "operazione militare speciale" al fine di denazificare l'Ucraina e deporre il governo del Presidente Zelens'kyj, che invece si è trasformata in una "guerra grande". È evidente che le cause del conflitto russo-ucraino siano da rinvenire, da una parte nel progressivo avvicinamento dell'Ucraina alla Nato e all'UE e dall'altra nella crescente competizione strategica tra Russia e Stati Uniti, ma anche tra questi ultimi e la Cina e quindi ad un conflitto tra le tre maggiori potenze mondiali.

Il secondo capitolo dell'elaborato esamina il nuovo ordine geopolitico che si è venuto a creare a seguito della guerra in Ucraina. Come dimostrano i voti dell'Assemblea generale delle Nazioni Unite, l'Occidente e il Sud globale hanno trovato una convergenza nel condannare la Russia per atti che costituiscono un atto di aggressione in violazione dei principi fondamentali della Carta delle Nazioni Unite, quali l'astensione dall'uso della forza, l'integrità territoriale e la sovranità degli Stati. Di conseguenza, pochissimi paesi del sud globale hanno appoggiato l'invasione e quelli con legami ed interessi più forti in gioco, soprattutto in Africa, hanno scelto di astenersi piuttosto che sostenere l'atto di aggressione. In America Latina, paesi come Nicaragua e Cuba, più vicini alla Russia, si sono astenuti dal voto di condanna in Assemblea Generale. Al contrario Europa e Stati Uniti hanno condannato l'invasione russa adottando una progressiva ondata di sanzioni molto forti. Tra queste, puntualmente indicate nel capitolo, è da annoverare il congelamento delle transazioni, non solo quelle legate agli scambi commerciali, ma anche quelle destinate a colpire la maggior parte delle banche russe attraverso il sistema di pagamento internazionale SWIFT. L'invasione dell'Ucraina è stata come una scossa che ha portato gli Stati Uniti ed i paesi europei a grandi mutazioni nella loro lettura del quadro geopolitico e del tema della sicurezza e difesa in particolare in Germania, che ha incrementato notevolmente le spese militari e i paesi nordici che hanno chiesto l'adesione alla NATO. La guerra in corso ha rafforzato inevitabilmente il legame tra USA e UE che difficilmente si sarebbe potuto verificare senza un evento così grave, e difficile da immaginare come un'invasione su larga scala di un paese europeo. Negli Stati Uniti, l'amministrazione Biden si è espressa a favore di una "Ucraina indipendente", libera sovrana e prospera, impegnandosi al suo sostegno. Va però anche sottolineato che non è certamente interesse dell'America mettere in ginocchio la Russia per i gravi problemi che ne conseguirebbero, tra cui l'inevitabile rafforzamento della Cina che è la vera e più temuta antagonista degli interessi americani nel mondo.

In Europa, stati come Polonia, Repubblica Ceca, Regno Unito e le Repubbliche Baltiche hanno scommesso su un forte sostegno all'Ucraina, con l'obiettivo di sconfiggere la Russia e liberare tutto il territorio ucraino,

compresa la Crimea. Questo punto di vista, ritiene che la Russia, potrà o meglio sarà costretta ad accettare un tale risultato a seguito di un suo progressivo indebolimento interno. Una posizione più riflessiva, come quella avanzata dalla Francia o dalla Germania, si basa invece, sull'idea che "la Russia non può vincere e l'Ucraina non può perdere" e modula il sostegno in modo da evitare il rischio di un'escalation economica e militare, dall'esito allo stato non prevedibile.

In questo schema va sottolineata l'astensione di India e Cina, paesi importanti non solo per il loro peso demografico, ma anche economico e politico alla base delle relazioni con la Russia. Più specificatamente, l'invasione ha posto la Cina nella difficile posizione di astensione, evitando di schierarsi in una guerra su larga scala che coinvolge uno dei suoi partner nonché le relazioni con l'Occidente e i suoi interessi economici. Pechino, infatti, non vuole abbandonare Mosca ma non appoggia l'invasione, né cerca il conflitto con Washington. Questa posizione ambivalente di "neutralità filorusa" può aver eroso l'immagine della Cina e non ha soddisfatto nessuna delle due parti: non ha fornito il sostegno di cui la Russia aveva ed ha bisogno, né ha impedito il deterioramento delle sue relazioni con gli Stati Uniti e con Paesi come il Giappone o la Corea del Sud, in uno scenario in cui le somiglianze tra Russia- Ucraina e Cina-Taiwan sono molto evidenti, anche se per certi aspetti generalmente fuorvianti. In questo contesto, può dirsi che Xi Jinping guarda con il cannocchiale il conflitto ucraino, mantenendosi a debita distanza tra le parti in causa, dato che il suo principale interesse è quello della fine del conflitto per riprendere a pieno ritmo i suoi traffici commerciali, che con la Via della Seta passano anche attraverso il territorio ucraino.

Se oggi dovessimo stabilire chi sta traendo maggiore profitto dalla guerra in Ucraina non sbagliremmo ad indicare la Turchia come il paese che, in questo arco temporale, ha accresciuto il suo ruolo nello scacchiere internazionale. L'idea strategica che Erdoğan sta perseguendo, è quella di tornare ad essere presenza egemone nel mediterraneo, sfruttando il legame con la NATO e USA, che gli assicurano un ruolo significativo e di protagonista nell'interlocuzione con la Russia da cui dipende per l'approvvigionamento energetico. Sfilatosi abilmente dalle adesioni alle sanzioni contro Mosca, Erdoğan è divenuto protagonista nel negoziato sull'export del grano dall'Ucraina riuscendo a rendere possibile il trasporto e la consegna di tale bene primario al Nord Africa, al Medio Oriente e all'Italia e scongiurando il rischio di una crisi alimentare nei paesi più poveri del pianeta. Tuttavia, il suo progetto è molto più ambizioso, perché poggia sulla convinzione che il conflitto tra Mosca e Kiev porterà ad un'insanabile frattura tra est e ovest destinata a durare nel tempo in Europa e nel mediterraneo, così da consentire ad Ankara di estendere la propria influenza dal Bosforo a Gibilterra, dal nord Africa allo stretto di Bab el-Mandeb; così come il legame con il Qatar costituisce la testa di ponte per le operazioni verso il Golfo Persico. È anche da registrare, la sua attiva presenza in più tavoli negoziali oltre quello del maggior impegno in Ucraina: dalla richiesta a Helsinki e Stoccolma di espellere gli oppositori Curdi in cambio dell'appoggio al loro ingresso nella Nato, al braccio di ferro con Mosca e Teheran per estendere il territorio curdo siriano sotto il controllo turco fino alla consegna di droni armati a Kiev.

Il terzo capitolo della tesi si focalizza sulle sanzioni economiche portate avanti dall'Europa nei confronti della Russia dal 2014 ad oggi, analizzando anche gli effetti che queste hanno fin qui avuto sulla Russia stessa e in Occidente dopo la guerra in Ucraina. In primo luogo occorre ricordare che, dopo l'annessione della Crimea da parte della Russia nel 2014, l'UE nel condannare l'atto illegale ha adottato varie misure che prevedono: il congelamento di beni individuali, il blocco del commercio e degli investimenti per il settore delle infrastrutture, del trasporto, delle telecomunicazioni, dell'energia dell'olio e gas e del turismo. Altre misure hanno riguardato le limitazioni al rifinanziamento nei confronti di cinque banche statali, di tre società attive nel settore dell'energia e di altrettante nel settore della difesa. Inoltre, è stato imposto un embargo sul materiale militare da e verso la Russia nonché il divieto di esportazione di alcuni beni e l'esigenza di una preventiva autorizzazione per l'esportazione di materiale e tecnologie nel settore energetico, come anche il divieto di esportazione di materiali e tecnologie per esplorazione e l'estrazione di petrolio e gas in acque più profonde di 150 metri. Più di recente nel febbraio del 2022, l'UE ha imposto sanzioni senza precedenti contro la Russia in risposta all'invasione non provocata e ingiustificata dell'Ucraina e all'annessione illegale delle regioni Ucraine di Doneck, Lugansk, Zaporizzja e Cherson. Nel capitolo in esame sono analiticamente considerate le sanzioni previste che si articolano in sanzioni economiche, individuali nonché misure in materia di visti. È bene comunque sottolineare che, è stato particolarmente colpito anche il settore energetico, strategico per il finanziamento della guerra condotta dalla Russia: tra l'altro, gli Stati membri hanno deciso di vietare l'importazione di carbone dalla Russia, così come l'importazione di greggio e prodotti petroliferi russi via mare, cioè praticamente tutto il petrolio esportato dalla Russia nei Paesi dell'UE. Pure da menzionare sono i pacchetti sanzionatori adottati nei confronti della Bielorussia per il suo coinvolgimento nella guerra e verso l'Iran per via dell'aiuto militare concesso alla Russia nella guerra contro l'Ucraina.

Nel capitolo terzo sono state poi analizzate le ripercussioni che le sanzioni hanno avuto in Russia. È evidente che il benessere economico dei cittadini russi è peggiorato, stando agli ultimi dati del fondo monetario il PIL russo a prezzi costanti è calato di oltre il 3% a 90,2 miliardi di rubli. Inoltre, le sanzioni hanno determinato anche una grave carenza di materie prime e di beni di prima necessità fermando la produzione di interi settori e complicando la vita della popolazione; tuttavia non può dirsi che esse abbiano fin qui strangolato l'economia del paese come preannunciato, la quale dipende in misura predominante dall'export di gas e petrolio. È certo però, che le sanzioni sull'economia russa hanno avuto e stanno avendo un pesante contraccolpo sui nostri sistemi produttivi. Innanzitutto, esse stanno colpendo le aziende che esportano in Russia, anche se l'esposizione dell'Europa è limitata, poiché l'export rappresenta solo il 2% del totale delle esportazioni dell'UE, e per l'Italia vale ancora meno, cioè solo l'1,6%. Ben più salato si sta rivelando il conto presentato dalle sanzioni energetiche infatti, dal giorno in cui è iniziata l'invasione dell'Ucraina, il prezzo del gas e del petrolio ha subito un'impennata, con picchi rispettivamente di circa il 25% e il 70% che, fortunatamente ad oggi, si stanno in parte ridimensionando. Per non parlare delle altre materie prime, sia agricole che minerarie; basti pensare che il prezzo del grano è balzato da 263 a 395 euro per tonnellata.

Il quarto ed ultimo capitolo esamina il parallelismo tra la guerra in Ucraina ed il contrasto tra Taiwan e la Cina. In realtà, sarebbe inappropriato intravedere un parallelismo assoluto tra gli avvenimenti in quel territorio e le prospettive del rapporto USA- Cina per quanto concerne Formosa. Nel primo caso si tratta di un'aggressione avvenuta nei confronti di un paese, l'Ucraina, che ha acquisito l'indipendenza sin dal 1991, laddove nei confronti di Taiwan non può assolutamente parlarsi di indipendenza; anzi, allo stato, sembra doversi escludere tale prospettiva per evitare un inasprimento della tensione tra gli Stati Uniti d'America e la Cina. Per Taiwan, allo stato attuale il concetto di indipendenza non collima con la visione pechinese di una "sola Cina". L'invasione russa dell'Ucraina non è quindi *tout court* lo scenario di un futuro conflitto sullo stretto di Taiwan. In primo luogo, è difficile pensare che in caso di invasione cinese nell'isola possa realizzarsi la coesione dei paesi occidentali così come è nata dopo l'invasione dell'Ucraina. Ciò, non solo per ragioni geografiche, ma soprattutto per il ruolo ed il peso della NATO nel continente europeo, ove il predominio degli USA e gli intrecci economici, politici e culturali palesano un'intensità meno presente nell'area del sud-est asiatico. Quanto sopra, non esclude evidentemente una relazione che può essere considerata nel rapporto tra Russia – Ucraina e Cina-Taiwan, ma l'unico elemento risiede nel fatto che in entrambi i casi, ci si trova di fronte ad una potenza mondiale che vuole esercitare il suo potere espansionistico nei confronti di una più piccola nazione anche se entrambe possono contare sull'appoggio dell'"impero americano" e dei suoi alleati NATO. Non significa però, che l'esito del conflitto tra Kiev e Mosca sia del tutto insignificante sul futuro della questione taiwanese. Se è vero che la guerra nell'Europa Orientale ha contribuito a dare rilievo all'interesse di opinioni pubbliche tradizionalmente disinteressate a quello scenario, è anche vero che il conflitto Russo - Ucraino non solo ha rafforzato la risolutezza della popolazione di Taiwan a fronteggiare una possibile invasione e ravvivato il dibattito su eventuali strategie da adottare da parte dell'asse Taiwan - USA per la difesa dell'isola, ma con ogni probabilità ha sollecitato anche una riflessione da parte cinese nel riconsiderare il proprio approccio verso l'opzione militare, per i rischi che essa comporterebbe e soprattutto per la perdita delle sue attuali quotazioni mercantili che evidenziano percentuali di PIL e di crescita economico-sociali superiori alle altre potenze mondiali. Del resto il preteso parallelismo tra il caso taiwanese e il caso ucraino è stato fortemente smentito anche dal governo taiwanese perché, si ritiene che lo stesso messaggio di possibili equivalenze sarebbe favorevole alla cosiddetta strategia di guerra cognitiva, destinata a minare il morale di Taiwan. Resta comunque il fatto di una permanente tensione in quell'area dell'Indopacifico, tenuto conto non solo per le ragioni di Taiwan a vedere riconosciuta la propria autonomia dalla Repubblica Popolare Cinese, ma anche per gli interessi americani in quell'area sia da un punto di vista militare ma anche per essere Taiwan una regione che produce materiali semiconduttori la cui utilità è indispensabile nel mondo della telematica e dell'informatica.

Le conclusioni della tesi contengono la sintesi dell'exkursus storico e geopolitico dei prodromi e delle diacroniche vicende che hanno segnato come storica, non solo per l'Europa ma anche per il mondo intero, la data del 24 febbraio 2022 e con essa principalmente la fine della pace in un'area geografica che da settanta anni non conosceva, almeno direttamente, il dramma profondo e disastroso della guerra e la minaccia che

incombe sul futuro reso più incerto dall'impossibilità o quanto meno dalla difficoltà di intravederne l'esito; ciò comunque nella consapevolezza che indietro non si torna e che forse la "Belle Époque" che abbiamo immaginato, ed in parte fin qui vissuto, forse è stata un'illusione. Inoltre, nella parte conclusiva si è cercato di porre l'accento e mettere a raffronto le diverse correnti di opinioni e quelle dei media che in questi mesi hanno affollato il dibattito pubblico cercando di evidenziare i limiti intrinseci a talune prospettazioni per i pericoli che esse contendono, auspicando che soprattutto l'Europa possa riscoprire l'arte della diplomazia e divenire protagonista di un fronte largo di paesi, capaci di suggerire le condizioni minime di almeno una tregua nel conflitto che possa aprire la strada alla via della pace, certo "giusta", che richiede però un incontro delle volontà verso soluzioni improntate al realismo e a quel sano pragmatismo secondo cui è meglio lasciare spazio al compromesso per il bene comune del mondo piuttosto che puntare alla disfatta di una delle due parti "costi quel che costi".

BIBLIOGRAPHY:

A. Alonso (2022). "Sweden renounces its anti-nuclear soul by joining NATO". *El Independiente*. Retrieved from: <https://www.elindependiente.com/internacional/2022/05/27/suecia-renuncia-a-su-alma-antinuclear-al-entrar-en-la-otan/>

Acharya, A. (2022). The Return of the West? *The Multiplex World*. Retrieved from: <https://multiplexworld.com/2022/06/05/the-return-of-the-west/>

Adams, P. (2022). Kherson biggest Russian loss since withdrawal from outside Kyiv. *BBC News*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-63598805>

Affari Internazionali (2023). L'invasione russa e la fine dell' "ambiguità occidentale" in Ucraina. Retrieved from: <https://www.affarinternazionali.it/visione-ucraina-russia-dopo-il-2022/>

Agi (2022). La Cina e Taiwan, la riunificazione anche con la forza. Retrieved from: <https://www.agi.it/estero/news/2022-08-10/taiwan-cina-avverte-riunificazione-forza-17713292/>

Ahn, D. P. and R. D. Ludema (2019), "The Sword and the Shield: The Economics of Targeted Sanctions". *CESifo Working Paper*. Retrieved from: <https://docslib.org/doc/7586132/economic-sanctions-on-russia-and-their-effects>

Al Arabiya (2022). Sanctioned Iran general Bagheri mocks EU, tells bloc to 'buy coal' with his assets. Retrieved from: <https://english.alarabiya.net/News/middle-east/2022/10/24/Sanctioned-Iran-general-Bagheri-mocks-EU-tells-them-to-buy-coal-with-his-assets->

Al Jazeera (2022). EU sanctions Iran over protest crackdown and Russia drone sales. Retrieved from: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/12/12/eu-sanctions-iran-over-protest-crackdown-and-russia-drone-sales>

Albanese, C. and Follain, J. (2022). EU Approves Banning Transactions With Russian Central Bank. *Bloomberg*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-02-27/eu-approves-banning-all-transactions-with-russian-central-bank?leadSource=verify%20wall>

Alena Popova. (2023). Russia can't replace Western chips — so it gets them illegally. *The Hill*. Retrieved from: <https://thehill.com/opinion/technology/3833248-russia-cant-replace-western-chips-so-it-gets-them-illegally/>

Ricciardi, A. (2022). Tutto dipende dagli Usa e Cina. *Italia Oggi*. Retrieved from: <https://www.italiaoggi.it/news/tutto-dipende-dagli-usa-e-cina-2591116>

Allan, D. (2022). «The Minsk Conundrum: Western policy and Russia's war in Eastern Ukraine». *Chatham House*. Retrieved from: <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2020/05/minsk-conundrum-western-policy-and-russias-war-eastern-ukraine-0/minsk-2-agreement>

Alonso, N.S. (2022). Reservas de oro y divisas, menos deuda y diversificación: así se ha preparado Rusia para las sanciones internacionales. *Newtral*. Retrieved from: <https://www.newtral.es/reservas-capital-rusia-preparado-ucrania-sanciones-ue/20220228/>

Anderson, R. (2008). Europe's Dependence on Russian Natural Gas: Perspectives and Recommendations for a Long-term Strategy. *Marshall European Center For Security Studies*. Retrieved from: <https://www.marshallcenter.org/en/publications/occasional-papers/europes-dependence-russian-natural-gas-perspectives-and-recommendations-long-term-strategy-0>

Anheier, H. (2022). How Much Has the Ukraine War Changed Germany? *Project Syndicate*. Retrieved from: <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/germany-strategic-policy-changes-after-russian-invasion-ukraine-by-helmut-k-anheier-2022-09>

Arms Control Association (2021). The Open Skies Treaty at Glance. Retrieved from: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/openskies>

Asia for Educators. Taiwan and U.S.-China Relations Since 1949. Retrieved from: http://afe.easia.columbia.edu/special/china_1950_us_china.htm

Asia Sentinel (2022). Taiwan Turning Itself into a Fortress. Retrieved from: <https://www.asiasentinel.com/p/taiwan-turning-itself-fortress>

Asia Society (2022). Avoiding War Over Taiwan. Retrieved from: <https://asiasociety.org/center-us-china-relations/avoiding-war-over-taiwan>

Asinta (2022). Belarus. Retrieved from: <https://www.asinta.com/countries/employee-benefits-in-belarus/>

Atlantic Council (2018). The Truth Behind Ukraine's Language Policy. <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/the-truth-behind-ukraine-s-language-policy/>

Ayson, R.(2022). What does Biden mean on Taiwan?. *The Interpreter*. Retrieved from: <https://www.lowyinstitute.org/the-interpreter/what-does-biden-mean-taiwan>

B., Dave (2022). «“Hero” Ukraine peace negotiator shot dead amid claims he was double agent», *Daily Mirror*. Retrieved from: <https://www.mirror.co.uk/news/world-news/hero-ukraine-peace-negotiator-shot-26398152>

Babic, M. (2020). Let's talk about the interregnum: Gramsci and the crisis of the liberal world order, *International Affairs*. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.1093/ia/iiz254>

Bali, M. (2018). The Impact of Economic Sanctions on Russia and its Six Greatest European Trade Partners: a Country SVAR Analysis. *ФИНАНСЫ И БИЗНЕС*. Retrieved from: <https://shs.hal.science/halshs-01918521>

Barbati, M. (2022). Pace e politica. Far tacere le armi, far parlare la diplomazia. *Micromega*. Retrieved from: <https://www.micromega.net/pace-e-politica-far-tacere-le-armi-far-parlare-la-diplomazia/>

Baron, J. (2022). Taiwan and Ukraine: Parallels, Divergences and Potential Lessons. *Global Asia*. Retrieved from: https://www.globalasia.org/v17no2/cover/taiwan-and-ukraine-parallels-divergences-and-potential-lessons_james-baron

Barsegyan, G. (2019), “Sanctions and Countersanctions: What Did They Do?”. *BOFIT*. Retrieved from: <https://www.econstor.eu/handle/10419/216248>

Basile, M. (2022). Perché l'Ucraina è così importante per la Russia e per l'Occidente. *La Repubblica*. Retrieved from: https://www.repubblica.it/esteri/2022/02/24/news/guerra_perche_lucraina_e_cosi_importante_per_russia_us_a_nato_europa-339002040/

Battaglia, M. (2022). Cosa succede se la Cina invade Taiwan. La simulazione. *Formiche.net*. Retrieved from: <https://formiche.net/2022/08/giochi-guerra-usa-difendere-taiwan/>

Baum, R. (2017). The Great Leap Forward: The Great Failure of Mao Zedong in China. *Wondrium Daily*. Retrieved from: <https://www.wondriumdaily.com/great-leap-forward-mao-zedong/>

- BBC* (2019). INF nuclear treaty (2019): US pulls out of Cold War-era pact with Russia. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-49198565>
- BBC* (2021). Cómo Putin logró restaurar el estatus de Rusia como potencia global tras el colapso de la URSS hace 30 años. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-internacional-59671737>
- BBC* (2022). «Kiyv's allies pledge more weapons to help win war». Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-61155035>
- BBC* (2022). «Russian veteran reformer Chubais quits job as Putin envoy». Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-60849918>
- BBC* (2022). Taiwan: China attack not imminent, but US watching closely, says Gen Milley. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-62022308>
- Belin, M. and J. Hanousek (2019), “Which Sanctions Matter? Analysis of the EU/Russian Sanctions of 2014”, *CEPR Discussion Paper*. Retrieved from: <https://cepr.org/publications/dp13549>
- Belkin, P.; Ratner, M.; Welt, C. (2022). Russia's Nord Stream 2 natural gas pipeline to Germany halted. *Congressional Research service*. Retrieved from: <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/pdf/IF/IF11138>
- Benjamin, J. (2021). «French Naval Activity in the South China Sea on the Rise», *The Geopolitics*. Retrieved from: <https://thegeopolitics.com/french-naval-activity-in-the-south-china-sea-on-the-rise/>
- Bergin, T. (2022). Explainer: Russia could work around SWIFT ban but with high costs. *Reuters*. Retrieved from: <https://www.reuters.com/markets/europe/russia-could-work-around-swift-ban-with-high-costs-2022-03-07/>
- Bergmann, M. (2022). Europe's Geopolitical Awakening. *Foreign Affairs*. Retrieved from: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/europe/2020-08-20/europes-geopolitical-awakening>
- Bianchi, A. (2022). I cinque scenari con cui potrebbe concludersi la guerra in Ucraina. *EuropaToday*. Retrieved from: <https://europa.today.it/attualita/scenari-conclusione-guerra-ucraina.html>
- Biden, J. R. (2022). President Biden: What America Will and Will Not Do in Ukraine. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/31/opinion/biden-ukraine-strategy.html>

Binda, M. (2022). Perché è improbabile che Taiwan sia il prossimo fronte di un conflitto. *Futuranetwork.eu*. Retrieved from: <https://futuranetwork.eu/geopolitica/702-3154/perche-e-improbabile-che-taiwan-sia-il-prossimo-fronte-di-un-conflitto>

Blandón, D. (2022). Europa busca carbón en medio de nuevas sanciones contra Rusia: ¿quién podría suplirlo? *France 24*. Retrieved from: <https://www.france24.com/es/programas/econom%C3%ADa/20220406-europa-busca-carbon-rusia-sanciones>

Blenkinsop, P. (2022). EU bars 7 Russian banks from SWIFT, but spares those in energy. *Reuters*. Retrieved from: <https://www.reuters.com/business/finance/eu-excludes-seven-russian-banks-swift-official-journal-2022-03-02/>

Boni, M. (2022). Le difficili prospettive negoziali nel conflitto tra Russia e Ucraina. *Analisi Difesa*. Retrieved from: <https://www.analisdifesa.it/2022/12/le-difficili-prospettive-negoziali-nel-conflitto-tra-russia-e-ucraina/>

Bowen, A. (2020) «Russian Armed Forces: Military Doctrine and Strategy». *Congressional Research Service*. Retrieved from: <https://sgp.fas.org/crs/row/IF11625.pdf>

Brailsford, D (2022). How long can Russian airlines maintain their aircraft? *IBA*. Retrieved from: <https://www.iba.aero/insight/how-long-can-russian-airlines-maintain-their-aircraft/>

Brennan, M. (2022) «Full transcript: Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal on “Face The Nation”». *CBS News*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/denys-shmyhal-transcript-face-the-nation-04-24-2022/>

Bret, C. (2021). European Union / Russia. Sanctions, what next?. *Institut Jacques Delors*. Retrieved from: https://institutdelors.eu/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/PP260_210322_SanctionsRussie_Bret_EN.pdf

Brill. Porošenko, Petro. Retrieved from: https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/entries/international-year-book-and-statesmens-who-s-who/Porošenko-petro-SIM_person_53199

Brown, D. (2022). China and Taiwan: A really simple guide. *BBC*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-59900139>

- Burr, W. (2001). The Secret History of The ABM Treaty. *The National Security Archive*. Retrieved from: <https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB60/>
- C. Torralba (2019). The era of nuclear control is crumbling. *El País*. Retrieved from: <https://elpais.com/autor/carlos-torralba-zaragoza/2/>
- Campagnol, L. (2022). La questione energetica tedesca al tempo della guerra in Ucraina. *Geopolitica.info*. Retrieved from: <https://www.geopolitica.info/questione-energetica-tesesca-guerra-ucraina/>
- Caracciolo, L. (2022). *La Pace è finita: così ricominciamo la pace in Europa*. Feltrinelli
- CGTN (2022). Kiev y la Unión Europea trabajan en séptimo paquete de sanciones contra Rusia. Retrieved from: <https://espanol.cgtn.com/n/2022-07-03/HEJGEA/Kiev-y-la-Union-Europea-trabajan-en-septimo-paquete-de-sanciones-contr-Rusia/index.html>
- Chan, M. (2021). «China has proved it can build warships. It faces another challenge if it wants to catch up with the US», *The Business*. Retrieved from: <https://www.businessinsider.com/china-challenged- to-build-balanced-to-compete-with-us-navy-2021-5>
- Cheng, E. (2022). China would only use force as a 'last resort' for Taiwan reunification, former PLA official says. *CNBC*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/05/25/force-a-last-resort-for-china-on-taiwan-reunification-former-pla-official-says.html>
- Chernysheva, A.; Degtereva, E.; Trofimova, A. (2019). Forming market instruments of import substitution strategy in Russia as a result of the sanctions policy related to events in Ukraine. *Opción*. Retrieved from: <https://produccioncientificaluz.org/index.php/opcion/article/view/27453>
- Cheung, E. and Chang, W. (2022). «Russia's invasion of Ukraine sparks concern in Taiwan over readiness for conflict with China», *CNN*. Retrieved from: <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/03/17/asia/taiwan-military-reservists-china-fears-intl-hnk/index.html>
- Chin-Han Wu, C. (2022). The Taiwan Policy Act and the Future of U.S.-Taiwan Relations. *Stimson Center*. Retrieved from: <https://www.stimson.org/2022/the-taiwan-policy-act-and-the-future-of-u-s-taiwan-relations/>
- Chotiner, I. (2022). The Provocative Politics of Nancy Pelosi's Trip to Taiwan. *The New Yorker*. Retrieved from: <https://www.newyorker.com/news/q-and-a/the-provocative-politics-of-nancy-pelosis-trip-to-taiwan>

- Christie, E. H. (2016), "The Design and Impact of Western Economic Sanctions against Russia", *RUSI Journal*. Retrieved from: <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03071847.2016.1193359>
- Chung, J. and Wu, S. (2022). «Relax rules to boost reservist numbers: lawmakers». *Taipei Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.taipeitimes.com/News/taiwan/archives/2022/02/27/2003773863>
- Clarke, M., & Sussex, M. (2021). Why 'Strategic Ambiguity' Trumps 'Strategic Clarity' on Taiwan. *Royal United Services Institute*. Retrieved from: <https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/why-strategic-ambiguity-trumps-strategic-clarity-taiwan>
- Clinch, M. (2022). How Russia invaded Ukraine in 2014. And how the markets tanked. *CNBC*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/01/27/how-russia-invaded-ukraine-in-2014-and-how-the-markets-tanked.html>
- CNN (2022). ¿Por qué el caso de Taiwán y China no es igual al de Ucrania y Rusia? Retrieved from: <https://cnnespanol.cnn.com/2022/03/03/caso-taiwan-china-ucrania-rusia-orix/>
- Cohen, J. (2018). «Ukraine's neo-Nazi problem». *Reuters*. Retrieved from: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-cohen-ukraine-commentary-idUSKBN1GV2TY>
- Colby, E. A. (2022). Why Protecting Taiwan Really Matters to the U.S.? *Time*. Retrieved from: <https://time.com/6221072/why-protecting-taiwan-really-matters-to-the-u-s/>
- Commissione Europea (2022). Ucraina: l'UE approva l'ottavo pacchetto di sanzioni nei confronti della Russia. Retrieved from: https://italy.representation.ec.europa.eu/notizie-ed-eventi/notizie/ucraina-lue-approva-lottavo-pacchetto-di-sanzioni-nei-confronti-della-russia-2022-10-06_it
- Communication (2016). What You Need to Know About: Chinese Harmony Theory. Retrieved from: <https://communication.binus.ac.id/2016/03/14/what-you-need-to-know-about-chinese-harmony-theory/>
- Condon, C. (2022). «Yellen Says U.S. Would Use Sanctions If China Invaded Taiwan». *Bloomberg*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2022-04-06/yellen-says-u-s-would-use-sanctions-if-china-invaded-taiwan>
- Confindustria (2022). Il primo pacchetto di sanzioni UE. Retrieved from:

Consejo Europeo, Consejo de la Unión Europea. Medidas restrictivas de la UE contra Rusia por sus actos en Ucrania (desde 2014). Retrieved from: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/es/policies/sanctions/restrictive-measures-against-russia-over-ukraine/>

Constantin, S. (2022). Ethnic and linguistic identity in Ukraine? It's complicated. *EURAC Research*. Retrieved from: <https://www.eurac.edu/en/blogs/mobile-people-and-diverse-societies/ethnic-and-linguistic-identity-in-ukraine-it-s-complicated>

Contact Ukraine (2018). Brief History of Ukraine Since Independence. Retrieved from: <https://www.contactukraine.com/about/ukraine-since-independence>

Cooper, J. (2021). «Russia's updated National Security Strategy». *NATO Defense College*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ndc.nato.int/research/research.php?icode=704>

Copper, J. C. (2023). Taiwan-History, Flag, Map, Capital, Population, & Facts. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Taiwan>

Cordella, G. (2022). Taiwan, le mosse anti-Cina: servizio di leva più lungo e stipendi quadruplicati ai militari. *Gazzettino*. Retrieved from: https://www.ilgazzettino.it/esteri/taiwan_cina_cosa_succede_guerra_militari_news-7135759.html

Council of Europe (2022). Impact of sanctions on the Russian economy. Retrieved from: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/infographics/impact-sanctions-russian-economy/>

CountryReports (s.d.). Taiwan geography, maps, climate, environment and terrain from Taiwan. Retrieved from: <https://www.countryreports.org/country/Taiwan/geography.htm>

Crisis Group (2022) Reaffirming Ukraine's Sovereignty and Territorial Integrity at the UN. Retrieved from: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/global/reaffirming-ukraines-sovereignty-and-territorial-integrity-un>

Crisis Group. Conflict in Ukraine's Donbas: A Visual Explainer. Retrieved from: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/content/conflict-ukraines-donbas-visual-explainer>

Crozet, M. and Hinz, J. (2019), Friendly Fire: The Trade Impact of the Russia Sanctions and Countersanctions. Retrieved from: <https://matthieucrozet.weebly.com/uploads/6/0/2/7/60271695/sanctionsep.pdf>

Cuesta, J. G. (2022). Putin accuses U.S. of ignoring his main demands in Ukraine crisis. *El País*. Retrieved from: <https://elpais.com/internacional/2022-02-01/putin-acusa-a-ee-uu-de-ignorar-sus-principales-demandas-en-la-crisis-de-ucrania.html>

Cuffe, S. (2022). Why did Central America shift UN votes on Russia-Ukraine war? *Al Jazeera*. Retrieved from: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/10/21/why-did-central-america-shift-un-votes-on-the-russia-ukraine-war>

Culver, J. (2022). How We Would Know When China Is Preparing to Invade Taiwan. *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. Retrieved from: <https://carnegieendowment.org/2022/10/03/how-we-would-know-when-china-is-preparing-to-invade-taiwan-pub-88053>

D. Fiott and G. Lindstrom (2021). Strategic Compass. New bearings for EU security and defence? *European Union Institute for Security Studies (EUISS)*. Retrieved from: <https://www.iss.europa.eu/content/strategic-compass>

D. Kimball (2019). The Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces. *Arms Control Association*. Retrieved from: <https://www.armscontrol.org/factsheets/INFtreaty>

Dall'Aguzzo, M. (2022). Perché Taiwan è così importante per Cina e Stati Uniti. *Startmag*. Retrieved from: <https://www.startmag.it/mondo/taiwan-cina-cosa-succede/>

Darvas, Z. (2022). Economia: l'inflazione cede il passo (alla recessione)? *ISPI*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/economia-linflazione-cede-il-passo-alla-recessione-37059>

Dávila, A. T., Morales, A. C., & Le-Fort, M. P. (2001). La República Popular China y el Conflicto con Taiwán: Un Estrecho Margen de Maniobra. *Estudios Internacionales*. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/41391659>

De Lisle, J. (2022). U.S.-Japan-Taiwan Dialogue: Deterrence, Defense, and Trilateral Cooperation. *Foreign Policy Research Institute*. Retrieved from: <https://www.fpri.org/article/2022/12/u-s-japan-taiwan-dialogue-deterrence-defense-and-trilateral-cooperation/>

Dentons (2022). EU: sixth package of sanctions against Russia. Retrieved from: <https://www.dentons.com/en/insights/alerts/2022/june/15/eu-sixth-package-of-sanctions-against-russia>

Devine, P. (2022). Strategic Ambiguity Isn't Working to Deter China on Taiwan – It Will Invade Anyway. It's Time to Commit. *Just Security*. Retrieved from: <https://www.justsecurity.org/82912/strategic-ambiguity-isnt-working-to-deter-china-on-taiwan-it-will-invade-anyway-its-time-to-commit/>

Diritto Consenso (2022). Gli accordi di Minsk. Retrieved from <https://www.dirittoconsenso.it/2022/03/23/gli-accordi-di-minsk/>

Disney, R., & Szyszczak, E. (2022). Ukraine's accession to the European Union: what difference would it make? *Economics Observatory*. Retrieved from: <https://www.economicsobservatory.com/ukraines-accession-to-the-european-union-what-difference-would-it-make>

Dixon, R. (2021). The U.S.-Ukraine Sea Breeze naval exercises, explained. *Washington Post*. Retrieved from: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2021/07/02/ukraine-us-military-black-sea/>

Doménech, E. (2022). El gas natural licuado de EEUU y la guerra de Ucrania. *Newtral*.

Dominiguez, G. (2022). What would be the signs China is preparing to invade Taiwan? *The Japan Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2022/10/18/asia-pacific/signs-china-invasion-taiwan/>

Dong, J. (2020). China | Understanding the 14th Five-Year Plan and the 2035 long-term development target. *BBVA Research*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbvaresearch.com/en/publicaciones/china-understanding-the-14th-five-year-plan-and-the-2035-long-term-development-target-3/>

Doyle, G. and Katakam, A. (2021). «The skies over the South China Sea». *Reuters*. Retrieved from: <https://graphics.reuters.com/TAIWAN-CHINA/byvrjrmgnve/>

Draghi, M. and Macron, E. (2021). “The EU's fiscal rules must be reformed”. *Financial Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ft.com/content/ecbdd1ad-fcb0-4908-a29a-5a3e14185966>

Dremlyugin, A. (2022). «Poklonskaya puede ser privada de premios estatales por declaraciones sobre los símbolos Z y V». *Kommersant*. Retrieved from: <https://www.kommersant.ru/doc/5317384>

Dutton, J. (2023). Who are the "Siloviki"? Russia's elite security faction. *Newsweek*. Retrieved from: <https://www.newsweek.com/who-are-siloviki-russias-elite-security-faction-1775796>

Econopoly (2022). Perché una guerra a Taiwan sarebbe molto peggio dell'Ucraina. Retrieved from: <https://www.econopoly.ilsole24ore.com/2022/07/12/taiwan-guerra-ucraina/>

EEAS (2022). Europe in the Interregnum: our geopolitical awakening after Ukraine. Retrieved from: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/europe-interregnum-our-geopolitical-awakening-after-ukraine_en

Efremova, A. (2022). Dopo sei mesi di guerra (e sanzioni) in Russia mancano materie prime. Dalla carne ai tessuti, fino ai farmaci: le persone cercano alternative. *Il Fatto Quotidiano*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ilfattoquotidiano.it/2022/08/26/dopo-sei-mesi-di-guerra-e-sanzioni-in-russia-mancano-materie-prime/6770831/>

Ekathimerini (2022). EU countries mull 180eur/MWh trigger for gas price cap, draft shows. Retrieved from: <https://www.ekathimerini.com/economy/1200632/eu-countries-mull-180eur-mwh-trigger-for-gas-price-cap-draft-shows/>

Elving R. (2022). Beijing and Moscow unite in efforts to redefine democracy itself. *Npr*. Retrieved from: <https://www.npr.org/2022/02/06/1078432575/beijing-and-moscow-unite-in-efforts-to-redefine-democracy-itself>.

Encyclopedia Britannica (2022). *Truce of Andrusovo | Russia-Poland (1667)*. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/event/Truce-of-Andrusovo>

Encyclopedia Britannica. Ukraine - Independent Ukraine. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Ukraine/Independent-Ukraine>

Encyclopedia Britannica. Ukraine - The Porošenko administration. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/place/Ukraine/The-Porošenko-administration>

Encyclopedia.com (2023). Chinese Civil War, U.S. Involvement. Retrieved from: <https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/chinese-civil-war-us-involvement>

Euractiv (2015). Normandy quartet agrees to reinforcement of Ukraine OSCE mission. Retrieved from: [www.euractiv.com. https://www.euractiv.com/section/europe-s-east/news/normandy-quartet-agrees-to-reinforcement-of-ukraine-osce-mission/](https://www.euractiv.com/section/europe-s-east/news/normandy-quartet-agrees-to-reinforcement-of-ukraine-osce-mission/)

Eurasia Review (2019). Tracing the rise of Medvedev's network - Russia's "civiliki". Retrieved from: <https://www.intellinews.com/tracing-the-rise-of-medvedev-s-network-russia-s-civiliki-500013934/?archive=bne>

European Commission (2022). Statement by President von der Leyen on further measures to respond to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Retrieved from: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/statement_22_1441

European Commission (2022). Commission proposes full suspension of Visa Facilitation Agreement with Russia. Retrieved from: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_5346

European Commission (2022). Question and answers on the fifth package of restrictive measures against Russia. Retrieved from: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/qanda_22_2333

European Commission (2022). REPowerEU: Joint European action for more affordable, secure and sustainable energy. Retrieved from: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_1511

European Commission (2022). Russia's war on Ukraine: EU adopts sixth package of sanctions against Russia. Retrieved from: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_2802

European Commission (2022). Ukraine: EU agrees fourth package of restrictive measures against Russia. Retrieved from: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_1761

European Commission (2022). Ukraine: EU agrees ninth package of sanctions against Russia. Retrieved from: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_22_7652

European Commission (2023). Statement by President von der Leyen at the joint press conference with Ukrainian President Zelenskyy. Retrieved from: <https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/>

European Council (2022). Adoption and review procedure for EU sanctions. Retrieved from: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/adoption-review-procedure/>

European Council (2022). The impact on markets of Russia's invasion of Ukraine: the EU's response. Retrieved from: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/it/policies/eu-response-ukraine-invasion/impact-of-russia-s-invasion-of-ukraine-on-the-markets-eu-response/>

European Council, Council of the European Union (2022). EU relations with Belarus. Retrieved from: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/eastern-partnership/belarus/>

European Council, Council of the European Union (2022). EU restrictive measures against Belarus. Retrieved from: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/restrictive-measures-against-belarus/>

European Council, Council of the European Union (2022). History - EU restrictive measures against Russia in relation to Ukraine. Retrieved from: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/it/policies/sanctions/restrictive-measures-against-russia-over-ukraine/history-restrictive-measures-against-russia-over-ukraine/>

European Council, Council of the European Union (2023). EU sanctions against Russia explained. Retrieved from: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/restrictive-measures-against-russia-over-ukraine/sanctions-against-russia-explained/>

European Parliament (2020). Retrieved from: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2020/646203/EPRS_ATA\(2020\)646203_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/ATAG/2020/646203/EPRS_ATA(2020)646203_EN.pdf)

Everington, K. (2021). «Pentagon doubles number of US troops in Taiwan under Biden». *Taiwan News*. Retrieved from: <https://www.taiwannews.com.tw/en/news/4355230>

Fabricius, P. (2023). Abstaining in absentia: does SADC have a common position on Ukraine? *ISS Africa*. Retrieved from: <https://issafrica.org/iss-today/abstaining-in-absentia-does-sadc-have-a-common-position-on-ukraine>

Farmer, B. (2022). China's cyber assault on Taiwan. *CBS News*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/china-cyber-assault-taiwan-60-minutes-2022-10-09/>

Fatuzzo, V. (2021). Usa-Taiwan: tra ambiguità e chiarezza strategica. *Geopolitica.info*. Retrieved from: <https://www.geopolitica.info/usa-taiwan-tra-ambiguita-e-chiarezza-strategica/>

Federal Foreign Office (2021). Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe (CFE)

Feltri, S. (2022). Dalla Crimea al Donbass: perché in otto anni le sanzioni alla Russia non hanno mai funzionato. *Domani*. Retrieved from: <https://www.editorialedomani.it/politica/mondo/dalla-crimea-al-donbass-perche-otto-anni-di-sanzioni-alla-russia-non-hanno-funzionato-gfcox0h1>

Feng, J. (2022). Today Ukraine, Tomorrow Taiwan: Americans Fear China Will Copy Russia. *Newsweek*. Retrieved from: <https://www.newsweek.com/today-ukraine-tomorrow-taiwan-americans-fear-china-will-copy-russia-1682128>

Fernandez, F. (2018). «C14: la extrema derecha ucraniana continúa su expansión». *Descifrando la Guerra*. Retrieved from: <https://www.descifrandolaguerra.es/c14-la-extrema-derecha-ucraniana-continua-su-expansion/>

Ferrero, R. (2020). Las sanciones de la UE hacia Rusia en el contexto del conflicto ucraniano. *Revista CIDOB d'Afers Internacionals*. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.24241/rcai.2020.125.2.187>

Focus Taiwan (2023). Taipei blasts Moscow over support of Beijing's Taiwan claim. Retrieved from: <https://focustaiwan.tw/politics/202301040009>

Foreign Affairs (2022). Should the United States Pledge to Defend Taiwan? Retrieved from: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/ask-the-experts/should-united-states-pledge-defend-taiwan>

Foreign Trade (2022). «Top Trading Partners - February 2022», United States Census Bureau. Retrieved from: <https://www.census.gov/foreign-trade/statistics/highlights/toppartners.html>

Fraioli, L. (2022). Gli effetti del G20 di Bali sul clima. *La Repubblica*. Retrieved from: https://www.repubblica.it/green-and-blue/2022/11/16/news/cop27_effetti_g20_bali_clima-374783549/

France 24 (2022). Ucrania: del Maidán a la guerra, ocho años de tensiones con Rusia. Retrieved from: <https://www.france24.com/es/rusia/20220228-rusia-ucrania-maidan-protestas-conflicto>

Freedman, L. D. (2007). Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty | international treaty. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/event/Anti-Ballistic-Missile-Treaty>

Fridrich Ebert Stiftung New York Office (2022). The Return of the West? Retrieved from: <https://library.fes.de/pdf-files/international/19816.pdf>

Fu, Z. (1996). CHINA'S PERCEPTION OF THE TAIWAN ISSUE. *UCLA Journal of International Law and Foreign Affairs*. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45302054>

G20 Indonesia (2022). G20 BALI LEADERS' DECLARATION. Retrieved from: https://www.g20.org/content/dam/gtwenty/gtwenty_new/about_g20/previous-summit-documents/2022-bali/G20%20Bali%20Leaders%27%20Declaration,%2015-16%20November%202022.pdf

Gallego, D. (2022). La UE adopta su noveno paquete de sanciones contra Rusia. *AA*. Retrieved from: <https://www.aa.com.tr/es/mundo/la-ue-adopta-su-noveno-paquete-de-sanciones-contra-rusia/2765964>

García, I. (2017). «Las Fuerzas Armadas de Taiwán y el programa nuclear de Taipéi». *IEEE*. Retrieved from: https://www.ieee.es/Galerias/fichero/docs_opinion/2017/DIEEEO46-

Gardner, F. (2021). «China warns UK as carrier strike group approaches». *BBC*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-58015367>

Gil, T. (2019). Por qué EE.UU. "está comprometido por ley" a facilitar armas a Taiwán en claro desafío a China, *BBC News Mundo*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/mundo/noticias-internacional-48944773>

Giuliani, F. (2022). Così la Cina può realizzare un blocco strategico su Taiwan. *InsideOver*. Retrieved from: <https://insideover.ilgiornale.it/guerra/cosi-la-cina-puo-realizzare-un-blocco-strategico-su-taiwan.html>

Giurisprudenza Penale (2022). L'invasione russa dell'Ucraina e i crimini di guerra. Retrieved from: https://www.giurisprudenzapenale.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/donnarumma_gp_2022_11.pdf

Glaser, B., & Mark, J. (2021). Taiwan and China Are Locked in Economic Co-Dependence. *Foreign Policy*. Retrieved from: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/04/14/taiwan-china-economic-codependence/>

Goldkorn, J. (2022). Gray rhinos and risk awareness in China and the U.S. — Q&A with Michele Wucker. *The China Project*. Retrieved from: <https://thechinaproject.com/2022/10/21/gray-rhinos-and-risk-awareness-in-china-and-the-u-s-qa-with-michele-wucker/>

Goldstein, S. M., & Schriver, R. (2001). An Uncertain Relationship: The United States, Taiwan and the Taiwan Relations Act. *The China Quarterly*. Retrieved from: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3451110>

Goncharenko, R. (2022). The Azov Battalion: Extremists defending Mariupol. *DW.com*. Retrieved from: <https://www.dw.com/en/the-azov-battalion-extremists-defending-mariupol/a-61151151>

Gorenburg, D. G. (2021). The HMS Defender Incident: What Happened and What Are the Political Ramifications? *Russia Matters*. Retrieved from: <https://www.russiamatters.org/analysis/hms-defender-incident-what-happened-and-what-are-political-ramifications>

GOV.UK (2022). Introduction of additional sanctions against Belarus. Retrieved from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/notice-to-exporters-202220-introduction-of-additional-sanctions-against-belarus/nte-202220-introduction-of-additional-sanctions-against-belarus>

Grevatt, J. and Macdonald, A. (2022). «China increases 2022 defence budget by 7.1 %», *Janes*. Retrieved from: <https://www.janes.com/defence-news/news-detail/china-increases-2022-defence-budget-by-71>

Gulevich, V. (2021). Ukraine: Russophobia plus Russophilia. *Modern Diplomacy*. Retrieved from: <https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2021/05/24/ukraine-russophobia-plus-russophilia/>

Gusak, D. and Servitja Roca, X. (2013). «La voz de los futuros líderes rusos», *Esglobal*. Retrieved from: <https://www.esglobal.org/la-voz-de-los-futuros-lideres-rusos/>

Hale, E. (2021). Do the US and China have a ‘Taiwan agreement’? *Al Jazeera*. Retrieved from: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2021/10/8/do-the-us-and-china-have-a-taiwan-agreement>

Hall, B., y Olearchyk, R. (2022) “Ukraine has upgraded its war aims as confidence grows says foreign minister”. *Financial Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/world/europe/ukraine-has-upgraded-its-war-aims-as-confidence-grows-says-foreign-minister-1.4875015>

Hamaui, R. (2022). Perché alcune sanzioni fanno più male all’Occidente. *Lavoce.info*. Retrieved from: <https://www.lavoce.info/archives/95508/perche-alcune-sanzioni-fanno-piu-male-alloccidente/>

Han, B. (2022). Pentagon bill includes US\$10 billion in grants and loans for Taiwan arms sales. *South China Morning Post*. Retrieved from: <https://www.scmp.com/news/china/military/article/3202466/pentagon-bill-includes-us10-billion-grants-and-loans-taiwan-arms-sales>

Heginbotham, E. and Odell, R. E.(2021). «Strait of crisis? Debating Beijing’s threat to Taiwan», *Foreign Affairs*. Retrieved from: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/china/2021-08-09/strait-emergency>

Heller, F. (2022). Spain least affected by Ukraine war, says finance minister. *Euractiv.com*. Retrieved from: https://www.euractiv.com/section/politics/short_news/spain-least-affected-by-ukraine-war-says-finance-minister/

Hellyatt, H. (2022). Russia took Crimea from Ukraine in 2014. Now, Kyiv is fighting back. *CNBC*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cnn.com/2022/08/18/russia-took-crimea-from-ukraine-in-2014-now-kyiv-is-fighting-back.html>

Henry, F., & L, N. A. (2019). Weaponized Interdependence: How Global Economic Networks Shape State Coercion. *MIT Press*. Retrieved from: <https://direct.mit.edu/isec/article/44/1/42/12237/Weaponized-Interdependence-How-Global-Economic>

Higgins, A. (2022). On the Edge of a Polish Forest, Where Some of Putin's Darkest Fears Lurk. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/16/world/europe/poland-missile-base-russia-ukraine.html>

Hilgenstock, B. (2022). How have sanctions impacted Russia? *Bruegel*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bruegel.org/policy-brief/how-have-sanctions-impacted-russia>

Hill, F. (2022) «Russia's assault on Ukraine and the international order: Assessing and bolstering the Western response». *Brookings*. Retrieved from: <https://www.brookings.edu/testimonies/russias-assault-on-ukraine-and-the-international-order-assessing-and-bolstering-the-western-response/>

History (2022). Ukraine declares its independence. Retrieved from: <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/ukraine-declares-its-independence>

History of Ukraine - the Soviet Union Period. *Ukrainetrek.com*. Retrieved from: <https://ukrainetrek.com/about-ukraine-history/soviet-union-period>

History.com (2022). Putin becomes acting president of Russia, following Yeltsin's resignation. Retrieved from: <https://www.history.com/this-day-in-history/putin-becomes-president-russia>

Huang, D. (2010). The United States and Taiwan's Defense Transformation. *Brookings*. Retrieved from: <https://www.brookings.edu/opinions/the-united-states-and-taiwans-defense-transformation/>

IEA (2022). How Europe can cut natural gas imports from Russia significantly within a year. Retrieved from: <https://www.iea.org/news/how-europe-can-cut-natural-gas-imports-from-russia-significantly-within-a-year>

Il caso Putin. *Limes Magazine* Edition 4/22

Il Foglio (2022). Berlusconi: "Putin voleva sostituire Zelensky con un governo di persone perbene". Retrieved from: <https://www.ilfoglio.it/politica/2022/09/23/video/berlusconi-putin-voleva-sostituire-zelensky-con-un-governo-di-persone-perbene--4470295/>

Il Post (2022). Breve storia dell'Ucraina. Retrieved from: <https://www.ilpost.it/2022/02/26/ucraina-breve-storia/>

Il Post (2022). Il servizio militare obbligatorio a Taiwan passerà da 4 mesi a un anno per tutti i cittadini maschi con almeno 18 anni. Retrieved from: <https://www.ilpost.it/2022/12/27/taiwan-servizio-militare/>

Il Post (2022). Vent'anni fa i rapporti fra Occidente e Russia erano nella loro fase migliore. Retrieved from: <https://www.ilpost.it/2022/05/28/pratica-di-mare/>

Il sole 24 Ore (2022). Tutte le sanzioni contro la Russia: l'Ue congela i beni di Putin e Lavrov. Retrieved from: <https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/le-sanzioni-dell-occidente-contro-russia-AE6ncCGB>

Il Sole 24 ore (2023). Ucraina ultime notizie. Pentagono annuncia nuovo invio armi a Kiev da 2 miliardi, inclusi missili a lungo raggio. Retrieved from: <https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/ucraina-ultime-notizie-3-febbraio-2023-AExumdgC>

Immenkamp, Beatrix (2019) "The end of the INF Treaty? A pillar of European security architecture at risk".

European Parliament Research Service. Retrieved from: <https://epthinktank.eu/2019/02/05/the-end-of-the-inf-treaty-a-pillar-of-european-security-architecture-at-risk/>

INFOBAE (2021). La representante de Taiwán fue invitada a la investidura de Biden como presidente de Estados Unidos por primera vez desde 1979. Retrieved from: <https://www.infobae.com/america/eeuu/2021/01/21/la-representante-de-taiwan-fue-invitada-a-la-investidura-de-biden-como-presidente-de-estados-unidos-por-primera-vez-desde-1979/>

Information from the Government of the Netherlands (2022). The Netherlands' position. Retrieved from: <https://www.government.nl/topics/russia-and-ukraine/the-netherlands-position>

Ing-wen, T. (2021). Taiwan and the Fight for Democracy. *Foreign Affairs*. Retrieved from: <https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/taiwan/2021-10-05/taiwan-and-fight-democracy>

Intelligence Resource Program. Army - Taiwan Intelligence & Security Agencies. Retrieved from: <https://irp.fas.org/world/taiwan/army-intro.htm>

Interreg- Italia Slovenia (2020). PRIMIS - The protection of linguistic minorities in Italy. Retrieved from: <https://www.ita-slo.eu/en/all-news/news/primis-protection-linguistic-minorities-italy>

Iran International (2022). EU, UK Sanction Iranian Generals Over 'Drones Used By Russia'. Retrieved from: <https://www.iranintl.com/en/202210200368>

Island Folklore. The Island's Many. Retrieved from: <https://islandfolklore.com/about/taiwan/names/>

ISPI (2021). Storia del G20, un paese alla volta: Russia. Retrieved from: <https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/storia-del-g20-un-paese-alla-volta-russia-31868>

ISPI (2022). Europa: Economia di guerra. Retrieved from: <https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/europa-economia-di-guerra-34191>

ISPI (2023). Gli italiani e la politica internazionale. Retrieved from: <https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/gli-italiani-e-la-politica-internazionale-37296>

J. Borrell (2022). The war in Ukraine and its implications for the EU. *EEAS Website*. Retrieved from: https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/war-ukraine-and-its-implications-eu_en

Jennings, R. (2022). Why Taiwanese are Donating Food, Money and Medical Supplies to Ukraine. *VOA*. Retrieved from: <https://www.voanews.com/a/why-taiwanese-are-donating-food-money-and-medical-supplies-to-ukraine-/6487801.html>

Jensen, B. (2022). Not So Fast: Insights from a 1944 War Plan Help Explain Why Invading Taiwan Is a Costly Gamble. *War on the Rocks*. Retrieved from: <https://warontherocks.com/2022/09/not-so-fast-insights-from-a-1944-war-help-explain-why-invading-taiwan-is-a-costly-gamble/>

Karatnycky, A. (2018) «Ukraine, Anti-Semitism, Racism, and the Far Right». *Atlantic Council*. Retrieved from: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/ukraine-anti-semitism-racism-and-the-far-right/>

Keating, D. (2022). With its Russian coal ban, the EU blocks a fuel it wasn't using much. *Energy Monitor*. Retrieved from: <https://www.energymonitor.ai/sectors/power/with-its-russian-coal-ban-the-eu-blocks-a-fuel-it-wasnt-using-much>

Keegan, D. (2021). Strengthening Dual Deterrence on Taiwan: The Key to US-China Strategic Stability. *Stimson Center*. Retrieved from: <https://www.stimson.org/2021/strengthening-dual-deterrence-on-taiwan-the-key-to-us-china-strategic-stability/>

Koenig, N. (2022). The 'Geopolitical' European Commission and its Pitfalls. *IWM WEBSITE*. Retrieved from: <https://www.iwm.at/blog/the-geopolitical-european-commission-and-its-pitfalls>

Kolotylo, M. (2022). Strategic Compass – towards secure European Union? *Diritti Comparati*. Retrieved from: <https://www.diritticomparati.it/strategic-compass-towards-secure-european-union/>

Kominko, S. (2021). Ukraine's nation-building journey and the legacy of the Euromaidan Revolution. *Atlantic Council*. Retrieved from: <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/ukrainealert/ukraines-nation-building-journey-and-the-legacy-of-the-euromaidan-revolution/>

Korhanen, L. (2019). Economic Sanctions on Russia and Their Effects. *CESifo Forum*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ifo.de/DocDL/CESifo-Forum-2019-4-korhonen-economic-sanctions-december.pdf>

Kramer, A. (2022). «Armed nationalists in Ukraine pose a threat not just to Russia». *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/10/world/europe/ukraine-nationalism-russia-invasion.html>

Kroenig, M. (2020). The Power Delusion. *Foreign Policy*. Retrieved from: <https://foreignpolicy.com/2020/11/11/china-united-states-democracy-ideology-competition-rivalry-great-powers-power-delusion/>

Kuo, M. (2020). Trump and the TAIPEI Act. *The Diplomat*. Retrieved from: <https://thediplomat.com/2020/04/trump-and-the-taipei-act/>

Kwan, R. (2021). 'Most dangerous place on Earth': Taiwan Twitter derides The Economist's latest cover story, *Hong Kong Free Press HKFP*. Retrieved from: <https://hongkongfp.com/2021/04/30/most-dangerous-place-on-earth-taiwan-twitter-derides-the-economists-latest-cover-story/>

L'Opinione delle Libertà (2023). Meloni-Scholz: intesa totale sul sostegno all'Ucraina. Retrieved from: https://www.opinione.it/politica/2023/02/04/redazione_meloni-scholz-kiev-aiuti-di-sta-to-migranti/

La fine della pace. Limes Edition 3/2022

La grande Guerra. Limes magazine edition 7 / 2022

La guerra russo Americana. Limes (2022).

La Repubblica (2022). Ucraina, cosa vuole davvero Putin? Domande e risposte sull'attacco della Russia. Retrieved from: https://www.repubblica.it/esteri/2022/02/25/news/ucraina_cosa_vuole_putin_cosa_puo_fare_loccidente_domande_risposte-339285334/

La riscoperta del futuro. Limes (2021)

La Russia cambia il mondo. Limes (2022)

La Russia cambia il mondo. Limes edition 3/2022

Lamperti, L. (2022). I 6 scenari di un'invasione di Taiwan da parte della Cina. *Wired Italia*. Retrieved from: <https://www.wired.it/article/taiwan-invasione-cina-scenari/>

Lamperti, L. (2022). Perché Taiwan è così importante? *Wired Italia*. Retrieved from: <https://www.wired.it/article/taiwan-cina-stati-uniti-microchip/>

Le Trattative (2022). Accordo nucleare con l'Iran: il riassunto. Retrieved from: <https://www.letrattative.it/2022/09/accordo-nucleare-iran-riassunto.html>

Lee, J. (2011). The new start treaty: signed. *The white house*. Retrieved from: <https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/blog/2011/02/02/new-start-treaty-signed>

Lendon, B. and Liebermann, O. (2023). War game suggests Chinese invasion of Taiwan would fail at a huge cost to US, Chinese and Taiwanese militaries. *CNN Politics*. Retrieved from: <https://edition.cnn.com/2023/01/09/politics/taiwan-invasion-war-game-intl-hnk-ml/index.html>

Leofrigio, M. (2021). La fortezza Taiwan. *Analisi Difesa*. Retrieved from: <https://www.analisdifesa.it/2021/12/la-fortezza-taiwan/>

Liberatore, F. (2022). Sanzioni: ottavo (non) pacchetto. *Istituto per gli studi di politica internazionale*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ispionline.it/it/pubblicazione/sanzioni-ottavo-non-pacchetto-36429>

Liboreiro, J. (2022). Poland, Ireland and the Baltics push for EU sanctions on Gazprombank and Russian diamonds. *Euronews*. Retrieved from: <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2022/09/23/poland-ireland-and-the-baltics-push-for-eu-sanctions-on-gazprombank-and-russian-made-diamo>

Liboreiro, J.; Pitchers, C. (2022). EU will slash imports of Russian gas by two thirds by 2023. *Euronews*. Retrieved from: <https://www.euronews.com/my-europe/2022/03/08/eu-will-slash-imports-of-russian-gas-by-two-thirds-by-2023>

Lieven, A. (2022). Inside Putin's circle — the real Russian elite. *Financial Times*. <https://www.ft.com/content/503fb110-f91e-4bed-b6dc-0d09582dd007>

Likhachev, V. (2018). Far-right Extremism as a Threat to Ukrainian Democracy. *Freedom House*. Retrieved from: https://freedomhouse.org/sites/default/files/2020-02/ukraine%20brief%20final_1.pdf

Lissovolik, Y. (2022). «Can BRICS underpin a New World Order?». *Russian International Affairs Council*. Retrieved from: <https://russiancouncil.ru/en/analytics-and-comments/analytics/can-brics-underpin-a-new-world-order/>

M. Babic (2021). “Let's talk about the interregnum: Gramsci and the crisis of the liberal order”.

M. Risyad Sadzikri (2021). Too Far, yet “Unstoppable”: The Story of Ultrationalism in Ukraine. *Kontekstual*. Retrieved from: <https://kontekstual.com/too-far-yet-unstoppable-the-story-of-ultranationalism-in-ukraine/>

M.Brüggemann and A.Lippert (2023). EU authorized new sanctions against Russia. *TaylorWessing*. Retrieved from: <https://www.taylorwessing.com/en/insights-and-events/insights/2022/02/neue-eu-russland-sanktionen-im-zuge-der-ukrainekrise>

Magnani, A. (2022). Petrolio, oro, gas: a che punto sono le sanzioni Ue alla Russia. *Il Sole 24 ORE*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/petrolio-oro-gas-che-punto-sono-sanzioni-ue-russia-AEyWcbiB>

Maizland L. (2022). Why China-Taiwan Relations Are So Tense. *Council on Foreign Relations*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cfr.org/background/asia/china-taiwan-relations-tension-us-policy-biden>

Major, D. (2023). China is taking lessons from Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Taiwan's foreign minister says. *CBC*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/china-ukraine-russia-taiwan-1.6713413>

Mankoff, J. (2022). Russia's War in Ukraine: Identity, History, and Conflict. *CSIS- Center for Strategic and International Studies*. Retrieved from: <https://www.csis.org/analysis/russias-war-ukraine-identity-history-and-conflict>

Mann, S. and König, O. (2022). EU agrees on second wave of significant sanctions against Russia. *Sanctions and export controls update*. Retrieved from: <https://sanctionsnews.bakermckenzie.com/about-the-blog/>

Maroulis, S. (2022). Civil War of China: Chinese Communist Party vs Kuomintang. *Pacific Atrocities Education*. Retrieved from: <https://www.pacificatrocities.org/blog/civil-war-of-china-chinese-communist-party-vs-kuomintang>

Mars, A. and De Miguel, B. (2022). U.S. and NATO reject Russia's claim to halt Alliance enlargement. *El País*. Retrieved from: <https://elpais.com/internacional/2022-01-26/estados-unidos-rechaza-la-demanda-de-rusia-de-limitar-la-expansion-de-la-otan.html>

Marsh, S. and Chambers, M. (2022). Germany freezes Nord Stream 2 gas project as Ukraine crisis deepens. *Reuters*. Retrieved from: <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/germanys-scholz-halts-nord-stream-2-certification-2022-02-22/>

Masters, J. (2022). Ukraine: Conflict at the Crossroads of Europe and Russia. *Council on Foreign Relations*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cfr.org/background/ukraine-conflict-crossroads-europe-and-russia>

- Maul, H. (2022). Why China Isn't Backing Away From Alignment With Russia. *The Diplomat*. Retrieved from: <https://thediplomat.com/2022/04/why-china-isnt-backing-away-from-alignment-with-russia/>
- Max-Planck-Gesellschaft* (2022). "Putin is abusing international law". Retrieved from: <https://www.mpg.de/18442939/putin-is-abusing-international-law>
- McGee, L. (2022). Why Ukraine's longshot bid to join the EU is likely to enrage Putin. *CNN*. Retrieved from: <https://edition.cnn.com/2022/06/16/europe/ukraine-nato-membership-putin-analysis-cmd/index.html>
- McWilliams, B. (et al.), (2022). Can Europe manage if Russian oil and coal are cut off? *Bruegel*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bruegel.org/2022/03/can-europe-manage-if-russian-oil-and-coal-are-cut-off/>
- McWilliams, B., and Sgaravatti, G. (2022). L'Europa può vivere senza il gas russo?. *Il Grand Continent*. Retrieved from: <https://legrandcontinent.eu/it/2022/03/06/leuropa-puo-vivere-senza-il-gas-russo/>
- Mearsheimer, J. J. (1989). Assessing the Conventional Balance: The 3:1 Rule and Its Critics. *International Security*. Retrieved from: <https://doi.org/10.2307/2538780>
- Mei, N. S., Jacques, A., & Chung-Pai, C. (2009). Earthquake cycle in Western Taiwan: Insights from historical seismicity. *OUP Academic*. Retrieved from: <https://academic.oup.com/gji/article/178/2/753/625204>
- Meijer H., Brooks S. G. (2021). Illusions of Autonomy: Why Europe Cannot Provide for Its Security If the United States Pulls Back. *International Security* 2021. Retrieved from: https://doi.org/10.1162/isec_a_00405
- Melnikova, J. (2022). «The Europe of political realism and the future of NATO – back to basics? ». *Russian International Affairs Council*. Retrieved from: <https://russiancouncil.ru/en/analytics-and-comments/analytics/the-europe-of-political-realism-and-the-future-of-nato-back-to-basics/>
- Memorial Italia (2023). *Guerra Globale- Il conflitto russo-ucraino e l'ordine internazionale*. Corriere della sera.
- Miles Yu On Taiwan: America's strategic clarity in defense of Taiwan: The dangerous illusion of strategic ambiguity. *Taipei Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.taipeitimes.com/News/editorials/archives/2022/10/31/2003787992>

- Milliken, D. (2022). UK sees threat to Taiwan if West does not support Ukraine. *Reuters*. Retrieved from: <https://www.reuters.com/world/uk/uk-pm-johnson-says-west-needs-solidarity-russia-2022-02-18/>
- Miyata, F. (2021). THE GRAND STRATEGY OF CARL VON CLAUSEWITZ. *U.S. Army War College*. Retrieved from: <https://warroom.armywarcollege.edu/articles/grand-strategy-clausewitz/>
- Modolo, G. (2022). La Cina si farà coinvolgere in una mediazione per far finire la guerra? *La Repubblica*. Retrieved from: https://www.repubblica.it/esteri/2022/03/06/news/la_cina_si_faro_coinvolgere_in_una_mediazione_per_porre_fine_alla_guerra-340513434/
- Mokrane, M. (2022). Ukraine: the blackest of black swan events. *Professional Real Asset*. Retrieved from: <https://www.patrizia.ag/en/news-detail/default-4361dfa8a7/>
- Molinari, M. (2022). *Il ritorno degli imperi*. Rizzoli
- Morris, L. et al. (2022). «Right-wing Azov Battalion emerges as a controversial defender of Ukraine». *The Washington Post*. Retrieved from: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/04/06/ukraine-military-right-wing-militias/>
- Murphy, M. (2023). Ukraine war: 80 years on, we are facing German tanks again. *BBC News*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-64502504>
- Mus, F., Vandemeulebroucke, K., D'Hulst, L., and Meylaerts, R. (2011). *La traduction dans les cultures plurilingues*. Artois Presses Université.
- Mützenich, R. (2022). La guerra y el cambio de época en Europa. *Nueva Sociedad*. Retrieved from: <https://nuso.org/articulo/la-guerra-y-el-cambio-de-epoca-en-europa/>
- Mützenich, R. (2022). La guerra y el cambio de época en Europa. *Nueva Sociedad*. Retrieved from: <https://nuso.org/articulo/la-guerra-y-el-cambio-de-epoca-en-europa/>
- Nationalia* (2015). Constitutional reform, autonomy for Donetsk and Luhansk foreseen in Ukraine ceasefire deal Retrieved from: <https://www.nationalia.info/new/10460/constitutional-reform-autonomy-for-donetsk-and-luhansk-foreseen-in-ukraine-ceasefire-deal>

NATO (2022). NATO's response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Retrieved from: https://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/topics_192648.htm

Navbahor, I. (2022). Ukraine War Overshadows SCO Summit in Uzbekistan. *VOA*. Retrieved from: <https://www.voanews.com/a/ukraine-war-overshadows-sco-summit-in-uzbekistan-/6745871.html>

Nemoto, R., & Ryugen, H. (2022). China intensifies disinformation, cyberattacks on Taiwan: report. *Nikkei Asia*. Retrieved from: <https://asia.nikkei.com/Politics/International-relations/Taiwan-tensions/China-intensifies-disinformation-cyberattacks-on-Taiwan-report>

NPR (2022). China upgrades its naval force with its first indigenous aircraft carrier. Retrieved from: <https://www.npr.org/2022/06/17/1105786322/chinas-upgrades-its-naval-force-with-its-first-indigenous-aircraft-carrier>

ODI . Global China 2049 Initiative. Retrieved from: <https://odi.org/en/about/our-work/global-china-2049-initiative/>

Office of the Historian. Milestones: 1953–1960. Retrieved from: <https://history.state.gov/milestones/1953-1960/taiwan-strait-crises>

ORF (2022). Taiwan's Battle for Diplomatic Space. Retrieved from: <https://www.orfonline.org/research/taiwans-battle-for-diplomatic-space/>

Otten, R. (2022). Ukraine conflict: What is Swift and why is banning Russia so significant? *BBC*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/business-60521822>

Pandey, A. (2022). How can the EU survive without Russian coal? *DW*. Retrieved from: <https://www.dw.com/en/how-can-the-eu-survive-without-russian-coal/a-61379128>

Parlamento Europeo (2022). Il Parlamento riconosce la Russia come stato sponsor del terrorismo. Retrieved from: <https://www.europarl.europa.eu/news/it/press-room/20221118IPR55707/il-parlamento-riconosce-la-russia-come-stato-sponsor-del-terrorismo>

Patel, M. (2022). What Russia means to Ukraine: A long complicated history. *The Indian Express*. Retrieved from: <https://indianexpress.com/article/research/what-russia-means-to-ukraine-a-long-complicated-history-7773826/>

Patrick, S. (2023). Four Contending U.S. Approaches to Multilateralism. *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. Retrieved from: <https://carnegieendowment.org/2023/01/23/four-contending-u.s.-approaches-to-multilateralism-pub-88852>

PBS NewsHour (2022). Turkey President Erdoğan on Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the future of NATO. Retrieved from: <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/turkey-president-erdogan-on-russias-invasion-of-ukraine-and-the-future-of-nato>

Perriello, M. (2022). La Cina pronta a invadere Taiwan? Dove e come può attaccare. *QuiFinanza*. Retrieved from: <https://quifinanza.it/editoriali/video/cina-usa-attacco-taiwan-esercito/660221/>

Pifer, S. (2019). Five years after Crimea's illegal annexation, the issue is no closer to resolution. *Brookings*. Retrieved from: <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2019/03/18/five-years-after-crimeas-illegal-annexation-the-issue-is-no-closer-to-resolution/>

Pifer, S. (2022). The Russia-Ukraine war and its ramifications for Russia. *Brookings*. Retrieved from: <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/the-russia-ukraine-war-and-its-ramifications-for-russia/>

Pisani- Ferry, J. (2022). *The Geopolitical Conquest of Economics*. *Project Syndicate*. Retrieved from: <https://www.project-syndicate.org/commentary/geopolitics-is-trumping-economics-by-jean-pisani-ferry-2021-09?barrier=accesspaylog>

Pita, C.; Maqueda, A. (2022). El suministro de gas a Europa, en el foco del conflicto entre Rusia y Ucrania. *Newtral*. Retrieved from: <https://www.newtral.es/suministro-gas- europa-conflicto-rusia-ucrania/20220121/>

Poggioli, S. (2022). Italy has been a strong supporter of Ukraine — but that is starting to change. *NPR*. Retrieved from: <https://www.npr.org/2022/11/10/1135146431/italy-ukraine-support-military-aid-russia-war>

Polo, M. (2022). Sul gas l'Europa ha un problema. *Lavoce*. Retrieved from: <https://www.lavoce.info/archives/93576/sul-gas-leuropa-ha-un-problema/>

Prashad, V. (2022). Russia-Ukraine war began in 2014, not 2022. *MR Online*. Retrieved from: <https://mronline.org/2022/03/16/russia-ukraine-war-began-in-2014-not-2022/>

President of Russia (2021). Vladimir Putin's annual news conference. Retrieved from: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/news/67438>

Prina Cerai, A. (2022). Le conseguenze economiche di un conflitto su Taiwan. *Formiche.net*. Retrieved from: <https://formiche.net/2022/12/conseguenze-economiche-conflitto-taiwan/>

Queen's University. Multiculturalism Policies in Contemporary Democracies. Retrieved from: University. <https://www.queensu.ca/mcp/national-minorities/resultsbycountry-nm/spain-nm>

Ragot, X. (2022). War in Ukraine: What short-term effects on the French economy? *Le blog*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ofce.sciences-po.fr/blog/war-in-ukraine-what-short-term-effects-on-the-french-economy/>

Rathbone, J. P. (2022). «Military briefing: Alexander Dvornikov, Russia's new commander in Ukraine». *Financial Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ft.com/content/7f90a244-f1da-4483-ab73-c80fa7248523>

Rathbone, J. P., & Ivanova, P. (2022, 7 febbraio). What is 'indivisible security'? The principle at the heart of Russia's ire against Nato. *Financial Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ft.com/content/84a43896-2dfd-4be4-8d2a-c68a5a68547a>

Ray, M. (2008). Dmitry Medvedev | Facts & Biography. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Dmitry-Medvedev>

Ray, M. (2010). Viktor Yanukovich | Facts, Biography, & Flight to Russia. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Viktor-Yanukovich>

Redeker, N. (2022). Same shock, different effects. *Jacques Delors Centre*. Retrieved from: <https://www.delorscentre.eu/en/publications/economic-consequences-ukraine>

Reif, K. (2015). Russia Completes CFE Treaty Suspension. *Arms Control Association*. Retrieved from: <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2015-04/news-briefs/russia-completes-cfe-treaty-suspension>

Reif, K. and Bugos, S. (2020). U.S. Completes Open Skies Treaty Withdrawal. *Arms Control Association*. Retrieved from: <https://www.armscontrol.org/act/2020-12/news/us-completes-open-skies-treaty-withdrawal>

Reporting Radicalism (2011). C14 - Radical right-wing group with youth camps, paramilitary unit and history of violence. Retrieved from: <https://reportingradicalism.org/en/dossiers/groups/c14-radical-right-wing-group-with-youth-camps-paramilitary-unit-and-history-of-violence>

Reuters (2021). «First German warship in almost two decades enters South China Sea». Retrieved from: <https://www.reuters.com/world/first-german-warship-almost-two-decades-enters-south-china-sea-2021-12-15/>

Reuters (2022). «China says Taiwan is “not Ukraine” as island raises alert level». Retrieved from: <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/taiwan-says-must-raise-alertness-over-ukraine-crisis-2022-02-23>

Reuters (2022). «Taiwan says inappropriate to link its situation to Ukraine’s». Retrieved from: <https://www.reuters.com/world/china/taiwan-says-inappropriate-link-its-situation-ukraines-2022-02-28/>

Reuters (2022). Factbox: What are the Minsk agreements on the Ukraine conflict? Reuters. Retrieved from: <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/what-are-minsk-agreements-ukraine-conflict-2022-02-21/>

Reuters (2022). Russian gas flows to Europe via Ukraine fall after Kyiv shuts one route. Retrieved from: <https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/requests-russian-gas-via-key-ukraine-transit-point-fall-zero-data-shows-2022-05-11/>

Reuters (2022). Sanctions have frozen around \$300 bln of Russian reserves, FinMin says. Retrieved from: <https://www.reuters.com/article/ukraine-crisis-russia-reserves-idUSL5N2VG0BU>

Reuters (2022). Taiwan 'proud' of its efforts to help Ukraine, says President Tsai. Retrieved from: <https://www.reuters.com/world/taiwan-proud-its-efforts-help-ukraine-says-president-tsai-2022-09-20/>

Reuters (2022). UK says Western inaction on Ukraine would send dangerous message for Taiwan. Retrieved from: <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/russia-wants-inflame-tensions-by-ignoring-planned-peace-talks-kyiv-says-2022-02-19/>

Rivera D.W. and Rivera S.W. (2018) *The Militarization of the Russian Elite under Putin*. *Routledge*. Retrieved from: <https://academics.hamilton.edu/documents/Rivera%20and%20Rivera,%20The%20Militarization%20of%20the%20Russian%20Elite,%20Prob%20of%20Post-Comm%202018.PDF>

Rivera, D. and Werning Rivera, S. (2018). *The Militarization of the Russian Elite under Putin*. *Routledge*. Retrieved from: <https://academics.hamilton.edu/documents/Rivera%20and%20Rivera,%20The%20Militarization%20of%20the%20Russian%20Elite,%20Prob%20of%20Post-Comm%202018.PDF>

Rivolta, D. (2022). La Russia “nemica” e la sporcizia sotto il tappeto dell’occidente. *Notizie Geopolitiche*. Retrieved from: <https://www.notiziegeopolitiche.net/la-russia-nemica-e-la-politica-del-doppiopesismo/>

Ronkin, N. (2023). Stanford Experts Explore the Roles of Taiwan and Ukraine in Countering. *Freeman Spogli Institute for International Studies*. Retrieved from: <https://fsi.stanford.edu/news/stanford-experts-explore-roles-taiwan-and-ukraine-countering-autocratic-challenges-democracy>

Ross, J. (2021). 'AUKUS' is Anglo-Imperialism resurrected. *BRICS international Portal*. Retrieved from: <http://infobrics.org/post/34169/>

Rossi, E., De Arcangelis, G., & Mariani, R. (2020). Le sanzioni alla Russia: effetto economico e scopo politico. *Etica ed Economia*. Retrieved from: <https://eticaeconomia.it/le-sanzioni-alla-russia-effetto-economico-e-scopo-politico/>

Royal United Services Institute (2022). European Security Architecture: Against Russia, or With It? Retrieved from: <https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/european-security-architecture-against-russia-or-it>

Rozanskij, V. (2022). La crisis económica de Minsk es peor que la de Moscú. *Pime Asianews* Retrieved from: <https://www.asianews.it/noticias-es/La-crisis-económica-de-Minsk-es-peor-que-la-de-Moscú-56616.html>

Rozanskij, V. (2022). Minsk asks Moscow for money. *Pime Asianews*. Retrieved from: <https://www.asianews.it/news-en/Minsk-asks-Moscow-for-money-56616.html>

RTVE (2022). «Ucrania entrega la solicitud para ser candidato a la adhesión a la Unión Europea». Retrieved from: <https://www.rtve.es/noticias/20220418/ucrania-formulario-adhesion-union-europea/2333664.shtml>

Rumer, E. (2019). «The Primakov (not Gerasimov) Doctrine in action». *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. Retrieved from: https://carnegieendowment.org/files/Rumer_PrimakovDoctrine_final1.pdf

Russell, M. (2022). Western sanctions and Russia. What are they? Do they work?. *European Parliamentary Research Service*. Retrieved from: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2022/698930/EPRS_IDA\(2022\)698930_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2022/698930/EPRS_IDA(2022)698930_EN.pdf)

Russell, M. (2022). Western sanctions and Russia. What are they? Do they work?. *European Parliamentary Research Service*. Retrieved from: [https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2022/698930/EPRS_IDA\(2022\)698930_EN.pdf](https://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/IDAN/2022/698930/EPRS_IDA(2022)698930_EN.pdf)

S. Kainikara (2019). Russia's Return To The World Stage: The Primakov Doctrine. *Eurasia Review*. Retrieved from: <https://www.eurasiareview.com/05112019-russias-return-to-the-world-stage-the-primakov-doctrine-analysis/>

S. Meister (2022). A Paradigm Shift: EU-Russia Relations After the War in Ukraine. *Carnegie Europe*. Retrieved from: <https://carnegieeurope.eu/2022/11/29/paradigm-shift-eu-russia-relations-after-war-in-ukraine-pub-88476>

Sanahuja, J. A. (2020) “¿Bipolaridad en ascenso? Análisis equívocos frente a la crisis de la globalización”. *Foreign Affairs Latinoamérica*.

Sánchez, A. (2016). Política comercial exterior de la Unión Europea y las sanciones a Rusia. *Dialnet*. Retrieved from <https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo=5690525>

Sanger, D. (2021). «Biden Said the U.S. Would Protect Taiwan. But It's Not That Clear-Cut». *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/22/us/politics/biden-taiwan-defense-china.html>

Sanger, D. E. and Qin, A. (2022). As China Plans Drills Circling Taiwan, U.S. Officials Fear a Squeeze Play. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/08/03/us/politics/china-exercises-taiwan-fears.html>

Santarelli, M. (2022). Cina, attacchi cyber e disinformazione su Taiwan (e USA): prove tecniche di invasione. *Agenda Digitale*. Retrieved from: <https://www.agendadigitale.eu/sicurezza/cina-attacchi-cyber-e-disinformazione-su-taiwan-e-usa-prove-tecniche-di-invasione/>

Save the Children Italia (2022). Crisi Ucraina-Russia: tutto quello che c'è da sapere. Retrieved from: <https://www.savethechildren.it/blog-notizie/crisi-ucraina-russia-tutto-quello-che-c-e-da-sapere>

Sciarrone, R. (2022). Ma davvero l'obiettivo di Vladimir Putin è "ricostruire l'Unione Sovietica"? *Geopolitica.info*. Retrieved from: <https://www.geopolitica.info/obiettivo-putin-ricostruire-unione-sovietica/>

Scobell, A. (2022). China Is Not Russia. Taiwan Is Not Ukraine. *United States Institute of Peace*. Retrieved from: <https://www.usip.org/publications/2022/03/china-not-russia-taiwan-not-ukraine>

Scott W. y Mori, S. (2021). «A Taiwan Contingency and Japan's Counterstrike Debate», *The Diplomat*. Retrieved from: <https://thediplomat.com/2021/07/a-taiwan-contingency-and-japans-counterstrike-debate/>

Scott, A. (2019). Ucraina, il comico Zelens'kyj al ballottaggio con Porošenko. *Il Sole 24 ORE*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ilsole24ore.com/art/ucraina-comico-Zelens'kyj-ballottaggio-Porošenko--ABn0kejB>

Sengupta, K. (2022) «Nationalists not extremists: Pravy Sektor deny radicalism claims and say they want to "serve" Ukraine». *The Independent*. Retrieved from: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/ukraine-russia-pravy-sektor-extremism-b2011598.html>

Shankar, P. (2022). Months into the Ukraine war, has Germany's position changed? *Aljazeera*. Retrieved from: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/5/5/germanys-russia-policy-under-the-microscope-amid-war-in-ukraine>

Shchedrov, O. (2008). «Russia comes in from Cold, Medvedev says in Berlin». *Reuters*. Retrieved from: <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-russia-medvedev-security-idUSBAT00225020080605>

Shelbourne, M. (2021). «China Has World's Largest Navy with 355 Ships and Counting, Says Pentagon». *U. S. Naval Institute*. Retrieved from: <https://news.usni.org/2021/11/03/china-has-worlds-largest-navy-with-355-ships-and-counting-says-pentagon>

ShieldSquare (2022). Taiwan Defense Market Highlights. Retrieved from: <https://www.globaldata.com/data-insights/aerospace-and-defence/taiwan-defense-market-budget-assessment-and-drivers-2022/>

Siciliano, G. (2022). Scontri tra Russia e Ucraina, tutto nasce dall'Euromaidan. *MasterX*. Retrieved from: <https://masterx.iulm.it/news/esteri/guerra-in-ucraina/scontri-tra-russia-e-ucraina-tutto-nasce-dalleuromaidan/>

Sky TG24 (2022). Le sanzioni alla Russia funzionano? Gli effetti sull'economia finora. Retrieved from: <https://tg24.sky.it/economia/2022/04/14/sanzioni-russia-economia>

Solana, J. (2022). The World Order After the Ukraine War. *Project Syndicate*. Retrieved from: <https://www.project-syndicate.org/onpoint/world-order-after-the-ukraine-war-by-javier-solana-and-nina-l-khrushcheva-2022-08?barrier=accesspaylog>

Sputnik (2022). La UE adopta el noveno paquete de sanciones antirrusas. Retrieved from: <https://sputniknews.lat/20221216/la-ue-adopta-el-noveno-paquete-de-sanciones-antirrusas-1133633915.html>

Statista (2022). «Taiwan: Gross domestic product (GDP) in current prices from 1986 to 2026». Retrieved from: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/727589/gross-domestic-product-gdp-in-taiwan/>

Storbeck, O. and Sheppard, D. (2022). “Germany fires up coal plants to avert gas shortage as Russia cuts supply”, *Financial Times*, Retrieved from: <https://ceipaz.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/3.JoseAntonioSanahuja.pdf>

Stratfor (2012). Russia's Shifting Political Landscape, Part 2: Breakdown of the Kremlin Clans. Retrieved from: <https://worldview.stratfor.com/article/russias-shifting-political-landscape-part-2-breakdown-kremlin-clans>

Studio Legale Padovan (2022). 7° PACCHETTO SANZIONI UE: NUOVE RESTRIZIONI DI CARATTERE MERCEOLOGICO E SOGGETTIVO. Retrieved from: <https://studiopadovan.com/blog/2022/7-pacchetto-sanzioni-ue-nuove-restrizioni-di-carattere-merceologico-e-soggettivo/>

Suciu, P. (2022). The US military came up with its own ill-fated plan to invade Taiwan during World War II. *Business Insider*. Retrieved from: <https://www.businessinsider.com/us-had-plan-to-invade-and-capture-taiwan-during-wwii-2022-8?r=US&IR=T>

Sui, C. (2022). Will China Try to Take Taiwan in Xi's Third Term? *VOA*. Retrieved from: <https://www.voanews.com/a/will-china-try-to-take-taiwan-in-xi-s-third-term-/6801580.html>

Surwillo, I., & Slakaityte, V. Ukraine is closer than you think. *DIIS*. Retrieved from: <https://www.diis.dk/en/research/ukraine-is-closer-than-you-think>

SWI swissinfo.ch (2022). Pope criticises Russia over cruelty in Ukraine but says war perhaps provoked. Retrieved from: <https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/pope-criticises-russia-over-cruelty-in-ukraine-but-says-war-perhaps-provoked/47671806>

Swissinfo.ch. (2022). China impone nuevas sanciones a Taiwán sobre arena, cítricos, soja y pescado. Retrieved from: https://www.swissinfo.ch/spa/china-eeuu_china-impone-nuevas-sanciones-a-taiwán-sobre-arena--cítricos--soja-y-pescado/47799348

TASS (2022). Taiwan more important for preserving US' influence than Ukraine — political scientist. Retrieved from: <https://tass.com/world/1487669>

Tan, S.-L. (2022). U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi meets Taiwan's president despite China's warnings. *CNBC*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cnbc.com/2022/08/03/-us-house-speaker-nancy-pelosi-meets-taiwans-president.html>

TASS (2022). Kremlin on sanctions: What doesn't kill you makes you stronger. Retrieved from: <https://tass.com/politics/1481309>

Tentori, D. (2022). Come fare a meno della Russia. *ISPI*. Retrieved from: <https://www.ispionline.it/it/publicazione/come-fare-meno-della-russia-34882>

Terry, P. C. (2015). The Libya intervention (2011): neither lawful, nor successful. *The Comparative and International Law Journal of Southern Africa*, 48(2), 162–182. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/24585876>

The Economic Times (2022). Military reserves, civil defense worry Taiwan as China looms. Retrieved from: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/defence/military-reserves-civil-defense-worry-taiwan-as-china-looms/articleshow/93992268.cms>

The Economist (2020). Why commercial ties between Taiwan and China are beginning to fray. Retrieved from: <https://www.economist.com/business/2020/11/19/why-commercial-ties-between-taiwan-and-china-are-beginning-to-fray>

The Economist (2022). How rotten is the Russian army? The unsuccessful invasion of Ukraine becomes dangerous because it is weak. Retrieved from: <https://newsdirectory3.com/how-rotten-is-the-russian-army-the-unsuccessful-invasion-of-ukraine-becomes-dangerous-because-it-is-weak-1-5-jbpress/>

The Economist (2022). Italy is the latest victim of Ukraine-related divisions. Retrieved from: https://www.economist.com/europe/2022/06/23/italy-is-the-latest-victim-of-ukraine-related-divisions?utm_medium=cpc.adword.pd&utm_source=google&ppccampaignID=18151738051&utm_ppcadID=&utm_campaign=a.22brand_pmax&utm_content=conversion.direct-

response.anonymous&gclid=CjwKCAiAlp2fBhBPEiwA2Q10D7eMxs-
gWe7marVkosRULnehiHDz9pO8Ejk6CFCheC2pZSejiiCeMRoC4QcQAvD_BwE&gclsrc=aw.ds

The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica (2004). Iraq War. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/event/Iraq-War>

The Editors of Encyclopaedia Britannica (2018). Chinese Civil War | Summary, Causes, & Results. Retrieved from: <https://www.britannica.com/event/Chinese-Civil-War>

The Guardian (2022). «Russian tycoon Oleg Tinkov denounces “insane war” in Ukraine», *The Guardian*. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/apr/20/russian-tycoon-oleg-tinkov-denounces-insane-war-in-ukraine>

The National Bureau of Asian Research (2022). China’s Sanctions Strategy and Its Implications. Retrieved from: <https://www.nbr.org/publication/chinas-sanctions-strategy-and-its-implications/>

The White House (2022). G20 Bali Leaders’ Declaration. Retrieved from: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2022/11/16/g20-bali-leaders-declaration/>

The White House (2022). Indo-Pacific Strategy. Retrieved from: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/U.S.-Indo-Pacific-Strategy.pdf>

Timofeev, I. (2022). «Russia-West: Is it possible to lift the sanctions?». *Russian International Affairs Council*. Retrieved from: <https://russiancouncil.ru/en/analytics-and-comments/analytics/russia-west-is-it-possible-to-lift-the-sanctions/>

Tocci, N. (2022). Taiwan has learned a lot from the war in Ukraine — it’s time Europe caught up. *POLITICO*. Retrieved from: <https://www.politico.eu/article/taiwan-lesson-war-ukraine-russia-china-europe-catch-up/>

Tooze, A. (2022). “The second coming of Nato. The alliance has been revived – but it can’t save the West”, *The New Statesman*. Retrieved from: <https://www.newstatesman.com/international-politics/geopolitics/2022/06/nato-summit-the-second-coming>

Torrico, E. and Piantadosi, G. (2022). «Novorrosiya: el sueño zarista detrás de la guerra de Putin», *El Confidencial*. Retrieved from: https://www.elconfidencial.com/mundo/europa/2022-04-02/rusia-putin-novorossiya-guerra-ucrania-donbass_3401511/

- Treisman , R. (2022). Putin's claim of fighting against Ukraine 'neo-Nazis' distorts history, scholars say. *NPR*. Retrieved from: <https://www.npr.org/2022/03/01/1083677765/putin-denazify-ukraine-russia-history>
- Trenin, Dmitri (2021). «Russian Foreign Policy: Shifting gears». *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*. Retrieved from: <https://carnegiemoscow.org/commentary/85827>
- Trofimov, Y. (2022). Ukraine Fears Defeat in East Without Surge in Military Aid. *Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/ukraine-fears-defeat-in-east-without-surge-in-military-aid-11655092861>
- U.S.- CHINA: ECONOMIC and SECURITY REVIEW COMMISSION (2022)* .China’s Position on Russia’s Invasion of Ukraine. Retrieved from: <https://www.uscc.gov/research/chinas-position-russias-invasion-ukraine>
- UKRINFORM (2022)*. «Ukraine must use every opportunity to negotiate with Russia until war ends». Retrieved from: <https://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-ato/3465782-president-ukraine-must-use-every-opportunity-to-negotiate-with-russia-until-war-ends.html>
- UKRINFORM (2022)*. «Ukraine’s independence, territorial integrity, sovereignty non-negotiable. Retrieved from: <https://www.ukrinform.net/rubric-politics/3466241-yermak-ukraines-independence-territorial-integrity- sovereignty-nonnegotiable.html>
- United States Department of State (2023)*. The Impact of Sanctions and Export Controls on the Russian Federation. Retrieved from: <https://www.state.gov/the-impact-of-sanctions-and-export-controls-on-the-russian-federation/>
- United States Department of States*. New START Treaty. Retrieved from <https://www.state.gov/new-start/>
- Valigia Blu (2022)*. Lezioni di Storia / Ucraina, un paese prigioniero del proprio passato? Retrieved from: <https://www.valigiablu.it/lezioni-di-storia-ucraina/>
- Verón, N. and Chag, F. (2022). Why did China build its Cross-Border Interbank Payment System and what does it mean for the dollar? *Peterson Institute for international economics*. Retrieved from: <https://www.piie.com/events/why-did-china-build-its-cross-border-interbank-payment-system-and-what-does-it-mean-dollar>

Verón, N. and. Kirschenbaum J. (2022). Now is not the time to confiscate Russia's central bank reserves. *Bruegel*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bruegel.org/blog-post/now-not-time-confiscate-russias-central-bank-reserves>

Vocal Europe (2015). Is Ukraine a failed Nation-State? Retrieved from: <https://www.vocaleurope.eu/is-ukraine-a-failed-nation-state/>

Walker, S. (2022). Enemy tongue: eastern Ukrainians reject their Russian birth language. *The Guardian*. Retrieved from: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jun/04/enemy-tongue-eastern-ukrainians-reject-their-russian-birth-language>

Wall, R. (2022). «Zelensky fires two Generals for being “traitors”», *The Wall Street Journal*. Retrieved from: <https://www.wsj.com/livecoverage/russia-ukraine-latest-news-2022-04-01/card/president-zelensky-fires-two-generals-cASwBg7pfy4FKlh2f25t>

Walton, A. (2021). L'ultima parola | La guerra culturale di Kiev per far parlare l'ucraino ai suoi cittadini. *Linkiesta.it*. Retrieved from: <https://www.linkiesta.it/2021/06/ucraina-russo-lingua/>

Wang, Y.-H. (2022). 'Old Witch', 'Pelosi get out of Taiwan!': Public billboards hacked on US Speaker's visit. *The Observers*. Retrieved from: <https://observers.france24.com/en/asia-pacific/20220803-old-witch-pelosi-get-out-of-taiwan-public-billboards-hacked-as-us-speaker-visits>

White and Case (2022). EU's 7th Package of Russia sanctions targets gold, Sberbank and fine-tunes existing sanctions. Retrieved from: <https://www.whitecase.com/insight-alert/eus-7th-package-russia-sanctions-targets-gold-sberbank-and-fine-tunes-existing>

Wilks, A. (2022). As Russia's war in Ukraine drags on, Turkey's role expands. *Al Jazeera*. Retrieved from: <https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2022/11/15/how-turkey-positions-itself-during-the-war-in-ukraine>

Willasey-Wilsey, T. (2022). US Policy on Taiwan and the Perils of 'Strategic Ambiguity'. *Royal United Services Institute*. Retrieved from: <https://rusi.org/explore-our-research/publications/commentary/us-policy-taiwan-and-perils-strategic-ambiguity>

Wilson Center. The Role of Ultra-Nationalism in Conflict and Crisis: Russia, Ukraine and the EU. Retrieved from: <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/event/the-role-ultra-nationalism-conflict-and-crisis-russia-ukraine-and-the-eu>

Wilson Center. The Map of Political Forces in Today's Ukraine. Retrieved from: <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/map-political-forces-todays-ukraine>

Wingfield-Hayes, R. (2022). Defiant Taiwan's identity is moving away from China. *BBC News*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-63196482>

Williams, L. (2022). Why Taiwan matters to China (and the rest of the world). *Investment Monitor*. Retrieved from: <https://www.investmentmonitor.ai/special-focus/ukraine-crisis/taiwan-matters-china-semiconductors-russia/>

Wolczuk, K. (2001). *The moulding of Ukraine: The constitutional politics of state formation*. Central European University Press.

Wolczuk, K. (2022). Russia's longstanding problem with Ukraine's borders. *International Affairs Think Tank*. Retrieved from: <https://www.chathamhouse.org/2022/08/russias-longstanding-problem-ukraines-borders>

Wong, E. and Barnes J.E. (2022). Russia Asked China for Military and Economic Aid for Ukraine War, U.S. Officials Say. *New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/03/13/us/politics/russia-china-ukraine.html>

Wong, E., & Swanson, A. (2022). U.S. Aims to Constrain China by Shaping Its Environment, Blinken Says. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/26/us/politics/china-policy-biden.html>

Wong, T., & Fraser, S. (2022). Putin-Xi talks: Russian leader reveals China's 'concern' over Ukraine. *BBC News*. Retrieved from: <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-62912892>

Wu, D. (2022). «The KMT's Defense Policy: Toward a Symmetric Posture», *The Diplomat*. Retrieved from: <https://thediplomat.com/2022/04/the-kmts-defense-policy-toward-a-symmetric-posture/>

Xinhua (2022). The Taiwan Question and China's Reunification in the New Era. Retrieved from: <https://english.news.cn/20220810/df9d3b8702154b34bbf1d451b99bf64a/c.html>

Z. Paikin and D. Gros (2022). ¿La guerra en Ucrania fortalecerá a la Unión Europea? *Política Exterior*. Retrieved from: <https://www.politicaexterior.com/la-guerra-de-putin-en-ucrania-hara-mas-fuerte-a-la-ue/>

Zelikow, P. and Blackwill, R. (2021). *The United States, China, and Taiwan: A Strategy to Prevent War*. *Council on Foreign Relations*. Retrieved from: <https://www.cfr.org/report/united-states-china-and-taiwan-strategy-prevent-war>

Zhang, T. (2022). China Is Not Russia; Taiwan Is Not Ukraine. *The Diplomat*. Retrieved from: <https://thediplomat.com/2022/07/china-is-not-russia-taiwan-is-not-ukraine/>

Zhang, Y. (2022). The Puzzling Silence of the Global South on Russian aggression against Ukraine. Retrieved from: <https://www.scripts-berlin.eu/publications/blog/Blog-62-Zhang-Puzzling-Silence/index.html>

Мировое обозрение (2022). Командир Азова в Мариуполе УМОЛЯЕТ о помощи - кончилась даже еда! Последние сводки из Мариупольского котла 10 апреля. Retrieved from: <https://tehnnowar.ru/350331-Komandir-Azova-v-Mariupole-UMOLYaET-o-pomoschi-konchilasy-daghe-eda-Poslednie-svodki-iz-Mariupolyskogo-kotla-10-aprelya-15-video2022.html>

Сурган, О. (2022). The 5 reasons why the "referendum" in Crimea is illegal. *Суспільне Крим*. Retrieved from: <https://crimea.suspilne.media/en/articles/45>