

The IMTe™ Reports

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A Turning Tide The End of Modern History

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A Turning Tide

The End of Modern History

When states are organized as a whole ever more rationally, then there remains less and less room for legitimate human desires. The general crushes the personal. To detach oneself from this dependence would be to overcome the shortcomings of this material world... The lightning-speed digital transformation of much of our world today is not limited to the modification of working conditions but extends to every type of social activity and expression. Man, the image of the Divine, becomes a potential risk for the transmission of disease, resulting in attempts to permanently distance the individual from his fellowman. Population growth control, questionable medical practices, the cancellation of national history, religion, culture and tradition, environmental doomsday scenarios, a new nuclear arms race, the specter of regional wars or even WWIII, are all worrisome trends in a world gone astray. A catastrophic disintegration of an already divided and fragmented world is a process in motion ... and then, notwithstanding all the above, Divine light shines through the darkness and new hope is born ... the unconventional and the outcast become the potential hope for a new world arising ...

Environmental Change

Since the 1960s, our entire solar system has entered an area of interstellar space in which profound imbalances and highly charged plasma prevail, causing disorganization of energy systems primarily of the sun, but also of all the planets orbiting the sun, with dramatic consequences for climate and living conditions on Earth. Scientific studies indicate that these transformations are caused by highly charged material and by energy inhomogeneity in the anisotropic interstellar space, into which the particular region of our solar system has entered. On earth, the results are observable in the acceleration of magnetic pole displacement, in anomalies in the distribution of ozone content in the atmosphere, and in the increased frequency and magnitude of catastrophic events. About 42,000 years ago the reversal of Earth's magnetic poles, together with a temporary breakdown of the world's magnetic field, may have triggered a tide of environmental changes, solar storms, and the destruction of the biosphere including the annihilation of the Neanderthals. A pole reversal is not a sudden flip but a slow process, during which the field strength becomes weak while probably also becoming more complex and possibly allowing for more than two poles for a while: it then regains strength to align in the opposite direction. While the polar shift materializes, the Earth will have no magnetic field for a period of about 200 years. During this time frame, Earth will be deprived of its ability to shield its atmosphere from direct exposure to dangerous solar radiation, which will additionally induce widespread disruption of power and communication grids.

Earth's climate and biosphere are directly affected by and interconnected with the overall transformation processes that take place in our solar system. Now, before our eyes, a global reorganization of the physical properties of Earth is taking place with intense pressure on the geophysical environment of our planet, creating new natural processes. Planet Earth is in a process of dramatic transformation due to a change in its electromagnetic field, the displacement of the geomagnetic poles, and the change in the composition of the ozone, hydrogen, and its surrounding gas-plasma shell. These changes are accompanied by climatic/atmospheric and biosphere adaptation processes. Thus, it is cosmic processes which are principally to blame for the exponentially increasing natural disasters on our planet, while the intensity and effect of human-induced damage to the environment is negligible by comparison with the former phenomena.

Present-day humanity has possessed for over one and a half centuries a fossil-fuel based civilization whose technical and scientific advances, quality of life, and prosperity rest on the combustion of huge quantities of fossil fuels, and we cannot simply walk away from this critical determinant in just a few years. Despite the increasing push of the past five decades *to go green*, Germany, as an example of an economically highly advanced state, has managed in the last two decades to boost its shares of renewables (mainly wind and solar) in electricity generation to about 46 percent - and yet could barely make a dent in its fossil fuel share of primary energy use, which declined from 84 percent merely to 78 percent. It seems to us a totally unrealistic target set by politicians supported by *green politics/media* for the US, Europe or any other group of nations, to be expected to go (net) zero in harmful industrial emissions and to entirely switch to *green energy* within an approximate targeted period of 10 years. What, by contrast, is absolutely feasible technologically is to integrate clean renewable energy with the continuous use of fossil fuels with such technologically advanced filtering techniques as to optimize harmful emissions to a minimal level.

For more than four decades, *the environmentalist movement* has been warning the world that global warming is the result of mankind's burning of fossil fuels, posing an existential threat to humans and to the earth's biosphere. This is one of the many lies *global leftist-oriented politics* use to reshape, if not destroy, Western civilization. Hence, thanks to the environmentalist movement, America is once again dependent on foreign oil, while Europe remains dependent on Russian oil. Germany has gone so far as to shut down its technologically highly advanced nuclear reactors and is now almost totally dependent on Russian energy.

Economics

The 10 richest men in the world have seen their wealth double during the Covid-19 pandemic, with their collective wealth growing from USD 700 billion to USD 1.5 trillion between March 2020 and November 2021, while at the same time the number of people in poverty has increased dramatically. Incomes of 99 percent of the world's population have declined considerably since March 2020. Lockdowns cost many businesses substantial losses, many of them having been forced to close. One hundred and sixty million people were pushed into poverty. With people spending more time at home, online shopping exploded. As a result, the world's largest companies in all areas of electronic services, communications, social media, and entertainment have raked in profits surpassing levels they have ever experienced before. What we have witnessed is the greatest transfer of wealth in history from the middle-income group to the new elite power centers, a historic wealth-transfer out of the hands of the middle class and into those high-tech companies deeply enmeshed in politics. During the Covid pandemic an unprecedentedly and dangerously tight relationship between government and big business has been firmly established.

Beijing is closer to mass adoption of its digital currency than the EU and the US, with unique technological advantages, a huge population, and a highly centralized autocratic regime. The e-yuan already has more than 250 million users. Just like cryptocurrencies, digital currencies will incorporate digital certificates, electronic signatures, and encrypted storage systems, while offering increased security.

In January 2022, Beijing added nearly a trillion US dollars in total new credit, a record increase. China needs a vibrant economy to service its growing debts. When *hidden debt* is included, total debt in the country amounts to somewhere in the vicinity of 350% of gross domestic product. Not surprisingly, Chinese companies are increasingly defaulting. Sadly, war has always been a way out of economic problems.

The Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications (SWIFT) system supports most interbank messages and connects over 11,000 financial institutions in more than 200 countries. SWIFT has its base in Belgium, is overseen by the G10 central banks, and is exerting immense control over banks and regulators around the world. SWIFT, along with the US dollar as the world's reserve currency, enables the US and its allies to impose particularly effective sanctions on countries regarding currency circulation. With Russia partially ejected from SWIFT, global interest is growing in China's Cross-Border Inter-Bank Payments System (CIPS), its version of SWIFT. The value of SWIFT depends on the number of banks that use it globally. A fragmentation of the international payments system will in the longer run undermine the USD's position as the global reserve currency.

In a remarkable show of unity, Western nations have set aside all concerns about Russian energy export dominance and unilaterally announced the bombshell option of banning transactions with the Russian central bank. Although European unity is certainly inspiring, it nevertheless does not answer the question of how the European continent intends in an escalating war situation or other Russian countermeasures to replace the massive amount of energy that daily flows through the giant Russian pipeline network into Europe. Meanwhile, President Biden surprised the EastMed pipeline partners and staunch US allies, namely, Cyprus, Israel, and Greece, by another superficially thought-out decision to abruptly withdraw US support for the South-East Mediterranean pipeline project on January 9th, 2022, in order to appease President Erdoğan. He thereby effectively killed this mega energy project, preventing a diversified (non-Russian) supply of energy to Europe, while further increasing Europe's dependence on Russian oil and gas.

With Russia losing access to its foreign currency reserves, a dangerous message has been sent to all countries round the world, namely, that *they cannot count on their reserves actually being their own* in the event of high global tensions. Hence, it might make less sense for global reserve managers to hold the USD for safety, as liquid assets could be taken away from them precisely when they are most needed. The ongoing Ukrainian conflict signals the start of a new monetary order. The recent weaponization of *the global reserve currency framework* against a G20 economy may undermine the USD's dominance as the global reserve currency. China in cooperation with Russia, the latter holding huge reserves in gold, could be taking other nations away from America's hegemony into a new monetary system. If China decided to invade Taiwan, it would, prior to such an assault, decouple itself from any overwhelming need for the USD. Recent unprecedented economic sanctions against Russia may mark a true turning point in the world's monetary history. Powerful blocs of nations, e.g., a European or Asian power bloc, could likewise use *the currency weapon* against their rivals or against the US in the future.

US and European oil companies are leaving Russia and Russia will be more than happy to acquire billions of USD of their assets. Although Russia may not be able to access USD 600 billion in foreign assets, the very same nations imposing these sanctions are paying Russia about USD 1 billion a day or more for natural gas and oil, unveiling the flaw in current measures meant to penalize President Putin. The global energy supply is so interconnected with Russia it is impossible to destroy the Russian economy without seriously harming Western economies. Shutting Russian gas off would create painful economic fallout for European countries, which are already struggling with the specter of high inflation. The total amount of cash Europe paid Russia in 2020 for mineral imports amounted to about USD 65 billion, which slightly exceeds the Russian military budget for that year. The US imported 245 million barrels of crude oil and petroleum products from Russia in 2021, which was about an 80 percent increase from four years ago. Gazprom continues to supply Russian gas to Europe through Ukrainian territory as per normal - about

110.0 million cubic meters (March 2nd, 2022), a volume slightly higher than usual. The currently unfolding crisis represents a geoeconomic and geopolitical quantum leap, with long-term implications. The war in Ukraine could trigger a massive negative supply shock in a global economy that is still trying to recover from the Covid-19 pandemic and will allow for the build-up of a long-lasting inflationary environment.

Western sanctions may in the long run achieve little in changing President Putin's course in his geostrategic objectives and, in fact, could even help him drive his agenda further. The more resources a country has and the larger its domestic market, the better it can cope with sanctions. Russia benefits from its huge energy reserves: it is the world's largest producer of natural gas and third in terms of oil. It is also a leader in wheat exports. An oil price of about USD 45 was enough for the state to achieve a balanced budget. Massive Ukrainian war expenditures have certainly pushed this threshold to a far higher level though still allowing for a huge margin of safety. Russia can survive, and under certain conditions even thrive, away from the West: it has ample resources to do so in the long run. War and sanctions will allow Putin to sever the links with Western economies further while solidifying his new alliances, these being mainly in the East, in the Middle East, Africa, and selectively in Latin America. They will also allow him to impose emergency laws at home, purge the opposition, and exert further control on information flow. The Russian media are at present portraying the military operation as a response to Ukrainian and Western aggression. In his quest to increase Russia's sphere of influence, Putin will demand from Russians to stand united behind him and they will probably hearken to the call. Already a large number of renowned individuals are pledging allegiance to Putin's military operation in Ukraine, persons in the media, business, military, and academia. The power-image Putin portrays to the world is one of a determined leader prepared to suffer painful consequences to reach his long-term goal. Apart from his quest for an *Imperial Russia* with a dominant role in Eurasia, Putin is also counting on his image as a leader who can endure sacrifices for his country in the long run and ensure a positive legacy in his nation's history books. His ideological stance focuses on national identity, religion, history, tradition, and family, all issues rejected in the nihilistic leftist inspired *cancel culture* tidal wave currently sweeping much of the Western world, representing yet another rift on the ideological/civilizational level between Russia and the West.

The global economy is becoming more fractured than ever as a great and dangerous power struggle between the West and East unfolds. Thanks to disastrous foreign policy choices made by the US, Arab nations are increasingly leaning towards China and the Asian bloc. Saudi Arabia has recently started discussions with China about pricing the former's oil sales to China in yuan, another strong indication of a shift by the world's leading crude exporter towards Asia. Beijing on its side has been offering lucrative deals to the Saudi Kingdom, from high tech military technology to nuclear energy, participation in the massive futuristic city named Neom, etc., etc. China purchases more than 25% of the oil that Saudi Arabia exports, and if those sales should be priced in yuan, they would further boost the standing of China's currency worldwide.

Global paradigm shifts are taking their relentless course, economic growth is slowing, and geopolitical/geostrategic fundamentals are becoming the main determinants of any investment decision. A number of potential risks but also opportunities present themselves in the current volatile situation. Fear is now driving markets, which may signal opportunities in selected asset classes. Tangible assets such as commodities, minerals, gold/silver, agricultural products and fertilizers, and rare earth minerals may in this environment not only present an interesting investment option (e.g., a basket representing those asset classes), but

also act as a proxy hedge in a prolonged present or future war situation. Major defense-related companies on both sides of the Atlantic will undoubtedly benefit from the current circumstances, while the US revamps and modernizes its military arsenal, and Germany, together with a core European group of allied nations, will massively upgrade their defense spending to build themselves up as a new world class military power. German energy policy for the past 20 years has been blatantly proven wrong: this will have implications for a reformulated German economic/industrial policy, but also presents excellent opportunities in smart capital allocation strategies in Europe's largest economy. The global energy sector, including oil & gas plus oil service companies, neglected and outcast coal and lignite as energy sources, alternative, renewable, and nuclear energy, all represent sectors of the world economy which offer ample opportunities for investments. Following the permanent end of hostilities in Ukraine, a strong economic recovery will begin in major world economies. We will, nevertheless, continue repeating that due a highly unstable environment worldwide, *hedging for precious capital protection against catastrophic loss* – directly, indirectly, or in a proxy manner - remains an ongoing must during this entire decade!

Power Politics and Turning Points

President Biden and European allies could have averted the Russian military operation in Ukraine by reassuring President Putin that Ukraine would never be admitted to NATO, plus satisfying a few other demands of his related to Russia's national security and standing firmly on those positions. For the past two centuries, the US government has, under the Monroe Doctrine, claimed the Western Hemisphere as its own *sphere of influence*, excluding other countries from any intrusion in this vast geographical domain: any such move would be treated as an act of aggression. From a Russian (i.e., with regard to Ukraine) or Chinese (i.e., with regard to Taiwan) point of view, the US is obligated to honor the same geostrategic perspective exactly in the same way as it applies it in its own backyard. Ukraine potentially becoming a member of NATO would have put the US directly on the doorstep of Russia, undermining its national security interests. By stating that it could under specific preconditions accept Ukraine for EU membership, the European Commission has further provoked Russia. It thus seems apparent that the US and the EU had, most likely, no intention of preventing an outbreak of war in Ukraine. Meanwhile, those who particularly benefit from this tragic conflict are predominantly the US and European military establishments, ready to rearm the world.

Russia has solidified its control over Belarus and has increased its economic cooperation to help Belarus overcome Western sanctions. The two countries have enhanced their cooperation through their Union State alliance in all aspects, including fiscal and defence policies, in effect making Belarus totally dependent on Russia. Economically, Belarus depends on Russia for trade, particularly in oil, oil refining, and foreign direct investment. Joint military exercises are held regularly. Belarus is playing an indispensable role in Russia's overall strategy to gain control over Ukraine. Russia has its own financial network, the SPFS, in which nearly all Belarusian banks were incorporated in 2021. Russia will now inevitably lean more heavily on the Eurasian Economic Union, of which Belarus is the third largest member. The new Belarusian constitution enables President Lukashenko to remain in power until 2035, while the Belarusian government is made up of President Lukashenko's loyalists. Within this framework, Russian troops, military equipment, and nuclear weapons can be permanently stationed in the country.

To fully understand President Putin's strategy, a totally different perspective is worth considering, namely, the spiritual standpoint, entirely overlooked, possibly not even understood, by Western strategic planning centers. Putin is an

unconventional leader representing a total antithesis to the prevailing trends in societies worldwide. He has another way of seeing the world, namely, through a nation's history, values, beliefs, and traditions. For President Putin, the Russian military operation in Ukraine, apart from its national security, geostrategic, and geopolitical aspects, is in addition a highly important spiritual quest. In the year 988, Prince Vladimir (Saint Vladimir) of Novgorod, Grand Prince of Kiev, and ruler of Kievan Rus' (980 to 1015) summoned the whole city to the banks of the Dnieper River for a mass baptism. This is the founding act of Russian Orthodox Christianity. It was from here that Orthodox Christianity would spread out and merge with Russian aspirations and a dedication to and love of the motherland, to create a powerful fusion of spirituality and nationalism. The Baptism of Rus is the founding event of the formation of the Russian religious psyche: this is why Kyiv is ultimately so important in President Putin's personal quest. Nationalism and spirituality are two pillars on which rests Putin's personal vision for Russia and for the wider geographical areas influenced by Russia. Since he became President, Putin has portrayed himself as the upholder of Orthodox Christianity throughout the world, the leader of *the Third Rome*. In its spiritual quest, the Patriarchate of Moscow and all Russia is at variance with the Greek Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople, the Great Church of Christ, the ecumenical head of Christian Orthodoxy. Following the signing of a peace treaty in Ukraine, President Putin may well oversee the Ukrainian Orthodox Church's return to the jurisdiction of the Moscow Patriarchate and the reestablishment of the former leadership of the Ukrainian Church.

March 1st was a momentous day in world history with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz announcing the massive militarization of Germany, supported enthusiastically by all political parties. We have extensively commented in our past essays on this long-anticipated watershed event in European and world history. By 2024, Germany should be spending about 2% plus of its economic output on growing its military capacity. At that level, Germany will be spending more on its military than Russia. Poland is another country strongly rearming itself, planning to spend 3% of its GDP in 2023 on military expenditures. It will soon have one of the strongest armies in Europe. Countries all over Europe are already on a course to increase their military budgets significantly. Today, Europe possesses an already well-trained armed corps (though highly fragmented and under no central command) and an ultra-high-tech military industry, while it has become an important space power, its ventures into space expected to also grow exponentially. Its nuclear arms capacity will also develop dramatically as Germany will likely join the nuclear arms club. This marks the end of German pacifism. Europe's massive militarization will change the balance of power in the world.

The Ukraine war and the earth-shattering events that will follow are due to reshape European politics and the fate of the European continent for the near- and long-term future. Europe is on track to become a major global nuclearly armed power, which will have major consequences for the balance of power worldwide. Only the outlines of its role within the wider Eurasian continent are at present discernible. Although for the time being US power centers, using the Ukrainian war as catalyst, have achieved their goal – part of a historic doctrine - of always keeping Europe and Russia divided, it is our view that this is not the end of efforts for a European-Russian relationship. Core European nations are rallying around Germany, while Belarus and Ukraine will stay under Russian control. The shaping of the Eurasian continent dictated by sheer geopolitical and geoeconomic power will continue to dynamically evolve and will ultimately prevail over short-term policies or crises. The Ukraine crisis does not constitute an isolated phenomenon of merely Russian aggression or of Western impotence or of foreign policy malpractice. It is the first world-shaking earthquake in our modern era marking the shift and collision of the globe's sociocultural, economic, geostrategic, and geopolitical tectonic plates, which will ultimately culminate in a new world order.

The potential use by Russia of a short-range tactical nuclear weapon in the Ukraine conflict is in our view small, but nevertheless worth mentioning. While the US in its geostrategic dogma believes nuclear weapons should never or rarely be used, Russia incorporates nuclear weapons in its warfighting doctrine and has over 2000 low-yield, non-strategic battlefield nuclear weapons versus 200 in the US arsenal. One hundred of these US weapons are deployed in Europe and, clearly, are no match for Russia's massive tactical nuclear offensive capacity. Both the US and Russia possess a nuclear triad (i.e., air/land/sea launching platforms) capable of striking 100% of each other's territory in a full-blown thermonuclear exchange. Russia has already modernized about 90% of its nuclear forces, while the US still relies on systems built during the Cold War. Russia seems to have a military advantage over the US in the latest hypersonic weapons. Such weapons can ensure a relative advantage, in particular against geographical areas/targets protected by layered air and anti-missile defense systems. The Avangard hypersonic missile is said to be designed using new composite materials to withstand temperatures of up to 2,000⁰ Celsius (3,632⁰ Fahrenheit) resulting from flight through the atmosphere at speeds 27 times faster than the speed of sound, carrying a nuclear weapon of up to 2 megatons. This is a turning point for the US, which needs to catch up in its ultra-high technology military arsenal and especially the modernization of its nuclear forces if it is to successfully address two geostrategic challenges simultaneously: (a) ensure it can effectively match Russia in its nuclear military capacities and effectively repel any major acts of aggression on its side and (b) confront an increasingly nuclear-capable China arming itself on all levels at an exponential growth rate. It is a daunting dual task for the US, but America has proven in the past that once it mobilizes its vast capacities in innovation and production, it has enormous human, intellectual, and material reserves to achieve its aims, no matter how difficult they may be.

Objectively looking at the West's sanctions, Germany has aligned itself with the US and NATO only to the extent that it could show solidarity with its Western partners. We seriously question if it truly supports a firm anti-Russian and pro-Ukrainian stance and whether its long-term affinity with Russia has really changed. In fact, we believe it has not. The US and the UK have pledged to cease buying oil and gas from Russia, while Germany and Europe have not. EU leaders met in Brussels on March 10th-11th in which meeting Germany leading the EU rejected an oil and gas boycott. Moreover, critical weapons that Germany promised to send to Ukraine have largely been outdated military hardware. The truth is that Europe is applauding the Ukrainians for their resistance from a safe distance, making some token gestures in the dispatch of military hardware and aid for the Ukrainian resistance, while watching events from warm living rooms, heated by Russian gas.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has revealed the extent of the deterioration in US relationships with the Arab league, most importantly the major Middle Eastern players Saudi Arabia and the UAE, who have been unwilling to make any major moves to cover supply shortages in US oil and gas. Declarations have been issued by Arab league nations underscoring the importance of Russia defending its national security interests. In addition, Arab countries have communicated clear messages directed at the Biden administration plus other Western powers who are participating in the Vienna negotiations, indicating that Iran and its militias continue to create chaos and instability throughout the Middle East, especially in Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Yemen. Arab countries and Israel are particularly worried that when Iran acquires nuclear weapons, such weapons could find their way into the hands of its militant proxies. Vis-à-vis Iran, Israel and most Arab nations increasingly follow the same line of strategic thinking. Alliances between China and the Arab world are also growing stronger, e.g., for China, the UAE becomes a gateway to expanding its economic activities in the Middle East and North Africa.

The visit paid by Imran Khan, Prime Minister of Pakistan, on February 24th to Moscow bears strategic significance, taking place as it did while the massive Western bloc was forming against Russia and its military operations in Ukraine. It only accentuates the stark division of the world into two opposing blocs: on the one side, the East including most of Central Asia aligning itself with China and Russia, plus India; and on the other side, the West with the US and the Anglo-Saxon world, as well as the central European core of nations. The Middle East is increasingly leaning towards the East, while Israel will keep a neutral position balancing its relationships with both camps and focusing on its strategic rivalry with Iran and its proxies, another situation which could well lead to the outbreak of a major new war.

The Ukrainian Conflict: Principles & Strategies

An outline follows of a number of important points regarding what actually defines the military conflict in Ukraine and its short- and long-term implications for Russia, the East, and the West:

1. The fundamentals for and key parameters, tangible and intangible, behind Russia's advance into Ukraine rest almost entirely on President Putin's highly unusual personality and mindset, which upholds the following goals and aspirations: (a) Russia's national security doctrine of *strategic depth* securing its borders westwards, i.e., towards Europe; (b) Putin's vision for the rebuilding of an imperial Russia as a leading force in the Eurasian continent; (c) his belief in the common historical destiny of Eurasian peoples, with values totally different than those of the West; (d) his confidence in the inherent spiritual force of the Russian people, in Russia's genuine multi-ethnicity, and the importance of the centrality of state power; and (e) his belief that Russia has not reached its peak and must continue evolving as a great nation.
2. The US is still the dominant global superpower in terms of military and economic might. The US dollar, in which still 80% plus of all trade takes place, is an effective weapon in times of crisis and war. Thus, the US has decided, instead of entering into an armed conflict with Russia, to use its USD weapon to subdue Russia and end the Ukrainian crisis.
3. The US and the West could easily have avoided the present war situation by simply conceding to the legitimate Russian demands, the most important being a totally neutral Ukraine as well as security demands for Russian minorities in the country. Spheres of influence are geostrategically legitimate: they rest on history and must be respected, as this concerns all major powers within a global context (not merely the US) along with, in a regional context, smaller nations. Hence, the notion conveyed by the global media that the war in Ukraine is entirely a Russian act of unprecedented aggression is deeply flawed: Russia has been forced into the present situation, while the West has done nothing to avert the ongoing conflict.
4. With their strategy of wide-ranging but inept economic sanctions, the US and European allies are underestimating the extent to which Russian citizens can endure hardship and pain while overestimating the ability of the rich Western societies to withstand a long-lasting crisis in food and energy supplies and a degradation of standards of overall wellbeing.
5. US and European sanctions may hurt Russia, but they are not likely to bankrupt a nation so very rich in energy and natural resources, especially if the Russian-Chinese axis holds. A Russian/Chinese versus a US/NATO front is already developing into an East versus West confrontation. Other regions of the world will take their positions within the one or the other camp.
6. Ukraine, once under Russian control, will be an exponential multiplier for Russia in terms of its natural resources, especially foodstuffs/grains. It can in effect

- turn Russia from a large energy rich and militarily powerful nation into an empire, also taking into account the recently formalized Belarus Union State relationship with Russia, formed as a model to include other nations under Russia's sphere of influence in the future.
7. The US will fight with all available means so as not to allow Ukraine to fall under Russian control. We think it will not succeed in this effort, unless WWIII is unleashed with totally unpredictable catastrophic consequences for the entire world.
 8. In terms of US strategic goals, the US has successfully resurrected a formidable Western economic alliance against Russia. It has temporarily managed to distance Europe from a rapprochement with Russia and has therefore for now succeeded in its strategic doctrine of never allowing a European-Russian axis to develop into a vast Eurasian continent stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific Oceans, thereby threatening the US's hegemonial status. The political/military/industrial and intellectual power centers in the US still believe that America's leading superpower status can and should be maintained indefinitely – if necessary, even by force. We think that this line of thinking is unrealistic and long since passé.
 9. Implications of the conflict on the geostrategic, geopolitical, and geoeconomic landscape are as follows:
 - a) The unification of Europe under the US/NATO umbrella is *temporary and misleading*. We already see the birth of a highly militarized core European alliance under German leadership, which coalition will shake the world power order in the coming years. We are witnessing the birth of Europe as a new global power.
 - b) Germany has only seemingly supported sanctions against Russia. Although not visible at first sight, nevertheless, the German-Russian axis will hold in the long run. The Nord Stream 2 project is in our view not a defunct undertaking but one that will be resurrected at an opportune time.
 - c) China has surely no interest in seeing Russia collapse and being subdued by US power because that would severely compromise its own position. China is on a highly competitive course for acquisition of global leadership or co-leadership with the US. If Russia crumbles, China will find itself in a weakened position in its rivalry with America, especially in the West Pacific and China Sea. In our view, China will support Putin until the end.
 - d) Long-standing relations between Russia and Turkey will deteriorate as Turkey has considerably assisted Ukrainian resistance forces, supplying them with a substantial number of their cheap but highly effective Bayraktar drones, thus inflicting serious damage on Russian military forces.
 - e) The strategic question of maintaining connections between Kaliningrad and the rest of Russia has become more important than ever before. Kaliningrad is the largest city in the westernmost oblast of Russia, an exclave located 200 miles away from the border of Russia proper and Russia's only ice-free port on the Baltic Sea. It is the headquarters of the Baltic Fleet of the Russian Navy and has about 25,000 Russian troops plus artillery including advanced nuclear-capable Iskander missiles, which can reach the heart of Europe. In any future war scenario, the West could blockade Kaliningrad by sea or try to seize this heavily fortified Russian outpost. Such an act of war would be met by a heavy military response by Russia and would trigger a forcible takeover by Moscow of the 60-mile *Suwałki Gap* between Belarus and Kaliningrad. Russia's current preventive moves to fortify Kaliningrad show that the Kremlin is preparing for a far longer and deeper conflict with the West than many strategists now assume.
 - f) Following the end of the war, China could be given the incentive to rebuild heavily damaged Ukrainian infrastructure, with war-related losses ranging

- anywhere between USD 20 and 100 billion. Ukraine will become part of China's massive Belt and Road Eurasian corridor.
- g) The US cannot maintain by economic or military force a unipolar US world: our world will de facto become or has already become multipolar, dictated by the tidal geoeconomic, geopolitical, and geostrategic waves sweeping the globe, on track towards the emergence of a new world order. Any opposition to such trends will either (i) accelerate and reinforce such evolutionary forces, or, in a worst-case scenario, (ii) destroy the entire world in a nuclear holocaust.
10. The Russian special military operations within Ukraine will, sooner or later, end, and we wager sooner rather than later. Russia will have achieved to the maximum extent its geostrategic objectives related to this military operation. These objectives have never been to occupy all of Ukraine but to strategically control Ukraine as well as to permanently occupy vital geographical areas of the country mainly in the southeast along the shores of the Black Sea and the Sea of Azov (from the Crimean peninsula to Moldova), as well as all of the northeast from the northern tip of the Sea of Azov all the way along the Ukrainian-Russian borders to Belarus. We do not foresee either the US or any other European power getting directly involved in the ongoing military operations, which would involve directly confronting Russian forces. Ukraine will most probably become a pacified country under Russian influence and control. The geopolitical map, along a notional line covering a geographic area extending from the Crimean peninsula in the Black Sea to Kaliningrad in the Baltic Sea across the territories separating Russia and Europe, is permanently changing, thus significantly actualizing most of Russia's long-term strategic objectives in relation to this military operation.

The Dawn of Post-modern History

A Covid-19 epidemic which should never have become a pandemic ... an Omicron mutation which has frightened people out of their wits, although it shouldn't have ... history's largest social, political, scientific and medical experiments forced upon billions of people ... human rights being violated on a global scale ... mass media terrifying people round the globe, although this should never have been so ... a world removed from free democratic principles, heading towards an autocratic governing model ... a geostrategic crisis which could easily have been averted by *common sense foreign policy* but has instead led to war and destruction ... a world having lost the capacity for clear, objective thinking and measured responses We believe that in our times of widespread turmoil, when the world is, unwittingly, flirting with catastrophe, real power rests with the populations of planet earth and not with the economic and political elites. The existing elites, though trying to remain in power with more and more autocratic measures, will nevertheless falter within this decade under a tsunami of change in all aspects of human life. The world is changing right before our eyes – although most of us have not yet realized it. We are on course for deep uncertainty and massive disruption, including inflation, escalating geopolitical crises, and military conflicts. We find ourselves in the second part of the fourth generational cycle of a grand 80-year cycle that started after WWII. Such *deep winter periods* are timeframes encompassing destruction - but at the same time they contain the seeds of renewal, when power slips away from the hands of the existing elites, established institutions, and outdated political parties and, through massive social movements, upheavals, and wars, transmutes into new socioeconomic, political, and cultural structures. Wars are historically catalysts for massive change, redefining sociopolitical geography and forming new geopolitical and geostrategic maps and alliances. Those are the core elements and the sources out of which real hope for decisive change on our planet can grow,

while new unconventional leaders arising unexpectedly will pave the way to two or three generational cycles of a new golden era for humanity!

Any person with love and compassion for his fellow human beings will reject and denounce outright any form of war as a means for resolving conflicts between nations, which basically constitute the most destructive of human interactions. War, ultimately, is the result of man's distancing himself from God, in Biblical terms, the result of *human apostasy* from God the Creator. War has sadly been an integral part of much of known human history and is attributable solely to individuals egoistically pursuing their own self-centered goals - and history repeats itself again and again. We are continuously surprised, even shocked, by the superficiality of the West's approach to crises. It is as if the West has lost itself in a vast sea of material wellbeing and abundance - but is also floundering in an ocean of degeneration, decadence, lack of any high principles and morality, absence of any connections to true wisdom, to its past roots going back to the great Greek philosophers as well to its Christian heritage. Unless the Western world returns to its historical Christian roots and to its forgotten civilizational foundations, it will continue to be taken aback and possibly, in specific cases, taken over by powerful nations such as China and Russia and perhaps others to follow, and by their actions on the global stage.

Vanity of vanities: all is vanity (King Solomon)

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