

Donald Trump's return will put the world back in order

By Conrad Black

Just two weeks after the U.S. election, the false hysteria that had been widely generated about immediate abandonment of Ukraine by the incoming Trump administration because of the returning president's supposed infatuation with Russian President Vladimir Putin, has effectively evaporated. It was Trump who ignored the pacifistic hawing of German Chancellor



Donald Trump, right, meets with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy at Trump Tower in New York on Sept. 27. PHOTO BY JULIA DEMAREE NIKHINSON/AP PHOTO

Angela Merkel and supplied pre-Zelenskyy Ukraine with Javelin anti-tank missiles to strengthen Ukraine's resistance against Russian incursions. Trump has never for an instant failed to recognize

that Russia must not be allowed to reoccupy Ukraine and his criticism of the Biden administration has not been its resistance to the Russian aggression but the failure to have any strategy to end the war satisfactorily and quickly. Trump's views should not be confused with those of his quasi-followers who are now so suspicious of the Pentagon's predilection for becoming involved in distant wars that they

rail against the extent of American military assistance to Ukraine, even though at least 90 per cent of the cost of assistance is acquisitions from American defence suppliers.

Trump knows as well as anyone that the largest single ingredient in the great and bloodless western victory in the Cold War over the Soviet Union, apart from the liberation of the so-called satellite countries, (45 years after Stalin had promised this at the Teheran and Yalta conferences with Roosevelt and Churchill), was the independence of Ukraine, the second-largest so-called republic, after Russia itself, in the U.S.S.R. Almost all prominent western politicians saw immediately that if Russia succeeded in reoccupying and re-absorbing Ukraine, it would significantly undo the strategic result of the disintegration of the U.S.S.R. and the western success in the Cold War, and only 30 years after that great victory, would reveal the Western Alliance to be a paper tiger as irresolute as the appeasement powers of the 1930s. In his debate with President Joe Biden, which brought the end of Biden's career, Trump made it clear in answering a question that he would not accept Putin's stated terms for peace as they were excessive. His position has been that the West, and specifically the United States, should let the Russians know that unless they moderate their demands and conclude a peace treaty that unconditionally concedes the legitimacy of Ukrainian sovereignty and guarantees somewhat revised borders, the Ukrainians will be armed with the capability to bring this aggressive Russian war forcefully to the Russian civil population, as Putin has insolently and brutally done to the Ukrainians. Trump's complaint has been the open-ended continuation of the war under Biden's "whatever and as long as it takes" lack of any satisfactory exit strategy.

Trump is also practically the only prominent western leader who recognizes that next to securing Ukraine as a permanent and recognized state with reliable security arrangements, the West's principal objective must be to create conditions in

which it will be possible for Russia to recognize that it can do better in a co-operative relationship with the West than as it is now, a very junior partner suffocated in the embrace of the People's Republic of China. The greatest strategic nightmare is that eventually China would ship tens of millions of surplus people to Siberia to exploit its resources and pay a royalty to the Kremlin: the West would be facing a very much stronger China squatting on top of strategic natural resources it now must import.

Having gathered anxiously together a couple of weeks ago to consider how they would replace America as a contributor of military assistance to Ukraine, the European powers have realized that is not under consideration by the incoming U.S. administration and that in fact it is time to embrace the Trump view of how to bring this war quickly to a satisfactory end. It is all slightly reminiscent of the excited statement by then-European president Jacques Poos during the crisis in Yugoslavia in the mid-'90s that, "This is the hour of Europe, not the hour of the Americans." Less than a month later, the European Union and its principal constituent national governments were beseeching the involvement of the United States.

America's allies, including Canada, generally like relatively weak American presidents because they are collegial and discuss things with the allies more often and create the illusion that it is really more of a joint effort than the Western Alliance has usually been. It is within the memory of most people when the Allied leaders included such personalities as Margaret Thatcher, Helmut Kohl, François Mitterrand and Brian Mulroney, and all made important contributions to the West's success in the Cold War. If it is true that American leadership has been somewhat uneven in the intervening years, it has at least, until the last several years, been more effective than that of most of its principal allies. The only important western countries that have

commendably purposeful leaders today, apart from Israel, are Italy, and up to a point, Hungary and a few of the Baltic countries.

A similar acceleration of a workable plan for satisfactory peace in Ukraine is already perceptible in the Middle East. The Biden administration engaged in a shabby attempt to suck and blow at the same time: Israel had "the right to defend itself" from Hamas's savage act of war, which meant the right to expel the terrorists from Israel but not to do very much to Gaza. This was the least courageous and decisive policy possible based on a desire to retain Jewish votes and not repel militant Islamist votes in the late American election. It inevitably failed as foreign policy and deservedly failed as political tactics also and will be replaced by the Trump policy of exterminating terrorist organizations. The Arab powers will be as enthused as Israel to have Hamas and Hezbollah crushed like pestilent bugs, and Iran strangled by sanctions and if necessary, militarily interdicted from deploying nuclear weapons. A ceasefire with Israel's terrorist neighbours intact though reduced merely assures their resupply and the continuation of their terrorist campaigns against Israel. There is no point to any negotiations between Israel and entities that will not accept the right of Israel to exist as a Jewish state, and the only road to peace is to kill, capture or demotivate the terrorists. Israel has gone a long way to accomplishing this goal and the Trump administration will assist it in finishing this unpleasant but necessary task.

Most of the current problems in international relations are the result of the weakness of the principal superpower in the last three years. That will end in two months and responsible leaders in Europe and the Middle East will be grateful for it, however incomprehensible they may find some of the returning president's stylistic flourishes.

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