

End of Ukraine War Would Be a Chance To Resolve Long-Deferred Strategic Matters between United States, Europe, and Canada

By Conrad Black

It is clear and has been for some time that the Western Alliance is going to evolve in delayed response to the West's great and almost bloodless strategic victory in the Cold War. It was the continuation of Cold War trading patterns that included substantial material enticements to wavering countries to keep their distance from the Soviet bloc by granting them commercially undeserved access to the American market that started the trade deficit.



The American economy was so strong it could attract back into the United States as investment much of the money made by these countries in exporting to the United States, which because of the incomparable size of the American economy did not create any serious problems of foreign ownership.

This and the gradual abuse of American friendship by the European Union, the particularly egregious case of Mexico, which has included outrageous mass migration and infiltration of dangerous drugs, and lesser acts of opportunism by Japan and India, finally required President Trump to move to reduce or abolish the current annual trade deficit of over \$1 trillion.

This deficit and the national debt joined the millions of annual illegal migrants and domestic problems of violent crime and rampant drug abuse and urban decay in the category of problems that simply could not continue and therefore had to be stopped. Addressing the tariff issue contemporaneously with

the Ukrainian and Gaza Wars and the unacceptability of Iran becoming a nuclear military power, should, within the next several months, produce a new orientation in American foreign policy and an updating of alliances and other important international arrangements.

The United States, contrary to the rather flippant attitudes of some American conservatives, cannot simply wash its hands of Ukraine and say that it has no interest in who governs there. Secretary of State James Baker famously advised Ukraine in 1991 in Kiev to remain in federal association with Russia. George W. Bush held out NATO membership for Ukraine.

The western as well as Russian influences in the 2010 and 2014 Ukrainian elections were somewhat discreditable to both sides but make it morally difficult for the United States simply to announce that it doesn't care what happens in that country, having intervened in its affairs rather extensively.

As a practical matter, allowing Russia to re-conquer or thoroughly emasculate Ukraine by force would, especially after the assistance that has been given Ukraine in this war, acquiesce in the substantial unwinding of the West's great victory in the Cold War. We have had 350 years of experience of Russian imperialism, and we should know by now not to be complacent about the implications of appeasing it, especially when a Russian victory can easily be avoided and would be a dangerous humiliation of the west.

The fact that President Trump has not imposed serious sanctions and tariffs on Russia and has not escalated arms shipments to Ukraine, to raise its ability to reciprocate Russia's brutal assault on the civilian population of Ukraine, indicates that he believes that Russia may be on the brink of a reasonable compromise. The president is not a soft negotiator, and he knows more about this than the commentators, especially those claiming that he's being "gamed" by President Putin.

Mr. Trump is practically the only statesman in the world who has shown any recognition that, in addition to preventing a Russian takeover of Ukraine, the West's goal in that conflict must be to create conditions for a gradual inducement of that country out of its current state of smothering vassalage with China. If Mr. Putin does not come to his senses spontaneously, it will be time to help him take that step by escalating the war's cost to him.

The end of the Ukraine War would be time to resolve a number of long-deferred matters between the United States and Europe and Canada. The joint declaration last week by the United Kingdom, France, and Canada demanding an immediate end of the Israeli offensive in Gaza as "disproportionate," while accusing Israel of blocking humanitarian aid to the civil population and failing to recognize that the only way to end Hamas' rule of Gaza is a unilateral cease-fire, is so fatuous and dishonest that it effectively condemns the government of all three countries as appeasers of terrorism, and brings them perilously close to a morally bankrupt relativistic policy toward antisemitism.

The reference to a unilateral Israeli cease-fire as a virtual Balm of Gilead to the region is mere hypocrisy from the countries that were long the closest allies and most kindred spirits of America on the ramparts of democracy and human rights. It is obvious that the Anglo-French and Canadians are a good deal more intimidated by the anti-Israel terrorists than the surrounding Arab powers are, most of whom would be grateful if Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis were eliminated, and if the fear of Iran as a nuclear military power , were permanently removed.

The United States possesses the ability to enable Ukraine to inflict such damage on Russia that the Kremlin would see the virtues of reasonable compromise. It may well be, as has been widely suggested, that the end to Hamas, Hezbollah, and the Houthis and the Iranian problem will lie in the military

destruction of the Iranian military nuclear program, especially if the overflight of Iran were accompanied by suitably well-targeted and vigorous attacks on the barracks and other control points of the horrible pseudo-theocratic despotism that is evidently hated by most Iranians.

It is within the power of the Trump administration to achieve all this, in cooperation with Israel and Ukraine. (Europe and Canada are surplus to requirements.) At that point, the elements of a modified containment strategy toward China would have to be implemented.

It would be possible, gradually, to conciliate Russia, without a sacrifice of western principles or interest. Europe is more than competent to handle its own relations with Russia without excessive dependence on the United States and Europe has no role to play in the Far East, much as it might imagine otherwise in its more terminal moments of grandiosity.

China is not as belligerent or dangerous a threat to the United States and the West as Nazi Germany and Soviet communism were, and its leaders are more civilized, if no less devious than those of the other regimes. This will be the next great challenge for American foreign policy, undoubtedly one it is eminently capable of meeting, but it will require a closer alliance with the logical powers in the region, especially Japan and India.

At that point, the Europeans may be disappointed, and even slightly offended at how little attention they get from Washington. Attendance at Davos, in the post-Schwab era, will decline by 70 percent, and the world would be the better for that, too.

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