

The United States and Europe—Bolstering the Infrastructure of Atlantic Unity in a Time of Crisis, Overcoming Rivalry

Program Workshop on Core and Periphery in the European Union—A New Phenomenon? Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, Belgrade 24-26 October 2014

Kees van der Pijl
Centre for Global Political Economy
University of Sussex

In these notes¹ I will address the issue of how the United States and the European Union are responding to what is now increasingly recognised as an existential crisis of Western hegemony and liberal capitalism. As George Soros wrote on 23 October 2014 in *The Guardian* newspaper, the West must keep up its pressure in Ukraine, because if not, the system that has been built up over decades and which includes NATO and the EU, may begin to unravel and as it does, eastern Europe may again come under the influence of a resurgent Russia. Soros knows what he is talking about: he was an active force in the rolling back of Soviet influence in the region, financing his many academic and ‘civil society’ initiatives from speculative investment, most notoriously the nearly a billion dollars he pocketed when he drove the British Pound out of the European Monetary System in 1992—without further criminal prosecution.

My first point will be that when we speak of the United States and Europe we are looking at a system, an integral social structure within which the two poles of the Atlantic bloc operate—not at 19th-century-style diplomatic relations between autonomous ‘actors’. This system, I will argue, has been bolstering its defences against social revolt from the mid-1970s on, whilst projecting a forward strategy once the USSR was brought to its knees in 1991. With the benefit of hindsight we can today reconstruct the steps by which this has evolved. To organise this part of the argument I will reassess three key interventions by Samuel Huntington, without doubt the most important ideologue of US imperialism after the war. Huntington, who died

¹ I thank the organisers of the Belgrade RLS event for the invitation to speak on this topic and Marko Costanić and Stipe Ćurković for their apposite comments on the oral presentation. This is a first draft of a written version.

last year, has made critical interventions also on other occasions, whether we are speaking of the original industrial contest between the United States and the Soviet Union, the Vietnam War, and others. However, his 1975 contribution to the Crisis of Democracy Report, his 1981 book on American politics, and the 1993 Clash of Civilisations argument that has meanwhile become a self-fulfilling prophecy, may be taken as the key markers of the strengthening, internally and externally, of the Atlantic bloc under US leadership.

The US and Europe operate within this Atlantic system, reproducing it through their actions. Yet as they do so, they also act from their own, more particular interests. This is the second aspect I want to highlight—the particular nature of Atlantic rivalry, that can be seen to have assumed a specific structure in the post-Cold War era, from the NATO wars against rump-Yugoslavia in the 1990s to the Ukraine crisis today. Here my argument will be that the structure of rivalry can be stylised into a pattern that allows us to organise our understanding of how the foray of the West after 1991 into its peripheries (both eastern Europe and the Middle East) has evolved. This pattern consists of an initial forward movement by either the US and Britain, or by Germany (and/or another large EU state); to which the other responds by a countermove; and thirdly, a common stance is found by defining a common enemy beyond the zone of straightforward rivalry. With respect to eastern Europe this was most evident, and it was through NATO that the common stance was achieved (and US hegemony over Europe restored) although in Ukraine this situation is still evolving.

1. Rolling Back Democracy and Forward Redeployment of the Atlantic Heartland. Notes from the Huntington Archive

Today liberal capitalism as a class system is in an existential crisis. This means that the global political economy organised around a Lockean core, composed originally of the English-speaking West, is losing its ability to organise its periphery by a combination of coercion and consensus. Processes of class formation elsewhere are no longer evolving along the lines preferred by the West. This can for instance be seen in the malfunctioning of the ‘human rights’ ideology which from the time of the Carter presidency in the second half of the 1970s, served as a guiding motif in US foreign policy and with a delay was also adopted by its Western European allies.

Human rights, one-sidedly interpreted as civil rights against the state, thus guided bourgeois class formation outside the Atlantic heartland. However, after Guantánamo Bay and Abu Ghraib and the perpetual war we are currently living in, the connection between Lockean liberalism and the projection of Western power has been broken for good. Likewise, the shock therapy with which as Naomi Klein has convincingly argued (2007), this violent turn of Western power projection was intimately connected, has wreaked social havoc across the globe and no longer serves the extended reproduction of capitalism as a mode of production across the globe. Instead as Klein also maintains, war has become the central axis in an accumulation regime, of which she cites Israel as an example but which is spreading across the Atlantic heartland as well. In his new book Claude Serfati documents this for France (Serfati 2014; cf. his contribution to the Belgrade meeting).

All this of course happens against the background of a life-threatening crisis of the biosphere, of which the demographic aspect in the current circumstances of perpetual war and predatory capital accumulation, looks like having escaped the control of the governments of the world.

This crisis and the repressive/warlike responses to it do not date from 2008 or the terror attacks of 2001, but have been long in gestation and essentially date, first, from the student, youth and workers' revolts of the late 1960s, and secondly, from the collapse of the USSR in 1991 with which the last stumbling block for their full unfolding was removed. As noted, Samuel Huntington, the most important ideologue of post-war US imperialism, formulated some of these responses and they may be taken as our guideposts to understand the complexity of the current global political economy. His three interventions were the Crisis of Democracy report of 1975, his conclusions in the book on American Power of 1981, and the Clash of Civilisations argument originally of 1993 and later elaborated in a book as well (1998). I will go through each in turn and explain what they contributed to the current Western posture in practical terms.

Putting the Crisis of Democracy Argument into Practice

In 1974, Huntington co-authored a report to the Trilateral Commission on the Crisis of Democracy. The Trilateral Commission had been established on the initiative of Chase Manhattan banker David Rockefeller, and under the intellectual directorship of

Huntington's patron, Zbigniew Brzezinski (Gill 1990). Since the novelty of the TC compared to the Bilderberg conferences from which it had branched off was to include a Japanese contingent, all its reports are authored by a writer from each of the three poles of the group, but in this case it is obvious that Huntington was the key contributor (Crozier, Huntington and Watanuki 1975).

The iconic 'May 1968' revolt was itself soon contained, even in France. De Gaulle had briefly fled to the French troops in Baden-Baden in the French occupation zone of West Germany (which incidentally inspired thinking about the power of mobilising youth movements against unwanted leaders that would later blossom into the infrastructure for Western-supported 'colour revolutions'), but the elections of 1969 returned the Right in power. However, the revolution in Portugal in 1974, the collapse of the NATO-imposed dictatorship in Greece, or the invasion of Cyprus, highlighted that the destabilisation of Cold War structures was continuing. The deeper cultural changes that transpired across Europe included the rise of Willy Brandt in Germany and his visionary *Ostpolitik*, the retooling of the major communist parties of Europe on a 'Eurocommunist' platform of alignment on parliamentary democracy, and several other processes which highlighted to varying degrees the growing strength of the unionized working class and the ascent of a left-leaning managerial cadre class recruited from the post-war generation—and partly already served in fact to *contain* the legacy of 1968 and the Portuguese revolution etc. In the United States, the Vietnam movement and the civil rights movement challenging segregation of the black sub-population were both domestic forces requiring a response and signal movements that acquired a global resonance.

Democracy as it was perceived by the Atlantic ruling class was beginning to become dysfunctional, requiring a structural response, for as two Soviet authors wrote later,

the movement of social protest of the 1960s contributed to... the ideological thesis according to which true and consistent democracy in social-political life is possible only as the limitation or even negation of capitalism. On the contrary, a number of ...neoliberals in the middle 1970s formulated the opposite thesis: "true", i.e., "rationally organized" ... capitalism, is possible only as the restriction of democracy (Zamoshkin and Melvil 1982: 225).

Huntington was key among those arguing from the vantage point of this ‘rationality’ and the TC report in fact stated that ‘In recent years, the operations of the democratic process do indeed appear to have generated a breakdown of traditional means of social control, a de-legitimation of political and other forms of authority, and *an overload of demands on government, exceeding its capacity to respond*’ (Crozier, Huntington and Watanuki 1975: 9). In his own chapter Huntington actually identifies the problem as that of democracy being made synonymous with equality (Ibid.: 62). Indeed if democracy would be allowed to include the economic sphere, the issue of economic justice might become a topic in elections, with possibly dangerous consequences. By then there was a growing consensus that the economy should be bracketed from public discussion, from elections and parliamentary decision making, and reserved to experts who alone are entitled to speak out on this matter.

Here we must remind ourselves that the role of a Huntington or any other writer, however prominent, should not be seen as initiating a series of events. Rather they serve as organic intellectuals in Gramsci’s sense, who provide cohesion to processes usually already underway but still lacking an explicit articulation (Gramsci 1975, iii: 1551). The idea of raising the status of economists, and neo-classical economists especially, to that of experts uniquely entitled to judge the workings of the economy, had already in 1969, so one year after the May revolt, led the Swedish central bank, a hotbed of the emerging neoliberalism, to ask the Nobel prize committee to be granted a licence to award an annual prize under the Nobel brand. This and other developments by the mid-70s not only had proliferated but were in obvious need being drawn together (see my 2006: 161-2). Huntington’s intervention fits into this.

Bracketing the economy from democratic interference thus was a response to the advancing social democracy and the leftward drift of the period. It allowed capitalist discipline to be restored without much public debate, as criticism of the neoliberal turn that the system was about to take, could be dismissed as amateur incomprehension. Indeed in 1979 the decision of the Federal Reserve under Paul Volcker to raise the real interest rate in order to discipline a global economy running on easy credit due to dollar inflation, inaugurated a new era in the development of capitalism. As we can see today, the abrogation of the class compromise with organised labour, as well as the replacement of the compromising attitude towards both the Soviet bloc and the Third World by debt crisis and military confrontation

dates from 1979, and has meanwhile drawn a trail of social and economic dislocation and political upheaval.

American Politics—Preparing for a State of Emergency

The second Huntington intervention that is relevant in reconstructing the Western posture we are confronted with today is his often overlooked *American Politics. The Promise of Disharmony* of 1981. The book came out in the first year of the Reagan administration which replaced the initially compromising Carter presidency with a confrontational attitude prepared already in the last year of Carter's term by the Volcker shock and the NATO missile decision that reducing warning time for a nuclear war to a few minutes by deploying in NATO Europe Pershing II and cruise missiles aimed at Warsaw Pact command centres in the east. Again Huntington lends cohesion and cogency to processes already underway, in this case to the domestic policy of the Reagan administration which was characterised by slashing the post-war deal with organised labour, highlighted by the mass dismissal of strike air traffic controllers.

In his book Huntington highlights what he sees as the particular vulnerability of the United States political system. This concerns its relatively lightweight ideological profile. The 'American Creed', combining equality, liberty, individualism, constitutionalism and democracy, can hardly be called an ideology because of the many contradictions within it (such as the contradiction between equality and democracy he had highlighted six years earlier himself). On the one hand this contradictoriness sustains the American Creed, but it also exposes it to movements mobilised under one or more of these themes. For opposition to state power is the core unifying principle behind all of them, so power is under permanent suspicion. Whereas in Europe, the state historically granted privileges to society, with the suggestion they could be revoked; in the United States society granted privileges to the state, under the same condition (Huntington 1981: 33-4).

Now in Europe, the political divisions between classes had spawned clear ideological dividing lines, preparing both sides to deal with challenges posed by the other and instilling in each an ability to recognise them early on. In the US however, what Huntington calls the 'new moralism' of the 1970s (so basically, the leftward

drift of politics in the wake of May 1968) was not met by such an early warning system. Indeed

Lacking any concept of the state, lacking for most of its history both the centralized authority and the bureaucratic apparatus of the European state, the American polity has historically been a weak polity... American moralism ensures that government will never be truly efficacious; the realities of power ensure that government will never be truly democratic.... The weakening of government in an effort to reform it could lead eventually to *strong demands for the replacement of the weakened and ineffective institutions by more authoritarian structures more effectively designed to meet historical needs*... Moralistic extremism in the pursuit of liberal democracy could generate *a strong tide toward authoritarian efficiency* (Huntington 1981: 232, emphasis added).

Again Huntington articulated, in his role as an organic intellectual, what was already underway in actual practice. Taking forward Nixon-era emergency plans for dealing with the domestic repercussions of Vietnam and the black emancipation movement, the Reagan administration began what was later labelled the Continuity of Government (COG) project, an ultra-secret enterprise to impose surveillance and mass detention of political dissenters, as well as emergency appointment of military commanders ruling under martial law. James Mann characterises this shadow government as ‘the permanent, though hidden, national security apparatus of the United States, inhabitants of a world in which presidents may come and go, but America always keeps on fighting’ (Mann 2004: 145). Donald Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney were recruited as team leaders in exercises preparing for nuclear war management, as were James Woolsey, later CIA director, and others. Supervised by CIA director William Casey and Vice-President Bush, Rumsfeld and Cheney became ‘principal figures in one of the most highly classified programs of the Reagan administration’, although neither of them held any public office at the time (ibid.: 138-9).

When Congressman Jack Brooks in the hearings on the Iran-Contra scandal in 1987 asked Oliver North (who under Bush’s authority had operated the backchannels exposed in the scandal) whether he had also worked on ‘a contingency plan... that would suspend the American constitution’, viz., ‘plans for continuity of government

in the event of a major disaster', North declined to answer. The committee chair, Senator Daniel Inouye, ruled that this was a 'highly sensitive and classified' matter and closed the discussion and the media ignored the matter (Scott 2007: 9, 184).

In the same period, George Bush (Sr.) had attended the first of a series of conferences organised by the new Likud government of Israel on how to mobilise society behind a comprehensive war on terror. I have several times already written at length about these conferences, especially the 1984 one in Washington chaired by Benjamin Netanyahu, then Israeli ambassador to the UN and currently prime minister (see my 2014: 208-11 and Netanyahu 1986).² Because these conferences were based on a narrative that Arab/Islamic terrorism was directed from Moscow, any interest they might have aroused otherwise was eclipsed by the rise of Gorbachev and the collapse of the USSR. However, the participation in these conferences in 1979 of (then-still presidential hopeful) Bush Sr. and in 1984, of high-level Reagan administration officials and key opinion leaders should remind us that the idea of linking domestic repression ('homeland security') to perpetual war in the name of a terror threat was assimilated by the Republican leadership early on, well before '9/11'. This takes us to the third Huntington intervention.

The Clash of Civilisations—The Christian West Against Orthodox Christianity, Islam and Confucianism

1991 was a year of triumph, but also of panic, because how would US defence outlays ever be sustained at Cold War levels without a credible enemy? Concerned that Senator Edward Kennedy's proposals to reduce defence spending and use the available funds for social purposes, the Pentagon under Dick Cheney and Paul Wolfowitz right in 1991 commissioned a *Defence Planning Guidance* for 1994-1999 that recommended that the United States should remain a generation ahead of all others in the decisive technologies of the future. NATO should be expanded into Eastern Europe, whilst Russia should be prevailed on to unilaterally reduce its forces and presence. The DPG also echoed the recommendations of the 1984 Netanyahu

² Besides my 2014 I have also submitted several papers on this topic to journals like *Alternatives*, *New Left Review*, and *Historical Materialism*, which were rejected and posted instead on my academia.edu site.

papers that pre-emption and punishment were legitimate forms of dealing with the threat, real or imagined, of weapons of mass destruction in ‘the wrong hands’ (that is, not in ours).

Certainly at the time these conclusions were still rejected by the majority in the Bush administration, which considered the Rumsfeld-Cheney-Wolfowitz line ‘extremist’ (Scahill 2013: 8-9). Both fractions in the government, but equally so the Democratic party leadership, were still confused about the future orientation of US foreign policy. All were on ‘the search for certitude’ as Zbigniew Brzezinski would characterise this period, and it was in this context that Huntington, Brzezinski’s right hand man, provided the Clash of Civilizations argument, first in a *Foreign Affairs* piece in 1993 and subsequently in the book of 1998. His patron was certainly not the only one to observe that Huntington’s conception was far more influential than Fukuyama’s prior End of History argument (Brzezinski 2008: 28). Among other things it served the interests of the military-industrial complex of the United States much better because Fukuyama at best projected mopping-up operations in societies ‘mired in history’, whereas Huntington’s sombre tale, in the spirit of Spengler’s *Decline of the West* at the time of the Russian Revolution, evoked an era of contests which by their very definition as ‘civilisational’ would in principle be never-ending.

Huntington on the one hand adjusted the arguments of the Moscow-centred terrorism threat to the new situation after the collapse of the USSR. Since China had taken the place of the Soviet Union as the key contender to the liberal West, but lacked a transnational revolutionary network that could credibly be linked to violence, he defined the threat coming from the Islamic world as rooted in a ‘demographic explosion in Muslim societies’, which turned ‘large numbers of often unemployed males’ into a ‘natural source of instability and violence’ (Huntington 1998: 265). So no need for a ‘centre’ here. For our purposes, the axis of confrontation between Western Christianity and the Orthodox Christianity of the east is more immediately relevant. Both the article of 1993 and the book version included a map entitled ‘the Eastern Boundary of Western Civilization’, beyond which are Orthodox Christianity and Islam. It runs along the eastern borders of the Baltic states, right through Belarus, Ukraine, and Romania, and then sharply bending to the west to cut off the Voivodina region of Serbia (all Hungarian and Polish *irredenta* are recognised by Huntington) and ending by cutting through Bosnia, following the inward wedge into Croatia (Huntington 1998: 159, map).

I have elsewhere discussed at length the NATO and EU foray to cover the entire ‘civilizational’ area west of this line, and the violent actions against rump-Yugoslavia and Serbia at its centre (see my 2006, chapter 8). Today we can establish that the three interventions by Huntington highlight the different aspects and stages of the systematic bolstering of the infrastructure of Atlantic power extending to the very boundaries of Russia proper—the removal from democratic decision-making of economics and by implication, finance; the putting in place of the surveillance state and the apparatus for domestic repression, in combination with the perpetual war ‘against terror’ debated from the early 1980s and theorised by Huntington as a Clash of Civilisations. However, within this systematic transformation of the liberal heartland into a repressive/aggressive, forward-leaning Western bloc, the competition and rivalry that continue to characterise capitalist imperialism also persist. This takes us to our second thesis, that of the structure of rivalry and the role of NATO in overcoming it.

2. Confronting Common Enemies to Transcend Atlantic Rivalries

The intervention in the Yugoslav break-up in the 1990s (of which the internal processes of class formation and conflict were discussed already at our meeting by Aleksandar Stojanivić) offers the first and decisive example of the forward drive that transformed NATO from a defensive alliance intended to keep out and suppress communism into an out-of-area offensive bloc. However, it also strikingly illustrates what I tentatively consider a pattern that was later repeated on and beyond the ‘civilisational’ boundary line drawn by Huntington. Besides serving as a catalyst for expanding the alliance eastwards, in overt breach of solemn reassurances by Secretary of State Baker to Gorbachev in 1990-91, the NATO intervention in Yugoslavia had the particular aim of transcending the initial rivalry between resurgent Germany and the United States, and it gave the US the upper hand in ordering the European periphery emerging after the demise of state socialism. Let me briefly summarise this episode in these terms.

Rival Forces in the Dissolution of Yugoslavia, NATO unity

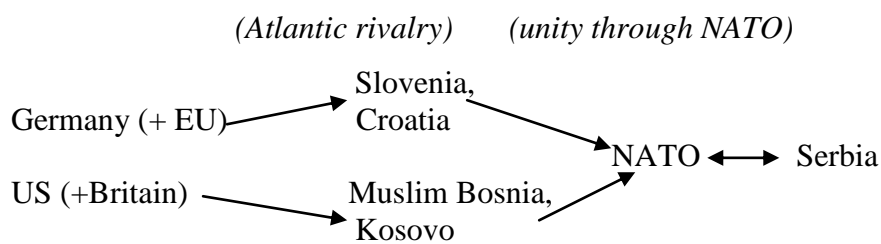
True to the ‘civilisational’ divide postulated by Huntington, Roman Catholic forces in Germany, Austria, Hungary and the actual Vatican were prominently involved in responding to the aspiration of Slovenia and Croatia to secede from Yugoslavia. The German step, soon to be sanctioned by the European Communities, also demolished the basis for Yugoslav citizenship as it transformed the internal conflicts into an open competition to obtain recognition of territorial claims based on ‘fictive ethnicities’ that suddenly occupied the centre-stage—not just through the Slovenian and Croatian secessions but importantly, by unleashing Serb nationalism as well.

The structure of rivalry that would be repeated from now on involved a United States response to German-EU support for Slovenia and Croatia by manoeuvring into a sponsor role of Bosnian Muslim statehood and later of course, by siding with the Albanians in Kosovo. By establishing bridgeheads among Islamic communities in Yugoslavia, also from a perspective of a Central Asian design to gain access to energy resources left unprotected after the dissolution of the USSR in 1991, it appeared, as Susan Woodward writes, that the United States had chosen to divide spheres of influence north and south in eastern Europe with Germany’ (Woodward 1995: 159-60).

A common pattern in rivalry, in which the (continental) European side has economic motives first, strategic ones second, and the United State (and Britain) the other way around (military bases to guard energy supply routes, notably) transpires in this episode for the first time. Whilst Bush still hesitated to intervene openly, Clinton, who took over in 1993, and the Wall Street investment banker, Richard Holbrooke, was entrusted with the Yugoslavia dossier at the State Department, moved to armed intervention. NATO, historically the instrument ‘to keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down’ (in the famous phrase of NATO’s second Secretary-General, Lord Ismay), was the instrument of choice to unite US-British and German, French and Italian interests against the Serbs, demonised as enemies of civilisation.

Serbia under Milošević also was on the other side of the fence from the liberal West because it had avoided a shock therapy by building up an indigenous capitalist class under the control of ‘an authoritarian political elite, crisscrossed by burgeoning mafia networks’, whilst maintaining a functioning, albeit minimal welfare state (Musić

2014: 22, 21). All this condemned it to sanctions first and actual bombing by NATO in 1994 and 1999. The rationale for intervention was provided by Holbrooke's article in *Foreign Affairs* under the telling title, 'America, a European Power'. In Holbrooke's view, 'the West must expand to central Europe as fast as possible in fact as well as in spirit, and the United States is ready to lead the way'. NATO would have to be the 'central security pillar' of the post-1991 European architecture (Holbrooke 1995: 42). At the risk of schematising a complex history, we may sum up events as follows:



In other words, and argued explicitly by Holbrooke, NATO functions to kick the EU into line and transcend rivalry. Whether in the Middle East adventures of the Bush Jr. administration, in which Cheney as vice-president and Rumsfeld as defence secretary occupied the key posts under the ineffective figurehead of the president, this functioned precisely along these lines we may leave aside here. One might also argue here, as Tom Engelhardt does (in his book-length opinion piece, 2014: 115) that we are looking at 'a single superpower that lacks genuine enemies of any significance and that... has nonetheless been fighting a global war with... well, itself—and appears to be losing'.

From Iraq to Ukraine

Of course, Germany, France, Belgium and Russia refused to go along with the invasion of Iraq in 2003, and one might make a case that the joint confrontation with Iran on account of its supposed aspiration to use its nuclear program for military purposes also served to overcome rivalry. In the case of Libya in 2011, Germany refused to join the NATO operation initiated by Franco-British intervention so the moment of rivalry is clearly present again. The US here remained somewhat in the background given the huge reticence in the United States for another military adventure after the costly debacles in Afghanistan and Iraq. This popular resistance

also played in the refusal of Britain and the US to intervene directly in Syria after Obama's 'Red Line' (that the US would respond if gas was used by the Assad regime) was triggered in vain by what appears to have been a Saudi provocation.

In the Ukraine crisis on the other hand the structure of rivalry clearly resembles the Yugoslav episode, although NATO has for obvious reasons confined itself to posturing and provocations (the account that follows draws on my blogs for OorlogIsGeenOplossing.nl). In our figure the pattern is the same except that there is no obvious geographical reference for the economic priorities of Germany and the EU or the military-strategic ones of the US.



Let me briefly go over the main moments in the process. The European Union in 2009 proposed a series of association agreements to the former Soviet republics Ukraine, Belarus, Moldavia, Armenia, Georgia en Azerbaijan, but not to Russia. Moscow felt threatened, and not only economically. For apart from Belarus and Armenia, these were the countries which in 1999 formed GUUAM, a subsidiary of NATO (the second U stands for Uzbekistan, which soon after left again). Ukraine and Azerbaijan in that year demonstrated that they took their commitments seriously by obstructing Russian deliveries to Serbia during NATO's war over Kosovo. In 2010 the Russian responded to the EU plans with a customs union (mutual free trade, a common external tariff) with Belarus and Kazakhstan. When Yanukovych on behalf of Ukraine signed a far-reaching free trade agreement with the EU in 2011, he proposed a 3+1 formula that would give Ukraine free access to Putin's customs union (the Russian market after all represents 30 percent of Ukraine's foreign trade), but which would leave the country inside the free trade agreement with the EU first of all.

This led to serious irritation in Moscow because EU goods would thus gain unrestrained access to Russia via Ukraine. When warnings that the EU agreement would lead to the demise of Ukrainian industry, were not heeded, several exports of Ukraine, such as the chocolate of current president Poroshenko's company, were

prohibited from entering Russia on account of ‘risks to public health’. In the end Yanukovych caved in and accepted Russian assistance, not least because of the uncontrollable deficit of the Kiev government which Russia, unlike the EU, was willing to cover. The consequences are known: the Maidan occupation and the seizure of that movement by various ultra-right and fascist forces as well as by the US democracy promotion infrastructure.

By February 2014 there was no doubt about the rival strategies of the EU (‘Old Europe’ to use former defence secretary Rumsfeld’s expression) and the US and its allies in the former Warsaw Pact states and the Baltic ex-Soviet republics. Whilst Chancellor Merkel banked on the former boxer, V. Klitschko, the Americans selected the caretaker of Yuliya Timoshenko’s party, the banker, A. Yatsenyuk, as their favourite. By its own estimate the US has spent \$5 billion in Ukraine to ‘construct a civil society’—read, achieve regime change. A tapped phone conversation between the US ambassador in Kiev and assistant secretary of state Victoria Nuland in February further revealed that US officials had little time for Merkel’s and other Europeans’ preferences. Nuland’s notorious ‘f**k the EU’ comment may explain why on 17 February, when agreement on an amnesty for demonstrators, new elections and constitutional change was reached between president Yanukovych and the foreign secretaries of Germany, France, and Poland, there was a Russian representative present, but nobody from Washington.

Here we may see the first instance of how pro-NATO forces intervened to wreck attempts to arrive at a peaceful compromise. For within a day of the agreement deadly shots were fired at both demonstrators and police; the agreement was forgotten about, Yanukovych fled, and the current rulers took his place, after which violent incursions into the offices of regional government officials, representative institutions and media bureaus followed that spread fear across the country. In another leaked phone call the Estonian foreign secretary pointed out to his EU colleague, Catherine Ashton, that the Maidan massacre had been perpetrated by the insurgents. They were later identified as belonging to UNA-UNSO, a branch of the underground NATO network, ‘Gladio’.

The February coup brought Yatsenyuk in as (interim) prime minister. The revocation of the law of 2012 which rules that every region where at least ten percent of the population speaks a language other than Ukrainian, is allowed to use that language for official purposes, was the first measure adopted by the Kiev parliament after Yanukovych’s Party of the Regions had been expelled from it. The revocation

was not enforced, but it did not fail to provoke unrest and eventually, armed resistance in Donetsk and Lugansk provinces. Mid-April, actually one day after the visit of the director of the CIA, John Brennan, to Kiev in the weekend of 13 and 14 April, an ‘anti-terrorist’ operation was launched by the Kiev government against the occupations in the Russian-speaking east of Ukraine,. This ended in a farce, because in Kramatorsk the elite troops of the 25th airborne division did not encounter armed fighters but citizens with flowers, and they either retreated or adorned their armoured cars with Russian flags, siding with the insurgents.

Even so, on 20 April, agreement was reached in Geneva by all parties in the conflict—the US, the EU, Russia, and the new rulers in Kiev. Again, amnesty (this time for the Russian-speaking occupiers), elections, and constitutional change—and promptly, the next day a violent attack occurred on unarmed civilians in Slavyansk, this time by the neo-fascist Right Sector, killing five. Although we should not have illusions about the fighting units in the east either, the overall thrust is that Ukrainian nationalists rally to far right slogans and organisations, whilst there runs a strong trade union and leftist element (expressed among other things in the notion of ‘People Republics’ in the east) through the ranks of the federalists. In Odessa dozens of Russian-speaking activists who had fled into a trade union building, perished when it was torched. The American network, NBC, established that in no other country today neo-Nazis are so prominently represented in the government as in Kiev. The neo-Nazi party, Svoboda, and Right Sector hold key posts in the security sector: a vice-premier, the secretary of defence, and the public prosecutor, hail from Svoboda, whilst the commander (‘secretary’) of the crucial Security and National Defence Committee in the Interior Ministry, Andriy Parubiy, was a co-founder of Svoboda (he meanwhile has formally switched to another, conservative party).

The elections of 25 May brought Petro Poroshenko the presidency. From the fact that he held talks with Chancellor Merkel briefly before the elections and the coincidence of his own election with that of the former boxer, Klitschko, as mayor of Kiev, we may conclude that this reflected the pro-EU/pro-German tendency in Ukraine first of all. Poroshenko, whose fortune has been estimated at \$1.3 billion, is first of all an opportunist. He was one of the founders of Yanukovych’s Party of Regions; when fraud in the first election of Yanukovych in 2004 was responded to by the Western-supported ‘Orange Revolution’ of Yushchenko, he joined the other side and in 2009-10 he was even Yushchenko’s minister of foreign affairs. The Orange

Revolution by that time had already run aground in another round of embezzlement, and Poroshenko returned to the camp of Yanukovych, who after his most recent election, gave him a (less prominent) ministerial post. Given this past and his legitimacy as an elected president, Russia wasted no time to take up negotiations with Poroshenko, whilst after Putin's visit to the Normandy landings anniversary in France, steps were taken also to begin negotiations with Germany.

It was revealed later by the *Independent* newspaper that Merkel and Putin were discussing a comprehensive agreement concerning the Ukraine crisis when Malaysian Airlines flight MH17 was brought down over eastern Ukraine in August. The above structure of rivalry and its transcendence would suggest that forces concerned about these secret negotiations might be the perpetrators. There are indications that an Ukrainian fighter jet under the command of Parubiy's Committee in the Interior Ministry that was trailing the plane, shot it down. However, since NATO was preparing a summit in Wales in September, the first after the debacle in Afghanistan had become generally acknowledged, the remarkable reticence in making the evidence of who was involved in this tragic incident public (the final investigation result has meanwhile been postponed to 2016), suggests that the forces interested in maintaining the pressure on Russia and use a war scare to maintain NATO unity in the face of deep divisions have prevailed in this matter although no definite conclusions can be drawn here.

Carving Up the Globe under a Permanent State of Emergency

One of the consequences of the 9/11 emergency was a plan to intensify the policies of regime change, of which Afghanistan and Iraq were the first targets. After the Iraq invasion this policy was elaborated into a general framework by Stanford International Relations scholar Stephen D. Krasner. In his capacity as policy planning director at the Bush State Department from 2005 to 2007 Krasner drew up a list of countries liable to 'collapse in conflict' His collaborator in this project, former US ambassador to Ukraine Carlos Pascual, explained that the plan was to write 'pre-completed contracts to rebuild countries that *are not yet broken*'. The goal was 'to create democratic and market-oriented' states. In fact it would not always be necessary to wait for a conflict to begin rebuilding a state: one might also begin by '*tearing apart the old*' (cited in Easterly 2006: 238, emphasis added).

In an article of 2005 Krasner proposed to formalise the class compromise with a client governing class into ‘shared sovereignty’, a ‘voluntary agreement between recognized national political authorities and an external actor such as another state or a regional or international organization’, if need be ‘limited to specific issue areas like monetary policy or the management of oil revenues’ (Krasner 2005: 70). For post-conflict countries invaded by the West such as Afghanistan and Iraq, shared sovereignty might help in overcoming the limits of governance aid. In a joint piece with Pascual, the aforementioned Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization at the State Department, Krasner argued that the US and other Western states should monitor weak states (‘weakness’ including ethnic or religious divisions) in order to intervene preventively when conflict would appear imminent—with the CIA and the military, think tanks and universities providing information (Krasner and Pascual 2005: 156-7). If conflict nevertheless erupts the authors propose a stabilization and reconstruction rulebook that allows intervention to establish the required ‘market democracy’ to evolve without the dislocations that followed the Anglo-American invasion of Iraq.

Basically the authors propose that ‘US or other military or peacekeeping operations’ fit into a longer-term planning in which the causes of internal conflict are well known in advance, so that over the longer term ‘the United States will have enabled more people to enjoy the benefits of peace, democracy, and market economies’ (Ibid.: 162-3). Following the granting of sovereignty to Kosovo by the West in 2008, Krasner made the case (to be applied to Kosovo, but also useful for Israel and a Palestinian state) for what he calls a ‘nested security arrangement’, in which sovereignty is shared between a senior partner and a client formation. Again he reiterates his point that ‘The international environment is too complex for any set of rules, including those regarding sovereignty, to be applied rigidly across all cases’ (Krasner 2009). Here we see how an international order organised on the principle of ethnicity, which is the ultimate consequence of the definition of international relations on a civilisational grid, ultimately leads to subordination of carved-up ethno-political units under the rule of a formation like the United States or the EU for that matter, which have or in the process of overcoming internal ethnic divisions or at least are trying to neutralise them internally.

Such major transformations are facilitated by the proclamation of a state of emergency, and this was just what ‘9/11’ had cleared the way for. Following the

argument of the 1920s, eventually Nazi jurist, Carl Schmitt, real sovereignty resides not in the people or any formal institution but is defined practically by those who have the ability to impose a state of siege. In a series of writings in 1921 and '22 Schmitt developed the argument that 'he who can declare the state of emergency' is the true sovereign (Schmitt 2005: 5). In a crisis like the post-World War I crumbling of the German empire and social order, and again following the attacks on New York and Washington in 2001, the idea of imposing authority in a climate of terror transmuted 'the politics of the exception ... into the politics of fear as a socially integrative device' (Teschke 2011: 72-3).

* *

Summing up, the Atlantic rivalries transpiring within the common frame of which the main features were articulated by Huntington, gave the United States the upper hand in Yugoslavia and allowed it to kick the world into line after 9/11. In the case of Ukraine, this has not worked out in the same way because the confrontation with the common enemy, Russia, could for obvious reasons never reach the stage of open warfare as in Yugoslavia against Serbia. NATO posturing in the Baltic and the Black Sea has not had so far the disciplinary effect that a full-fledged military operation would have had, so it may well be that the EU in the end achieves a position in which it retains the right to negotiate the agreement with Russia that was scuttled by the downing of flight MH17. It may also be that 'Old Europe' has already been so weakened by the sanctions it was forced to impose under US and NATO pressure that its ability to resist the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Pact (TTIP) giving transnational capital unprecedented rights over states, has been undermined beyond repair.

References

- Brzezinski, Zbigniew. 2008. *Second Chance. Three Presidents and the Crisis of American Superpower*. New York: Basic Books.
- Crozier, Michel, Huntington, Samuel P., and Watanuki, Joji. 1975. *The Crisis of Democracy. Report on the Governability of Democracies to the Trilateral Commission*. New York: New York University Press.

- Easterly, William. 2006. *The White Man's Burden. Why the west's efforts to aid the rest have done so much ill and so little good*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Engelhardt, Tom. 2014. *Shadow Government. Surveillance, Secret Wars and a Global Security State in a Single-Superpower World* [foreword, G. Greenwald]. Chicago: Haymarket.
- Gill, Stephen. 1990. *American Hegemony and the Trilateral Commission*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gramsci, Antonio. 1975. *Quaderni del carcere*, 4 vols. [ed. V. Gerratana for the Istituto Gramsci]. Turin: Einaudi [written 1929-'35].
- Holbrooke, Richard. 1995. 'America, A European Power'. *Foreign Affairs*, 74 (2) 38-51.
- Huntington, Samuel P. 1981. *American Politics. The Promise of Disharmony*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Huntington, Samuel P. 1993. 'The Clash of Civilizations?' *Foreign Affairs*, 72 (3) 22-49.
- Huntington, Samuel P. 1998. *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order*. London: Touchstone Books.
- Klein, Naomi. 2007. *The Shock Doctrine. The Rise of Disaster Capitalism*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Krasner, Stephen D. 2005. 'The Case for Shared Sovereignty'. *Journal of Democracy*, 16 (1) 69-83.
- Krasner, Stephen D. 2009. 'Who Gets a State, and Why? The Relative Rules of Sovereignty.' *Foreign Affairs Snapshot* <http://www.foreignaffairs.com> (Accessed 12 July 2011).
- Krasner, Stephen D., and Pascual, Carlos. 2005. 'Addressing State Failure'. *Foreign Affairs*, 84 (4) 153-163.
- Mann, James. 2004. *Rise of the Vulcans. The History of Bush's War Cabinet*. New York: Penguin.
- Musić, Goran. 2014. *Serbia's Working Class in Transition 1988-2013* [preface B. Kanzleiter]. Belgrade: Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung Southeast Europe.
- Netanyahu, Benjamin, ed. 1986. *Terrorism. How the West Can Win*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson.
- Scahill, Jeremy. 2013. *Dirty Wars. The World is a Battlefield*. London: Serpent's Tail.

- Schmitt, Carl. 2005 [1934, 1922]. *Political Theology. Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, 2nd ed. [trans. and intro G. Schwab, foreword T.B. Strong]. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Scott, Peter Dale. 2007. *The Road to 9/11. Wealth, Empire, and the Future of America*. Berkeley, Cal.: University of California Press.
- Serfati, Claude. 2014. *L'industrie française de défense*. Paris: La Documentation française.
- Teschke, Benno. 2011. 'Decisions and Indecisions. Political and Intellectual Receptions of Carl Schmitt'. *New Left Review*, Second Series (67) 61-95.
- Van der Pijl, Kees. 2006. *Global Rivalries from the Cold War to Iraq*. London: Pluto; New Delhi: Sage Vistaar.
- Van der Pijl, Kees. 2014. *The Discipline of Western Supremacy*. Vol. III of *Modes of Foreign Relations and Political Economy*. London: Pluto.
- Woodward, Susan L. 1995. *Balkan Tragedy. Chaos and Dissolution After the Cold War*. Washington, D.C.: The Brookings Institution.
- Zamoshkin, Y.A., and Melvil, A.Y. 1982. 'Between Neo-Liberalism and Neo-Conservatism' in E. D'Angelo, D.H. DeGrood, P.N. Russo, and W. W. Stein, eds. *Contemporary East European Marxism*, volume II. Amsterdam: Grüner.