

# After the War: The Eurasian Covenant



In this Issue:

- Why Ukraine Cannot Lose This War
- Russia's War Machine in 2025
- The American Bully and How to Counter
- Strategy for Europe





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# Introductory Note

This is the first edition of Broad Horizon: Journal, a curated and strategic publication at the intersection of history, conflict, and peace. It marks the beginning of a broader effort — to trace the forces shaping our world, and to suggest, carefully and clearly, how they might be reshaped.

The focus of this issue is Eastern Europe. From the legacies of empire and occupation to the unbroken will of a sovereign people, we examine the historical structures and moral stakes of the war in Ukraine — and what it reveals about Europe's own condition. Our work is layered, non-linear, and values-driven. It connects timelines, actors, turning points, and symbolic moments. Not to prove a point, but to offer orientation.

This journal is part of a wider vision. With time, it will grow into a full geopolitical register: with events, people, resources, issues, and a living record of unfolding signals — all bound by the same voice. It tells a story. This first edition sets the tone.

It begins with a war — but it is not only about the war. It is about the deeper fractures beneath it. About the structures that failed, the values that faded, and the forces now rushing in to replace them.

Why does this happen? Because we are human. We argue and fight. Why does this happen now? Because we lost our common narrative. Of christian-liberal values. Why is that a problem? Our Trias Politica and Political Systems are built on. We lost our freedom — some by force, some by choice. From democracy to authoritarian. From Order to Control, from Freedom to Chaos.

All is not lost. There is always hope. That is what this journal is telling of. We search for the why — the deeper story behind the things we see, the rhetoric we hear, the pain we feel. After all, we are human.

This Magazine is about the geopolitical shift that is currently happening. We start at the war in Ukraine, proposing strategies for peace talks. We go deeper into the why: with language matters,

We invite you to subscribe to our work. Don't worry, it's free. Find the options online at [...link](#) or contact us directly at [editor@broad-horizon.eu](mailto:editor@broad-horizon.eu).

- George Raven — Editor

# Dedication

We dedicate this first issue:

To Volodymyr Zelenskyy,

for his unwavering endurance — not only in the fire of war, but in the slow pressure of years. For the integrity of showing up, the force of presence, and the defiance of fear.

And to Yulia Svederenko,

for her work rebuilding the foundations. For economic reform, youth opportunity, international bridges — and the kind of leadership that does not chase cameras, but changes outcomes.

To those who build and endure. This journal responds.

# How to Read this Journal

The flow of thematic order. The labels we use.

This is not just a magazine. It is a narrative map.

Broad Horizon Journal is not meant to be consumed quickly. It is designed to orient — through conflict, through theory, through memory — toward something deeper.

The sequence matters. The journal opens with the present conflict, expands to the regional balance, then to the global tilt, and finally draws inward toward human meaning and historic traces.

Each article is labeled by form, to help navigate:

Label	Meaning
Essay	Long-form strategic or philosophical proposition
Reflection	Moral, emotional, or personal stance
Feature	Deep narrative or structural focus
Background	Factual or explanatory brief
Profile	Portrait of a thinker or idea
Passerby	A day in a city — travel, culture, quiet power
Vestigia	Historical record, archive, or annotated document
Editorial	Foreword, Raven Outlook, framing notes
Promo / Support	Rebuilding Ukraine, donation, app

# 1. Foundations & Frac- tions

Framing the postwar moment: on moral, strategy, narrative and enduring stakes.

## Reflection

# Why Ukraine Cannot Lose This War

## And why Russia, in a deeper sense, already did

By George A. Raven

Over 1200 days in the war. Nearly four years into Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine, the situation on the ground seems grim — but not final. Russia has managed to occupy roughly 27% of Ukraine's territory. And yet, in the past twelve months, its military has gained only about 1%. Each advance has come at enormous cost — in men, in morale, in equipment, in legitimacy.

And in the background, something deeper is happening. The Ukrainian spirit has not collapsed. Resistance is growing, not waning. Drone strikes continue to disable airfields far behind enemy lines. Civilians adapt and persist. A nation still breathes.

This article is not about maps, nor front lines. It's about something harder to see — and harder to defeat: the soul of a people who refuse to be erased.

## Occupation Is Not Victory

Russia may still achieve military advances. With time, numbers, and attrition, it may wear down Ukrainian defenses. It may station forces in cities. It may pressure borders, launch missiles, declare some new reality from above. It may take months, or years.

Any so-called “victory” would come at unbearable cost. Tens of thousands of soldiers dead. A generation lost. The international isolation, the sanctions, the slow bleed of economy and morale. And for what? To govern people who will never truly accept it?

Occupation is not peace. It's a wound with a delayed infection. You can suppress a people, but the spirit — the memory of freedom — will remain. Ukrainians have already seen it. They've already tasted it.

Resistance will come. Maybe not tomorrow. Possibly in 10 years, or 30. But history shows: once the mind awakens to liberty, it cannot be silenced.

Ukraine is not fighting to become sovereign. It already is. Its institutions, elections, and civil society stand even under fire. Bombed, blockaded, broken — but not beaten.

Sovereignty is not something granted by empires. It is lived, felt, built from below. That's why every missile strengthens Ukraine's case. Every civilian who stays. Every teacher who keeps the school open. Every soldier who returns to rebuild.

This isn't the story of a country trying to become something. It already is.

## A Neighborhood Without Gates

There's a story told, sometimes bitterly, sometimes as a warning: "Well, that's what you get when you provoke the bear. When you want NATO. When you talk of gates."

But picture a neighborhood. Most houses have locks. Some have alarms. Others — not all — have fences. But one house doesn't. Not because it loves danger, but because it still hoped to live openly. It trusted the road it was on. After moving in, building a fence isn't the first thing you normally do. You start living.

This house borders the gardens of a huge mansion. Fenced off and guarded for obvious reasons. Nothing wrong with that per se. Just a bit of a distance.

Now the owners of our house in question decided to build a fence too. You want to feel home and have some privacy. So the building begins. Not like a concrete wall, but a normal wooden fence. Modest.

Then trouble started. This neighbor — from the mansion starts walking by, making remarks about your fence being a cheap ugly thing. It destroys their view and lowers their property value. And also very disturbing — when you fence off that area, where must the dogs poop? You are fencing off the dog's walking area — this neighbor states. The common good, you know. You dare steal from the community?



A while later, a big old man — self-proclaimed mayor of this part of town, living in a gipsy-style turreted palace starts berating you how unfair it is to treat your mansion-

neighbor like you do. “Did you know he feels threatened by your selfish actions? If you continue behaving like this, you will destroy this community”<sup>1</sup>.

And then comes the breach. Now the whispers begin: “See? That’s what happens when you build fences. Doesn’t he trust us? So unneighborly”.

But the truth? It wasn’t the fence or gates that provoked them. It was the fear that a fence might be built. That the window might close. That the people inside would become unreachable — and the opportunity to control and to steal would be lost.

Ukraine didn’t provoke this war. It was punished for seeking a future.

## Russia’s Moral Loss (The Cost of a Hollow Victory)

In another article — The Eurasian Covenant — we explore the longer roots of this conflict, and the path toward dignity and peace for all. But here we must say: Russia has already paid a generational price.

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<sup>1</sup> We could elaborate on the “mayor’s” reclamation. How he described the dogs barking - the loudest, biggest mouth bark sounds you will ever hear. Or the dogs poop - very special and remarkable smell, good quality, a big honor to have such a great product on your turf, someone should deserve to live there and get this smell. Such a sad wasteful situation not to appreciate it.

But sadly it doesn’t fit our platforms theme style which is more black and white. And in our modest opinion, we believe that our style is the best.ever.made. Footnote: when you do not agree, that is a matter of taste. Distaste.

I hear you. How did it end. The mayor kept asking — he would love to have been a dog you know, if he could have chosen to. Imagine everyone walks your line. They beg to hold that line and follow your lead. When you bark, they fear. Maybe next life. A boxer. A big beautiful boxer. Yes, that’s going to be it. Next life. Halfway there already. See the dog in me. Haha. I don’t bark. Sometimes. I mean, no never. Not always. I mean, I can bark whenever I want to. I hold the line. Haha. Not all dogs are equal. A boxer. Big one.

But.

Those mean cats... sneaky

And those birds. Black, screeches. conscience whisperers. Hurts.

Dogs. Haha.

Dog.

Big One. Woof.

Dog. Yes.

Woof.

It has lost more soldiers than in any war since 1945. It has strangled its own economic potential. It has become, in many eyes, a pariah — not through lies, but through choices. The moral ground it once claimed — of antifascist liberation, of Slavic fraternity — is eroding.

There was a time when Russia offered something: a unifying identity, however flawed. That time is fading. Now it imposes itself on peoples who no longer choose it. And every forced claim deepens the wound.

There's another future possible — not carved by tanks, but shaped by treaties and ties. Ukraine and Russia do not need to be enemies forever. But the road to coexistence cannot go through conquest.

Cooperation is possible. Control is not. That is the simple truth of this century.

What Ukrainians seek is not revenge. It is recognition. That alone opens the door to something lasting.

## Ukraine Cannot Lose

Because what Ukraine is defending is not just territory. It is memory, dignity, sovereignty, home. And these things — when held together — can outlast even the longest war.

If it stands now, Ukraine sets a precedent: that freedom is not decided by force. That small nations matter. That the age of empires is behind us.

This is not Western triumphalism. It is human resilience.

And if the world can see that — not as strategy, but as truth — then Ukraine's victory will already be written. Not in a headline. But in history.

Vestigia

# Events That Led To The War in Ukraine - A Timeline

## A 1.000 Years Struggle For An Autonomous National Identity

History repeats itself. Does it?

This section is part of the Broad Horizon Timeline.

It does not aim to explain everything — but to anchor the present in a sequence.

A war like this doesn't begin with missiles. It begins with memory.

From the founding of Kievan Rus to the collapse of the USSR, from famines and treaties to quiet betrayals and unspoken fears — this timeline traces the long arc of imperial rise, collapse, resistance, and reassertion. It is not a neutral list. It is a set of moments, loaded with meaning, contested in interpretation, and crucial to understanding why the war in Ukraine — and the shape of Europe itself — takes the form it does.

Some events stand alone. Others echo through current articles. Together, they form the underlay to this journal — the story beneath the stories.

This is not the past.

This is what the present stands on.

A timeline is not just a series of happenings. History as a class at school. Or annals to spright our inner patriot. Why independence is important - and cooperation at the same time. The difference between oppression and freedom. It helps us understand - why events occur, what endurance mean, why people fight.

# Timeline

Time Goes On:



**Kievan Rus**  
The Founding of Kievan Rus marks the establishment of the first East Slavic state centered around Kyiv, which laid the foundations for modern Ukraine, Belarus, and Russia.



**Cities of the Hanse**  
Beginning in the 14th century, a group of northern European cities formed a commercial and legal alliance that would dominate Baltic trade for centuries. Known as the Hanseatic League, this urban confederation connected ports from Flanders to Novgorod, enabling secure trade, mutual defense, and legal cooperation without central rule.



**Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth**  
Before Moscow, there was Lublin. The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth laid the groundwork for Western Ukrainian identity — and for centuries of contested rule.

historical empire

Narratives & Interpretation

## 880-1240

- 🇺🇦 Viewed as the beginning of Ukrainian statehood and independence.
- 🇷🇺 Seen as the origin of Russian statehood and civilization.
- 🇧🇪 A key moment in Christianizing Eastern Europe. Foundational to both Russian and Ukrainian national identities.

## 1356-1669

- 🇩🇪 A proud civic legacy — decentralized, commercial, and culturally formative.
- 🇧🇪 A forgotten example of peaceful urban order built on shared interest, not force.
- 🇷🇺 A useful trade partner through Novgorod — later expelled as a foreign threat to imperial centralization.
- 🇵🇱🇱🇻 An economic asset with cultural distance — integrated into cities like Gdańsk and Kaunas, but never fully national.
- 🇩🇪🇺🇦 The League brought urban structure and long-distance trade — but also foreign rule and German domination in cities like Riga and Tallinn.




## 1565

- 🇺🇦 A legacy of tolerance and domination. The Commonwealth offered pluralism and protection to many — but also imposed power unevenly across its lands.
- 🇷🇺 Seen as a fading rival once rich in tolerance and ambition, yet doomed by internal discord and Western entanglements.
- 🇧🇪 A bold experiment in pluralism and federation — admired for its tolerance, yet weakened by elite fragmentation and foreign ambition.

## 1654







**Pereyaslav Agreement with Tsarist Russia**  
The Pereyaslav Agreement between the Cossack Hetmanate and Tsarist Russia marked the beginning of Ukraine's alignment with Russia, which would evolve into centuries of political, military, and cultural influence.

-  A moment of lost autonomy, as the agreement gradually led to Russian dominance over Ukraine.
-  Seen as the unification of Ukraine with Russia, marking the beginning of Ukrainian ties to the Russian state.
-  Reflects the complex relationships in Eastern Europe, where powers sought strategic alliances to balance regional conflicts.



**Act of Unification**  
In the chaos after World War I and the collapse of empires, Ukrainian leaders declared the Act of Unification — joining the Ukrainian People's Republic with the West Ukrainian People's Republic. It was a symbolic moment of national hope — but it came too late, and would not last.




## 1919

-  A moment of clarity in chaos — short-lived, but foundational.
-  A nationalist experiment threatening proletarian unity — quickly suppressed.
-  A competing territorial claim over Galicia and Lviv, fueling later war.
-  An ignored opportunity — overshadowed by Versailles and postwar exhaustion.



**Soviet absorption of Ukraine**  
In the wake of civil war and foreign invasions, Ukraine's brief independence collapsed under military defeat and political exhaustion. By late 1922, Bolshevik forces had crushed the Ukrainian People's Republic. With the Treaty on the Creation of the USSR, Ukraine was absorbed into the new Soviet Union.

## 1922




-  A forced union masked as equality. Independence lost, not surrendered.
-  A triumph of proletarian internationalism — building unity after civil war.
-  A postwar redrawing of space — one many failed to fully understand or resist.



**Holodomor Famine**  
The Holodomor Famine was a man-made catastrophe under Stalin's regime that devastated Ukraine, killing millions of Ukrainians and leaving a permanent scar on the national consciousness.

historical event




## 1932-'33

-  A deliberate act of repression and a key moment in the fight for Ukrainian independence
-  Part of the broader Soviet effort to enforce unity within the empire, though controversial
-  A tragic consequence of totalitarian policies within the Soviet Union



**Molotov–Ribbentrop Pact**  
On the eve of World War II, two ideological enemies struck a secret deal to divide Europe — condemning millions before the first shot was fired.

## 1939

-  Ukraine was one of the lands carved up. Western regions, including Lviv, were absorbed into Soviet Ukraine — with long-term consequences for borders, identity, and memory.
-  A strategic masterstroke. It delayed war, regained lost lands, and protected the Motherland.
-  A moral catastrophe. Hitler and Stalin divided Europe in secret while pretending to be guardians of peace.

## 1941



### Operation Barbarossa

In June 1941, Nazi Germany launched Operation Barbarossa, the largest military invasion in history. Its aim: the conquest of the Soviet Union. Its result: the beginning of a long, brutal war of annihilation on the Eastern Front.

🇺🇦 A brutal occupation that exposed Ukraine to genocide, famine, and forced collaboration choices. Neither invader treated Ukrainian lives as sovereign.

🇷🇺 A treacherous betrayal — and the beginning of a great patriotic struggle for survival.

🇺🇸 The ultimate turning point in the European war — leading to catastrophic loss and long-term East–West division.

## 1942-'43



### Battle of Stalingrad

Blood in the snow, fire in the streets. The Battle of Stalingrad marked a brutal turning point — not only for the Eastern Front, but for the fate of Europe.

🇺🇦 We fought to stop the Germans — and to survive.

Some believed in the Red Army. Others had no choice. All bled.

🇷🇺 A heroic and sacred victory. The city's name — and its survival — symbolized Soviet resolve and sacrifice.

🇺🇸 A defining battle of the 20th century, demonstrating the cost of authoritarian ambition and the scale of industrialized warfare.

## 1943



### Battle of Kursk

The largest tank battle in history — and the final gamble of Nazi Germany in the East. At Kursk, Soviet armor held the line and changed the war.

🇺🇦 A Soviet victory — won also by Ukrainians. Many returned to ruins, repression, or silence.

🇷🇺 A triumph of engineering, planning, and sacrifice. Kursk was proof that the Red Army could defeat the Nazi war machine on its own terms.

🇺🇸 Kursk is remembered as the moment where Hitler's Eastern ambitions finally broke under steel, strategy, and Soviet resolve.

## 1945



### Yalta Conference

In February 1945, as World War II neared its end, the Allied leaders met in the Crimean city of Yalta. Their goal: to determine the shape of the postwar world. Their decisions would define Europe for decades.

🇺🇦 Yalta is a symbol of decisions made over our heads. While the Ukrainian SSR was a UN founding member, its sovereignty remained fiction under Moscow's grip.

🇷🇺 A justified security buffer and recognition of Soviet sacrifices and power.

🇺🇸 A difficult compromise made in good faith — but later viewed as naïve.

🇬🇧 An uneasy balance between principle and power — Churchill feared appeasement by necessity.

🇺🇸 Necessary compromise or historical mistake? Yalta remains a cautionary tale of how peace conferences can entrench spheres of power more than they solve them.

## 1945



### Potsdam Conference

The final Allied summit of World War II revealed not just a changing cast of leaders — but a changing world. At Potsdam, unity cracked, and the Cold War crept in.

🇺🇦 The conference confirmed Ukraine's place within the Soviet sphere, despite its status as a UN founding member. No voice, no veto — only quiet submission.

🇷🇺 We cemented our victories and rebuilt our influence. Our presence in Berlin and beyond was the rightful outcome of our sacrifice.

🇺🇸 Potsdam formalized a divided continent. From cooperation to confrontation, the world split before our eyes — and we were at the fault line.

## 1949



### The Institution of NATO

Emerging from the ashes of World War II and the early chill of the Cold War, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) was born in 1949. More than a military alliance, it became a strategic foundation for Western unity — balancing deterrence with diplomacy.

🇺🇸 A strategic anchor and moral commitment to defend the free world.

🇺🇸 A necessary shield for rebuilding democracies — with some tension over autonomy.

🇷🇺 A hostile encirclement — the first institutional front of Cold War opposition.

🇺🇦 Excluded from its founding, Ukraine would later see NATO as a protective promise — one that came too late.

## 1955



### Warsaw Pact

The Soviet Union and seven Eastern European states signed a mutual defense treaty in Warsaw, creating the Warsaw Pact. It solidified the division of Europe and institutionalized the Soviet bloc in direct opposition to NATO.

🇺🇸 🇷🇺 A forced alliance that prioritized Soviet interests above national autonomy.

🇷🇺 A defensive bulwark against NATO encroachment and imperialism.

🇺🇸 An oppressive tool for Soviet hegemony and internal suppression.

## 1991



### Collapse of the Soviet Union

A red flag lowered, a new world born. The collapse of the Soviet Union ended the Cold War and reshaped the global order. It marked the end of an Empire.

#### 🇷🇺 Russian Perspective

A moment of loss and humiliation for some; a chance for renewal and freedom for others. Russia inherited the Soviet seat at the UN but entered a period of chaos.

#### 🇺🇸 Western Perspective

Seen as a geopolitical victory — the peaceful end to a decades-long standoff. A moment of unipolar triumph.

#### 🇺🇦 Ukrainian Perspective

Independence, long suppressed, finally realized. The 1991 referendum showed overwhelming support for a sovereign Ukrainian state.

## 1991



### Ukraine Declares Independence

After decades as a Soviet republic, Ukraine asserted its sovereignty on 24 August 1991. This act of independence emerged from the ashes of empire — a democratic rebirth with fragile roots and far-reaching consequences.

🇺🇦 A long-awaited rebirth. The moment Ukraine ceased to be a province — and became a nation.

🇷🇺 A painful fracture in shared history. A loss of cultural and geopolitical depth.

🇺🇸 A hopeful step toward democracy — though few grasped the scale of the challenge ahead.



**Budapest Memorandum**  
Ukraine surrendered the world's third-largest nuclear arsenal in exchange for security assurances. The Budapest Memorandum was a milestone in post-Soviet diplomacy — and later, a haunting example of broken promises.



**Putin Speech at Munich Security Conference**  
Vladimir Putin publicly denounces the post-Cold War order, accuses the West of broken promises, and warns against NATO expansion.



**The Maidan Revolution**  
Revolution of Dignity — erupted when President Yanukovich abandoned an EU agreement under Kremlin pressure. What began as a protest for European integration became a national revolt against corruption, repression, and foreign domination.



**Occupation of Crimea**  
In the shadow of Ukraine's Maidan uprising, Russian forces seized control of Crimea. What followed was a swift, illegal annexation — a violation of international norms that shattered post-Cold War assumptions and launched a new era of geopolitical confrontation.



**Minsk I&II Agreements**  
After a year of brutal fighting in eastern Ukraine, world leaders convened in Minsk to forge a ceasefire. The resulting deal — Minsk II — was meant to freeze the conflict. In reality, it became a symbol of unkept promises, geopolitical stalemate, and strategic miscalculation.

## 1994

- 🇺🇦 A promise betrayed. Ukraine traded power for peace and received war.
- 🇷🇺 Not a legally binding treaty; not violated by Crimea or Donbas actions.
- 🇪🇺 A political commitment with moral weight — but not a defense treaty.

## 2007

- 🇺🇦 Though not named — already seen. The speech signaled a future where choice of Ukraine would not be tolerated
- 🇷🇺 A public rejection of Western control. NATO broke its word. Russia will restore balance.
- 🇪🇺 A warning — delivered clearly, but underestimated. Few imagined it would lead to war.

## 2013

- 🇺🇦 Not just a revolution — a reckoning. Dignity reclaimed from decades of deception.
- 🇷🇺 A Western-orchestrated coup undermining Ukraine's constitutional order.
- 🇪🇺 A people's revolt against corruption and repression — and a warning about hybrid threats.

## 2014

- 🇺🇦 A national wound and international betrayal — Crimea was taken while Ukraine mourned its dead.
- 🇷🇺 A historic homecoming, correcting a “mistake” of Soviet borders. Strategic and cultural restoration.
- 🇪🇺 An outright violation of sovereignty, international law, and the European order.

## 2015


- 🇺🇦 An imposed deal under pressure — survival, not sovereignty.
- 🇷🇺 A diplomatic tool to paralyze Ukraine and delay NATO integration.
- 🇪🇺 An imperfect but necessary pause to prevent escalation.


## 2022




### Full Scale Invasion

At dawn on February 24, 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine from all directions. The illusion of limited conflict vanished. This was not a special operation — but war. From airstrikes to tank columns, the scale stunned the world. But Ukraine did not collapse.

 An existential war for survival, identity, and home.

 A “necessary intervention” against NATO expansion and Ukrainian defiance.

 A turning point: the return of war to Europe — and a test of resolve.

### Eurasian Peace Talks

A Summer-offensive is at hand - though strategic talks are still possible.

2025?



This is not just a history.

It is a fault line.

Each event left its mark — not only on borders, but on memory, dignity, and belonging.

What Ukraine faces now is not new.

It is the unfinished consequence of what was never truly resolved.

## Essay

# After the War: The Eurasian Covenant

A moral and strategic reflection on Europe after the war

By A. Richter

This is not a deal. It is not satire. It is not surrender.

It is a proposition — a framework for peace between Europe, Ukraine, and Russia. A Eurasian Covenant rooted in realism, dignity, and the long view of history.



After Munich, after the liveshow with Trump, Vance, and Zelensky, and after the continued instability of the American administration, Europe must act.

It is time to prepare for alternatives. Not as a reaction — but as a responsibility.

Our countries share a deep past. We have fought, aligned, betrayed, and rebuilt.

This proposal begins from that shared history — and moves toward a future where different systems can coexist and cooperate.

This is a Plan B for Peace between Ukraine and Russia in Europe.

## A history in brief

Our countries have a common history and partially common backgrounds. It might be good to sit and go all the way back from where our cultures came into existence. Wars have been fought, pacts have been made, and broken. Empires came, empires went. And somehow we ended up where we are today. In a situation where people fight - likewise people.

So let us talk:

- On our common history and values. What binds us and what sets us apart;
- What is true and what is assumption. Can we come to a mutual story that shares light on both sides;
- Can we somehow come to an understanding how different governmental systems can coexist and cooperate;

Russia and Ukraine share a common history that goes back to when the Kievan Rus Empire was established with Kyiv as its capital in 882. The common history is also seen in aspects like Language, the Eastern Orthodox faith, culture such as arts, music, poetry and such.

## Ukraine

It might be difficult to state when exactly a distinction could be made between Russian and Ukrainian people - much like we see that in Western European countries. It is rather a gradual process that makes these distinct groups. Arguably the Ukrainian identity grew during the period of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (14th - 17th centuries) where - much of modern Ukraine, were the so called borderlands and Ukrainian people where distinct from Poles and Muscovites.

The Cossack revolts for autonomy in the 17th century and later with rising nationalism in the 19th century, Ukrainian became a national identity. Though did not yet exist as a sovereign state. Divided between the Russian Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Empire until it's 3 years independence (1918-1921). In WW2 millions fought side-by-side with Russians against Nazi Germany, though others collaborated with, or resisted both Nazis and Soviets. It was heavily devastated, and was soon absorbed into the USSR until it finally achieved independence in 1991.

Ukraine has long been shaped by an internal divide between its rural agricultural base and more urban, often Russian-speaking industrial regions — a legacy of Soviet planning. After independence, corruption and political instability undermined trust in the state, creating vulnerabilities later exploited by foreign influence and oligarchic interests. At the same time, the current Ukrainian government has shown genuine efforts toward reform, transparency, and European integration — despite operating under the pressure of war, instability, and economic hardship.

In the now disputed areas are many ethnic Russians (mainly Crimea) and Russian-speaking Ukrainians. In general it seems genuine that Russian-speaking means they are Russian. That is not the case, but from a historical situation where the Russian language was spoken all over the USSR and partially the Middle East (much like Spain in America and English in the British Commonwealth), and from demographic manipulation. Language does not define loyalty, especially after 2022.

## Russia

The Russian Empire has had close ties with Western Europe, specially after Tsar Peter the Great made his journey to transform Russia into a modern state. With maritime, naval industries, water management from The Netherlands, the palace architecture style from Italy, the wide city planning , cuisine and literature from France made St. Petersburg. Also the Royal Families were connected through marriage with the British, French, Dutch crowns.

Russia's historical contribution to European peace should not be forgotten. In three major conflicts, Russia played a decisive role in preserving or restoring balance: against Napoleon in the early 19th century, against the German Empire in World War I, and at enormous human cost against Nazi Germany in World War II (Think alone of the Battle for Kursk with losses of 800.000 Russians and 200.000 Germans). These sacrifices helped preserve the freedom of many Western European countries. Despite later divisions, these moments reflect a shared interest in defending Europe against tyranny.

Yet after 1945, the shared cause gave way to division. The post-Cold War order created tensions as NATO expanded and mutual distrust deepened. While Eastern European states sought protection, Russia saw encirclement. These conflicting logics were never resolved — only postponed. Now they demand rethinking, not just remembering.

The memory of Russia's imperial and Soviet past is not untroubled. The repression of dissent under the USSR, the devastating Holodomor famine in Ukraine, and the deep scars left by Stalinist policies still shape perception across the region. The early 2000s

— under Vladimir Putin’s first presidency — brought a sense of restoration and order within Russia, but also signaled a return to centralized authority and strategic assertiveness abroad.

## America

In these talks it is also good to consider the role of the USA. The Transatlantic bond has been strong from the beginning of the USA’s existence. Obviously due the fact that it were Europeans that settled and colonized the areas we now know as The United States of America and Canada. People came from the United Kingdom, Germany, France, The Netherlands, Sweden and other countries. Lots of europeans have family in America. Like lots of Russians have family in Ukraine.

During the fight for independence it were European countries financing and helping the Independence Movement. The Constitution of the United States leans on the Dutch Act of Abjuration (Declaration of Independence). There is a lot that binds us.

After World War II - the Great Division basically started. The US supported Western European countries tremendously, making economic stabilization and growth possible where otherwise it would have taken decades to recover.

After the Cold War the US also schemed in Eastern European countries, making vague promises and running expensive projects. This disturbed the Transatlantic bond a bit, mainly for Easter European countries (former USSR satellite states) while Wester European countries still relied heavily on the US.

In 2025 - with President Trump in office again - one start realizing that the Transatlantic Relation will not be the same anymore. That it’s time to realize that it is now a world without a big brother to run to. It is time to become an adult.

Unlike in most European democracies, where the civil service provides long-term policy continuity, U.S. administrations often bring thousands of political appointees with each election. When the presidency changes hands — especially between parties — entire layers of government shift direction. This creates a system where foreign policy is deeply tied to short-term electoral cycles, rather than strategic continuity. As a result, Europe must prepare for a world where American positions may shift every four years, and where long-term commitments can no longer be assumed. That’s not a criticism — it’s a structural reality. And it’s time we plan accordingly.

## Europe

Europe is often viewed as the cradle of modern civilization — a legacy that reaches from the Roman Empire through the Renaissance and Enlightenment to today’s technological and institutional frameworks. From shipbuilding and navigation to the printing press, from the rule of law to democracy, and from classical music to semiconductors, Europe’s influence on the modern world is vast.

But alongside that intellectual and technological flourishing came centuries of violence, imperialism, and exploitation. European powers — from Spain and Portugal to the Netherlands, France, Britain, and others — shaped the modern world not only through ideas, but through colonization, war, and conquest.

European history is marked not only by innovation but by blood. The colonization of Africa, the Americas, and Asia led to cultural erasure, slavery, economic extraction, and mass suffering. Entire civilizations were destroyed. The scars remain.

From the removal of Native peoples in the Americas, to the Opium Wars in China, to the carving up of Africa, Europe exported both its knowledge and its wars.

From the late 18th century onward, Europe not only expanded across the map — it began to extract from the earth on a scale never seen before. Empires were built not just on territory, but on coal, cotton, copper, and control.

This extractive era laid the foundation for modern geopolitics: a world in which access to resources, supply chains, and strategic dominance became as important as borders themselves.

We must reckon with this legacy not to erase it, but to understand the full arc of Europe’s role — both its light and its shadow.

## Geopolitical Reflections: Empires, Rhythm, and the Illusion of Historical Correction

History tends to follow a rhythm: globalism, crisis, imperialism, crisis, nationalism, crisis — and then a restart. Empires rise, they dominate, and they fall. They tend to last around 300 years — from Rome, to the Ottomans, to the British Empire.

Attempts to correct history through force rarely lead to healing. Every attempt to go back — to reclaim lost lands, redress past betrayals, or resurrect old empires — invents new victims, and opens new wounds. New conflicts.

“All empires fall. What matters is what they leave behind: scars, or foundations.”

This is not the time to restore empires. It is time to build something better.



This new situation requires a new theory. It marks the end of American hegemony — not with vengeance, but with maturity. It offers Europe the space to stabilize and reorganize.

## Negotiations and Follow-up

Europe must begin to act not as a protectorate, but as an actor.

We are not neutral. But we can be honest. We are not above the conflict. But we can stand apart from the logic of vengeance and offer a path out — grounded in realism, dignity, and a long view of history.

The following proposals are not rigid. They are meant to open doors. To reset perspectives. To begin a path forward over the next 5 to 10 years, with milestones based on verified progress and human dignity.

Let's draw some possibilities that could open the path forward.

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Russia: Withdrawal, investment, restraint.

Ukraine: Healing, rebuilding, bridging.

Europe: Acting, stabilizing, balancing.

No one wins. But everyone can stop losing.

## Europe commits to

- Lifting trade restrictions on Russia in exchange for progress on peace and withdrawal
- Unfreezing Russian state and private assets under specific conditions
- Resuming energy cooperation (gas, wood, oil, critical infrastructure), with environmental and strategic safeguards
- Investing in joint infrastructure (e.g., a revised Nord Stream 2 under EU-Russian governance)
- Exploring new trade possibilities, including flowers, food products, and industrial equipment

Europe must not merely stabilize. It must renew its position as a balancing power, investing in the human and material rebuilding of Ukraine, and offering a post-crisis model of peaceful cooperation.

Europe must stop waiting for the world to fix itself.

It's time to act — not as a protectorate, but as a power.

## Russia Commitments

- Withdraw all armed forces from Ukraine, including Donbas and other occupied territories (Crimea negotiated separately)
- Accept the possibility of retaining Crimea, but only under the condition of:
- An agreed transactional arrangement (e.g., long-term energy supply contract, or reparative contribution)
- Demilitarization of the region
- Guaranteed minority protections, international oversight, and open access to historical populations
- Participate in the economic reconstruction of Ukraine, matching the EU's financial effort for at least ten years, with investments in housing, energy, schools, infrastructure, and jobs
- Receive conditional mining rights for rare minerals in Ukraine in return for economic investment and infrastructure co-development — negotiated transparently and overseen internationally

Russia does not lose its position but reorients it: from militarization to strategic partnership.

## Addressing Russian Concerns

Argument	Possible Solution Direction
For any peace agreement to succeed, it must offer all parties a narrative of dignity and strategic gain — especially for Russia, whose leadership faces domestic, constitutional, and ideological constraints. Offering off-ramps is not about validating past aggression, but about avoiding further escalation and creating conditions for future cooperation.	
Constitution prevents giving up territory	Shift the storyline: Russia gains more from the agreement than it gives up. The result is not territorial loss, but economic gain, security guarantees, and renewed geopolitical standing.
“Denazification” narrative / Nazi government	Political transitions happen naturally. Support internationally observed elections in Ukraine with no predetermined outcome, or frame it as a civil reset without military interference.
NATO and Western encirclement	Shift NATO toward a European-led structure, with the U.S. in a support role and Russia as a consultative partner — echoing proposals from the early 2000s.
Frozen assets are a humiliation	Frame asset unfreezing as a reward for peace, based on measurable progress, with joint oversight boards to prevent misuse and loss of face.
These are not concessions. They are paths to stability — where no one wins everything, but everyone stops losing.	

## Ukraine Recovery

- The war would end. But the pain remains. Recovery begins not with buildings, but with people. Immediate ceasefire and phased demilitarization
- Recognition that trauma takes generations to heal. Postwar reconciliation must include cultural, educational, and psychological dimensions
- Access to reconstruction funds from both EU and Russia
- Positioning Ukraine as a central bridge economy for Eurasian trade, mineral processing, green energy, and transit infrastructure
- Open investment zones with international guarantees
- Ukraine should receive full-scale rebuilding support from both Europe and Russia. With access to reconstruction funds from both EU and Russia
- Its agriculture, minerals, and skilled workforce must be leveraged to build lasting prosperity.
- A European framework should support open labor mobility, visa-free travel, and long-term investments in education and health. With open door towards full EU-membership

Ukraine is not passive. Ukraine becomes the pivot of a new regional economy.

## Shared Measures

- No new Iron Curtain: The border between Russia and Ukraine must remain open. Free travel of persons, goods, and services should be promoted — ideally via a Schengen-style agreement, without visas or strict controls.

- Redefine NATO: shift toward a European-led defense structure, with the U.S. in a supporting role and Russia included in a consultative capacity, as once proposed around the year 2000.
- Nuclear deterrence doctrine review:
  - Global leaders must clarify the logic and limits of nuclear deterrence
  - Establish mutual declarations of non-first-use and initiate dialogue with China, India, and others
- Develop non-nuclear alternatives:
  - Fast, precise, hybrid-response forces
  - Intelligence cooperation, conflict mediation, de-escalation missions
- Ensure strategic autonomy:
  - Strengthen the European Space Agency (ESA) for autonomous satellite navigation
  - Build digital and defense independence from U.S.-controlled platforms
- Define a shared Arctic vision:

Establish joint frameworks for ecological protection, shipping routes, and resource zones in the Arctic — where Russia and Europe act as co-stewards, preventing militarization and proving peaceful intent.

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This is not a deal to be signed in one night. It is the framework for a generation to rebuild what was broken — not only in buildings and treaties, but in trust. Europe, Russia, and Ukraine all stand at the edge of history. The choice is not who wins. The choice is what we build together next.

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## Safeguards, Violations, and the Problem of Trust

Trust cannot be assumed — not by history, not by signature, not by good intentions. The problem in past peace efforts was not only broken promises, but the absence of clear consequences when treaties were violated. After Yalta, Potsdam, and Budapest, no joint enforcement framework was created for violations. That mistake must not be repeated.

Any new agreement must include consequences by design, not improvisation.

Key elements to include:

- Clear definitions of violations - Examples: unauthorized military activity, covert interference in elections, breaches of demilitarization, disinformation sabotage
- A joint monitoring body, composed of EU, Ukrainian, Russian, and neutral observers, operating with shared access and equal reporting duties. Russian participation must come with a binding commitment to transparency and acceptance of the group's authority
- Escalation paths: Violations trigger pre-agreed response stages: from diplomatic warnings to economic measures to reactivation of mutual defense clauses. No ambiguity.
- Shared appeals process: Disputes over violations or gray areas can be referred to a regional dispute resolution forum, or — with agreement — escalated to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague.

The goal is not blind trust, but designed accountability. If lying is inevitable, then peace must be built in a way that makes lying harder — and consequences automatic.

This framework is not a single moment, but a sequence.

Implementation would unfold over 5 to 10 years, with phased steps, verification at each stage, and room for adjustment.

What matters is not how fast we move — but that we move with purpose, and without delay.

## Perspectives

The following outlines how each party may view the proposal — and what consequences it may carry for the broader global balance.

### Russia

Why this is worse than the Trump Deal:

- Russia gains less aerial space (1 instead of 4 new provinces)
- Also carries the risk of future underlying guerrilla disturbance
- It loses the narrative of total victory - and accepts limits
- No more expansionism towards a Greater Russia through force; borders become definitive
- The U.S. may become less predictable and more threatening at other borders (Baltic, Arctic, Pacific)

Why this is better:

- A covenant with Europe provides stable, long-term economic growth and mutual respect
- Europe's system is based on continuity, unlike the shifting U.S. administrations (see note on foreign policy consistency)
- Access to new and reopened markets for energy, raw materials, and infrastructure investment
- Opens space for historical reconciliation and soft-power rebuilding in the post-Soviet sphere

Framing the Russian Narrative

"Russia helped end the war through wisdom and realism — not conquest. It secured lasting influence, economic revival, and a place at Europe's table. This was not a retreat, but a redirection."

## Ukraine

Why this is worse:

- May lose direct U.S. military backing, leading to reduced access to American defense technology and intelligence
- Risks Western disillusionment or pressure from internal factions who expected NATO or stronger security guarantees

Why this is better:

- Preserves sovereignty with less territorial loss than feared
- Gains broad economic rebuilding support from both Europe and Russia
- Becomes a bridge economy at the center of new trade routes — rail, road, minerals, and digital corridors
- Opens the path to future EU membership, framed as a long-term process of alignment, not a bargaining chip

## Europe

Why this is worse:

- Risks damaging the historic alliance with the United States, creating fear of abandonment
- No longer protected by NATO's automatic umbrella, at least in its current form
- Feels exposed to potential U.S. retaliation — economic or political — for stepping out of line

Why this is better:

- Finally acts as a geopolitical power on its own terms
- Gains freedom from U.S. tariffs and extraterritorial rules that limit European trade autonomy
- Can refocus on internal market strength, boosting economic growth through expanded Eurasian trade
- Has the opportunity to rewrite its role in global diplomacy, becoming a mediator rather than a dependent

## Consequences for the World Order

Beyond the immediate players, this framework (or whatever framework there will be) might have impact far beyond Europe. The balance of power is shifting — demographically, economically, and strategically. What follows are some of the broader consequences and thoughts and the global order.

### Europe

- Gains geopolitical maturity, but faces a shrinking and aging population
- Must act while it still has economic and institutional weight — before demographic decline erodes its global leverage
- Its future as a power will depend on strategic immigration, talent mobility, and technological adaptation

### USA

- Will lose influence, increasingly challenged on two fronts: China and Eurasia
- Faces reduced access to Eurasian markets, rising import fees, and declining investment influence
- Risk economic regression by decades if sanctions provoke retaliation
- May be tempted to pursue expansion in Greenland, Iceland, or the Caribbean to reassert strategic control — a destabilizing path with global consequences

### China

- Stands to benefit if Europe and Russia stabilize independently of the U.S.

- Gains greater control and access to expanded rail-based Silk Road routes through Eurasian / China territory
- May have to recalibrate its strategic ambitions if Eurasia no longer plays East vs. West
- Faces a severe demographic crisis: falling birthrates, aging population, and shrinking workforce
- May turn to deeper economic partnerships with India, Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia to offset these trends
- May push for short- to mid-term strategic gains before demographic decline weakens its long-term position
- Increasing reliance on AI, surveillance, and centralized control to offset labor shortages

## Korea & Japan

- Increasingly caught in strategic tension between China and the U.S., yet deepening trade ties with China and regional partners like Australia
- Facing severe demographic decline, with some of the lowest birthrates in the world — posing long-term challenges to workforce, military capacity, and economic stability
- Risk becoming front-line states in a renewed Pacific standoff
- Need to reassess their strategic alignment amid demographic vulnerability and rising regional tension

## Indian Subcontinent

- Becomes the world's largest population center, with a young, growing, and urbanizing workforce
- Holds a key swing position, capable of aligning selectively with the West, China, or a Eurasian bloc
- Could emerge as the economic growth engine of the 2030s–2040s, if it manages internal reform, infrastructure, and governance challenges
- Bangladesh and Sri Lanka likely will follow similar growth curves
- Pakistan's trajectory remains uncertain, hinging on internal stabilization and regional alignment

## Central Asia / Middle East

- Could gain new relevance as corridors of stability or disruption, depending on how the Eurasian framework handles energy, trade, and religious tensions
- Central Asia may align economically with Russia and China, while the Middle East becomes a battleground of influence between Eurasia, the Gulf, and the US
- The long-term key lies in infrastructure, political inclusion, and post-oil economic planning

## Africa

- Holds untapped potential as the demographic future of the world
- Stands to benefit from diversified alliances, especially if the U.S. retreats and Europe re-engages without neocolonial dynamics and China changes approach from extracting towards value added-chains
- Could become a decisive actor in mineral supply chains, agricultural innovation, and renewable energy partnerships

## South & Latin America

- Present strong opportunities for renewed trade relations, particularly as the U.S. loses regional trust
- Countries like Mexico, Colombia, Brazil, Argentina, and Chile may seek greater independence in economic policy and global partnerships
- Could align with a multipolar trade system that includes Europe, China, and Eurasia

“A new balance of power will not come from war, but from recalibrated needs, shared interests, and mutual restraint.”

—

This is not a simple peace deal. It is a long-term effort — to stabilize a region, to prevent another generation of war, and to recognize that dignity, not dominance, is the foundation of lasting security.

It will not satisfy every ambition. It will not undo the past. But it offers something more important:

A beginning. A framework. A way forward — before it is too late. Now is not the time for perfect solutions. It is the time for responsible ones.

And if this peace cannot be built — if trust is broken again, or the war continues — then Europe must still act. Not to escalate. But to stand with Ukraine, to defend its sovereignty, and to help rebuild a future that war tries to erase. Responsibility does not disappear when dialogue fails. It grows.

Special

# Rebuilding Ukraine

Investment Opportunities with Purpose

Thinking of rebuilding a country that is currently at war. What about risk?. What about gain? Why start thinking on possible investments now?



Gathering Information Outline Plans & Budgets	Preparing Contracts Preparing Project Plan	Finalizing Contracts Start Project
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The Image above shows the global stages from war to relative peace, and in what phase preparation can be done. This enables the investor to balance risks, make choices at the right time while still in the front seat.

### Reasons Why (Not) To Invest Now

#	Why Invest Now	Why Wait
1	First-Mover Advantage	Security Risks
2	High Growth Potential	Legal & Regulatory Uncertainty
3	Geostrategic Importance	Insurance & Financial Risk
4	Global Political Backing	Lack of Clear Exit Strategy
5	Talent & Innovation	Infrastructure Damage & Logistics
6	Agriculture Superpower	Limited Consumer Spending
7	Energy Independence Push	Political Shifts After War
8	Delaying May Cost More	
9	Empathy & Moral Commitment	

## Balanced Scorecard

Perspective	Strategic Goal	Metric/Indicator
Financial	Secure high ROI from undervalued assets in rebuilding economy	IRR, payback period, valuation growth
Customer	Be recognized as a partner in Ukraine's democratic future	Brand sentiment, stakeholder recognition
Internal Processes	Establish early partnerships and local supply chains	Time to market, local partner onboarding
Learning & Growth	Build culturally intelligent teams and adaptive practices	Team readiness, cross-cultural training scores

## Political Phases



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## Special

# Youth Development as National Reconstruction

## A Strategic Framework for Ukraine's Post-War Generation

By Jeff Fountain - Robert Schumann Centre

In every conflict, there is a generation that disappears — into silence, exile, or loss of meaning. In Ukraine, that generation is still within reach. But only if we act. Youth development must be more than training or aid. It is the slow, deliberate reconstruction of trust, responsibility, and belonging. Nation-building begins with those who will one day inherit it.

Five Pillars for Long-Term Impact:

### 1. Trust and Belonging

War fragments identity. Youth across Ukraine — displaced, online, often alone — carry invisible burdens. Rebuilding trust must begin at eye level: through listening, mentorship, and presence. Invest in local institutions that offer relationship: schools, churches, community groups.

### 2. Work and Purpose

Post-war economies often default to emigration or frustration. Ukraine must offer its young citizens something better: a reason to stay. Apprenticeships, youth service corps, regional internships — these are not subsidies. They are foundations of future dignity.

### 3. Family and Responsibility

The family is not just a private structure. It is the smallest unit of recovery. Policies must support family formation, housing, and income stability. Without this, many will delay or discard the very idea of rootedness. A nation cannot rebuild if its children have nowhere to return.

### 4. Learning and Formation

A digital schooling platform must be built not only to recover lost years, but to shape resilient minds. Education must carry content and character: civic memory, ethical reasoning, and skills for a changing economy. Not just coding — but conscience.

## 5. Moral Infrastructure and Community Anchors

Hope requires a place to stand. Local churches, youth movements, sports and cultural centers must be empowered to offer continuity where chaos once reigned. These are not peripheral. They are essential infrastructure for a just and stable society.

### Next Steps & Call to Action

- Appoint a National Youth Recovery Coordinator
- Align the Ministries of Youth, Education, Economic Affairs, Social Policy, Digitalization, under one shared roadmap
- Establish a Donor & Civic Advisory Council to guide transparency and inclusion
- Launch a pilot version of the national digital platform by early 2026, linked to five regional youth hubs
- Secure an initial funding envelope of €250 million from G7, EU, and trusted private partners
- Involve civil society, faith-based networks, diaspora communities, and employers from day one

Do not rebuild Ukraine for its youth. Rebuild it with them.

## 2. Fault-lines & Reflections

Unveiling the hidden cracks: Language, identity, generational gaps, suppressed memory.

## Background

# Return to Babel: Language, Identity, and Belonging

How identity is filtered — not by law, but by design — and what it means to belong

By George A. Raven



“If they are one people with one language, nothing will be impossible for them... So the Lord confused their speech and scattered them over the face of the earth.”

— Genesis 11 (paraphrased)

The Tower of Babel is usually told as a warning: about pride, confusion, collapse. But it also echoes something older. In the creation command, humanity was told to go forth, multiply, and fill the earth. The scattering of languages wasn't the end of culture. It was its beginning.

What followed Babel wasn't destruction — it was pluralism.

Different tongues. Different places. Different ways of being human.

## Europe protects languages — on paper

And yet today, across Europe and far beyond, we find ourselves attempting to reverse that story. To fold back plurality into singularity. To make language serve power, not identity. To treat diversity as danger — and uniformity as strength.

What happens when we try to force a return to Babel? And who benefits when we do?

Europe protects languages. It says so in law. In charter preambles and constitutional clauses, in multilingual websites and minority councils, the message is clear: cultural diversity is not just allowed — it is part of what Europe is.

But legal text doesn't always translate into reality. And exclusion rarely announces itself as law — more often, it comes through procedures, requirements, and silence. The right to speak one's language does not guarantee the right to be understood — by the court, the school, the job examiner, the tax office. The result is a continent where pluralism is promised, but unevenly practiced.

This isn't authoritarianism. It's state logic. And it follows a familiar pattern.

## The Post-Occupation Reflex

Across Eastern Europe, language policy has often followed the same sequence: occupation → independence → reaction. When a state has been ruled by another power, the first act of reclamation is usually linguistic. This was true after the Soviet collapse. But it was also true after the Austro-Hungarian breakup, after the expulsion of Germans following World War II, and even earlier.

Language, in these moments, becomes more than speech. It becomes boundary. Identity. Control.

This explains — but does not excuse — much of what happened after 1989. In Estonia and Latvia, large Russian-speaking populations were left behind when the USSR disintegrated. To build national identity, the new states required proficiency in the state language for citizenship, government work, or access to education. It was a sovereign response. But it also left tens of thousands stateless.

In Ukraine, efforts to strengthen the role of Ukrainian in public institutions culminated in the 2019 language law. It made Ukrainian mandatory in most official contexts — even in regions where the population spoke Russian or Hungarian.

Again — not repression. But not real inclusion either.

Other countries chose more covert paths. Romania, under Ceaușescu, didn't ban Hungarian outright. It simply reshaped demographics, moved populations, and ensured that Hungarian-speaking communities would be outnumbered — and therefore institutionally sidelined. A smarter move than others — and more dangerous in its subtlety. No bans required. Just math.

Elsewhere, post-war Hungary and Czechoslovakia treated German-speaking minorities with harsher tools. Expulsions, removals, erasures. The mechanisms vary — but the pattern holds:

After domination ends, identity hardens. Language becomes territory.

## When Protection Isn't Access

The gap between legal protection and functional participation runs through most of Europe.

You may have the right to speak your language — but if no interpreter is provided, no school is funded, no court recognizes the document, then the right is decorative. In Slovakia, Hungary, and Bulgaria, Roma communities are told their culture is protected — while their children are shunted into special schools, or left with teachers who don't speak Romani at all.

In Latvia, a Russian-speaking grandparent may pass the language test and gain citizenship. But if they don't, they remain a non-citizen — legal but voiceless. In parts of Ukraine, Russian or Hungarian speakers can go to school — but find that their diplomas, exams, and career paths depend entirely on Ukrainian proficiency. Again, no ban. But real consequence.

This is not discrimination by decree. It is filtering by design.

## Russia's Accusation — and the Mirror It Offers

Russia claims to protect Russian speakers in the near abroad. It uses this claim to justify pressure, intervention, even war. And while the motives are hollow, the critique touches something real.

In the Baltics and Ukraine, policies have often made life harder for Russian speakers — not to punish them, but to sever the lingering threads of empire. That effort is understandable. But it becomes dangerous when it makes individuals carry the weight of history.

At the same time, Russia's internal record is no cleaner. It recognizes dozens of minority languages — Tatar, Bashkir, Chuvash — but allows almost none of them to flourish. In 2018, Russia made minority language study optional. Instruction hours dropped. Russian remains the unchallenged default in administration, higher education, media, and law.

So the Kremlin's accusation is a mirror: Europe sees only the propaganda, and misses the reflection. Because while Europe may not repress language, it often allows exclusion to settle quietly. The mechanisms are different. But the outcomes rhyme.

Language has become a tool for sorting, for filtering, for deciding who belongs — and who doesn't.

## When It Works

There are places where this story looks different.

In Belgium, for all its complexity, handles language with constitutional seriousness. Dutch-, French-, and German-speaking communities are formally recognized. Schools, courts, administrations are built around this pluralism. There are frictions. But no one questions the citizenship of the other. French-speaking Belgians do not want to be French. Dutch-speaking Belgians do not identify with the Netherlands. Their languages do not imply different nations — only different voices.

South Tyrol is another working model. Finland protects Swedish and Sámi — not just as cultural ornaments, but as languages with institutional standing. Even Georgia, while asserting its national language, has built local structures for Armenian and Azeri education — and while Russian remains widely spoken, particularly among older generations, it holds no formal status — though a ban seems out of question.

These aren't perfect systems. But they show that linguistic pluralism can be constitutional, lived, and stable.

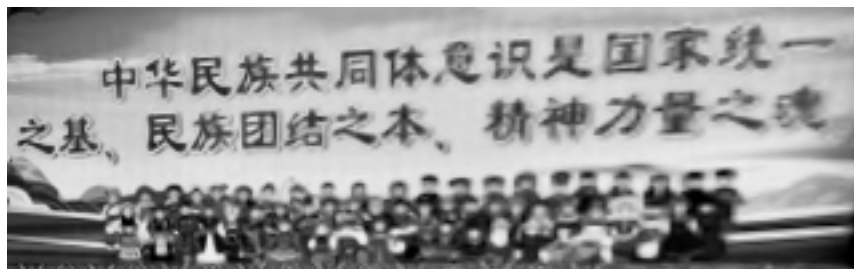
## Consequences

When states make access to society conditional on language — especially when that language once represented the occupier — it is often the most vulnerable who lose: The elderly who cannot pass integration tests. The children who grow up speaking one tongue at home and another at school — but feel at home in neither. The stateless. The sidelined. The quietly filtered out.

You don't need to criminalize a language to erase it. You just need to make it irrelevant to power. And once power speaks only one tongue, everyone else learns to whisper — or to stop speaking entirely. It just needs to be rendered inconvenient. That's enough to disappear it from public life.

Towers are everywhere

This is not only a European question. In the United States, Spanish is not banned — but it is socially ranked. In China, the state celebrates its 56 ethnic minorities with murals and cartoon smiles — but only Mandarin is promoted, taught, funded, and legally dominant. Cultural diversity is framed — but linguistic uniformity is enforced. From Texas to Xinjiang, from Paris to Lviv, language remains a tool of control as much as a medium of culture.



## Conclusion: The Tower We Build

This isn't just about speech. It's about access. About dignity. About whether Europe is willing to live up to what it claims — that identity can be plural, and memory can coexist.

This was never about rewriting laws. It's about how language is used — not to ban, but to sort. To filter. To reward. To quietly close doors. The difference between speaking and being heard is the difference between permission and belonging. And Europe, if it still believes in values, must choose the latter.

Babel was not the end of civilization. It was the beginning of cultures.

To suppress language — or to privilege one above all others — is not progress.

It is a return. A return to Babel. Not to scatter, but to centralize. Not to liberate, but to build a tower. A tower not for God, but for the autocrat. Stone by stone. Tongue by tongue.

The question is not which language dominates. The question is: what kind of world are we building when only one is allowed to speak?

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## Appendix A: Comparative Language Law Table

Country	Minority Language Policy	Russian Language Status	Public Use (Courts, Admin, Signage)	Education Language Law	Notes
Estonia	Recognized (but restricted use)	Not official; ~25% speak it	Allowed in private; limited official use	Gradual transition to Estonian-only schools (by 2030)	Non-citizenship issue for many ethnic Russians
Latvia	Recognized, limited rights	Not official; ~30% speak it	Russian banned in public administration since 2022	Russian schools phased out after 2024 reforms	Referendums rejected Russian co-official status
Lithuania	Recognized	Recognized but minimal presence	Limited use in local government where >60%	Minority language schools allowed	Less confrontational policy
Ukraine	Formerly official regionally (pre-2014)	Now excluded as minority language	Banned from courts and education since 2019	Ukrainian-only law in public education	Criticized by Venice Commission
Hungary	Strong protections (esp. Hungarian abroad)	N/A	Full rights for minorities where present	Minority schools fully legal	Opposes Ukrainian language law for Hungarians
Romania	Minority languages allowed	N/A	Allowed locally where >20% population	Hungarian, Romani schools exist	Hungary often protests treatment of Székely
Slovakia	Official Slovak only	N/A	Use allowed >20% threshold	Slovak mandatory; minority schools exist	Tightened restrictions post-2009
Poland	Recognized	Minority but not regionally concentrated	Limited to cultural institutions	Polish-only schooling, minor bilingual education	Historically assimilative
Finland	Swedish is co-official	Recognized immigrant language	Finnish and Swedish both mandatory	Bilingual schooling protected	Russian community small, integrated
Belgium	Dutch, French, German = official	Russian not recognized	Depends on region (Flemish/Walloon)	Multilingual schooling per region	Highly institutionalized federalism

Switzerland	4 official languages (DE, FR, IT, Romansh)	Russian not recognized	Local autonomy	Schooling depends on canton	Model of linguistic coexistence
France	French-only policy (Jacobin model)	Not recognized	No minority languages in administration	French-only in public schools	Corsican, Breton excluded
Germany	Recognized: Sorbian, Danish etc.	Russian as immigrant language	Regional use permitted	Schooling mainly in German; exceptions exist	Integration over autonomy
Austria	Minority protections exist	Not officially recognized	Recognized where minorities live	Croatian, Slovene schools exist in Carinthia	Stable, limited minorities
Spain	Co-official in regions (Catalan, Basque, Galician)	Russian not recognized	Full autonomy in some regions	Immersion in regional languages legal	Regionalism = deep linguistic rights
Italy	Recognized (Ladin, Slovene, German)	Russian not recognized	Use allowed in designated zones	Some bilingual schooling	Historical minorities only
Czechia	Limited recognition	Not official	Czech only for most purposes	Minority schools exist, rare	Russian declining post-2022
Serbia	Recognized (Hungarian, Romani, etc.)	Russian not recognized	Local use permitted	Schools exist in Hungarian, Slovak, others	Diverse linguistic base
Bosnia-Herzegovina	Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian co-official	Russian not present	Local use defined by canton/entity	Schools use local language depending on region	Post-war decentralization

### Key Observations:

- Baltic States (especially Latvia and Estonia) have strictest Russian language restrictions in the EU.
- Ukraine shifted from multilingual tolerance to strong Ukrainian-only policies post-2014 and especially 2019.
- France remains unique in total exclusion of minority languages from public life.
- Spain, Switzerland, and Belgium represent models of multilingual governance—though not without political strain.
- Russian narratives exaggerate discrimination, but partial truth exists, especially where Soviet settlers were never fully integrated.

## Appendix B: Selected Films on Language, Identity & Exclusion

These selected documentaries explore how language connects — and divides — across societies, institutions, and memory.

Talking Black in America – Social Justice (PBS, 2025)

A powerful documentary that explores how African American Vernacular English affects educational access, legal fairness, and workplace opportunities—demonstrating that dialects, not just languages, can shape belonging and exclusion.

Music Beyond Borders (Minority Rights Group, 2023)

A compelling short film on Kurdish communities in Turkey, exposing how language policies can marginalize culturally recognized groups—often under the guise of national unity.

Speak Freely: Bilingual Lives in Belgium (2022)

An intimate portrait of families navigating the Dutch-French linguistic divide in Brussels, showing how institutional multilingualism functions—and occasionally, how it fractures communities.

Voices Under Pressure: Tatar Education in Russia (2020)

A sobering account of post-2018 language reform in Tatarstan, where removal of mandatory instruction in Tatar schools triggered debate over cultural assimilation, identity, and local autonomy.

## Feature

# The Baltic's Burden

## What a Nation Remembers in the Morning

By A. Richter

“What does a nation remember when it rises in the morning?”

– A question that lingers across the Baltic Sea, where memory and future cross like currents between shores.



## Crossing Waters

In the autumn of 2013, I crossed the Gulf of Finland. Ninety kilometers from Helsinki to Tallinn, aboard a ferry filled with quiet commuters. Among them, Estonian workers on their weekly rhythm: five days building in Finland, two days back home. Some reading a newspaper. Others talking - a beer in hand. Some stared out over the dark water. Their voices carried not complaint, but the weary cadence of purpose. Work, family, return. Their movement wasn't migration in the classic sense — it was economic necessity in free circulation. Still, something felt lopsided: a weight was shifting from one shore to the other.

That weight is part of the Baltic's burden.

On the ferry, I met a man who told me something I later asked three others to confirm. During Soviet times, Estonian families would tune their antennas to Helsinki and watch Finnish television. The news, the Western shows — it was their glimpse into another world. The Soviets knew. They couldn't trace your clicks or search history back then. But they had other ways. In school, children were sometimes asked to draw what they'd seen on television. If they sketched Finnish anchors or foreign images, it was a quiet signal. The house was watching the wrong sky.

## The Long Shadow of Empire

Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania. These countries on the northeastern edge of the European Union form more than a regional cluster — they are a passage, a boundary, a historic compression zone. For centuries, they were run over, divided, absorbed: by Sweden, Prussia, the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, and most enduringly, by the Russian Empire.

Lithuania, once the Grand Duchy and proud half of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, retains a complicated pride. It was once the second-largest state in Europe, with influence extending far into modern Ukraine and Belarus. But that legacy came at a cost: conquest, partition, and the burden of having been both victim and empire.

Estonia and Latvia have Hanseatic roots — seafaring, trade-driven, German-influenced. But they too were swept up by Tsarist and later Soviet tides. Today, they carry the memory of forced collectivization, deportations, and a generation that still speaks Russian by default — not always by choice.

These entangled legacies linger in language, policy, and posture.

## The Burden of Memory

Vilnius was once known as the Jerusalem of the North. Its Jewish population shaped the intellectual and spiritual life of Eastern European Jewry. But the Holocaust struck early and hard here. In his book *In Europa*, Dutch writer Geert Mak recounts how local collaboration in the early extermination of Jews preceded even Nazi occupation in some areas. Whether out of ideology, fear, or long-suppressed grievance, the violence was swift and devastating. This dark fact, too, is part of the Baltic burden.

And the minorities that remained — Russians, Poles, Belarusians — did not always feel welcome in the new nations that emerged after 1991. Some language policies,

though rooted in legitimate national restoration, began to exclude. In Estonia, large Russian-speaking communities found themselves outside the full circle of civic inclusion. In Ukraine, similar dynamics fed resentment in Donbas. The principle of “one state, one language” clashes with a multilingual reality born of empire.

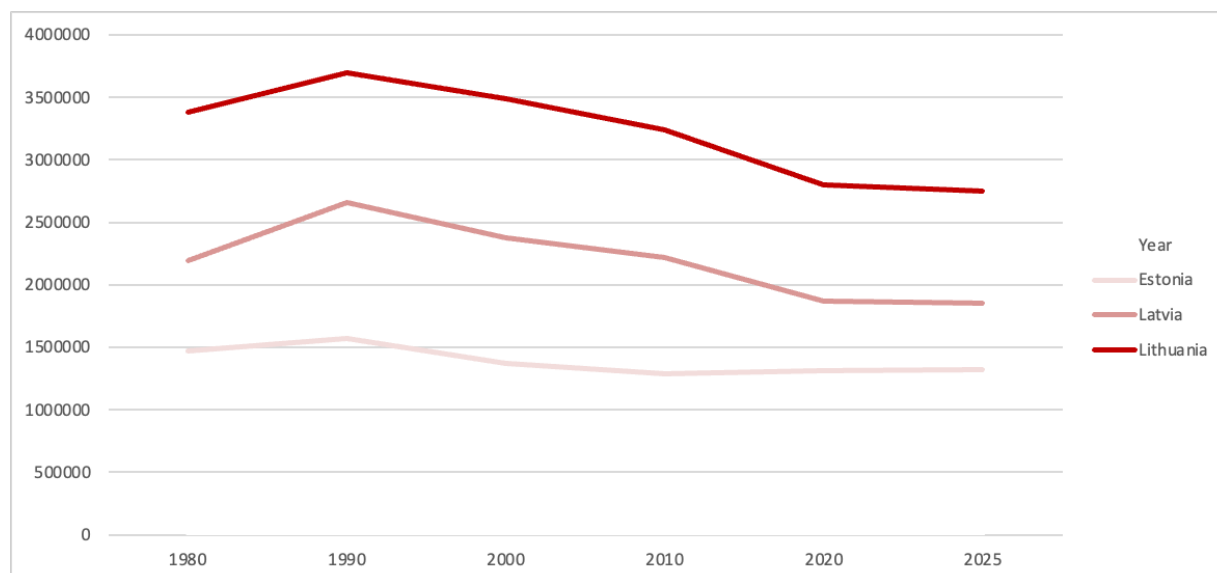
It is a delicate balance: affirming national identity without erasing lived diversity.

Background Insight:

For a deeper comparison of language laws across Europe — from South Tyrol to Samtskhe-Javakheti — see our Background article [Return to Babel: Language, Borders, and Belonging](#). It traces how states use language as a tool of nation-building, sometimes at the cost of pluralism. The Baltic case is not unique.

## The Migration Dilemma

The Baltic States have lost people — by war, by exile, and now, by aspiration.



Source from World Bank, UNDESA, Eurostat

Since the 1990s, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania have all experienced population decline. Lithuania alone dropped from 3.7 million to around 2.8 million between 1990 and 2020. Much of this is due to emigration: young professionals, skilled workers, entire families seeking better wages in Germany, the UK, or Finland.

And yet, this movement has not been replaced. Refugees from Ukraine have been accepted, but broader immigration — from Syria, Afghanistan, or Africa — meets resistance. Demographic anxiety mixes with cultural conservatism. “We want our people back,” is a common refrain. But economies move faster than sentiment.

The result is a generation gap — and an emotional one.

# Strategic Position, Fragile Ground

Geographically, the Baltics are a hinge: between Scandinavia and Central Europe, between Poland and the Russian sphere. Their ports — Tallinn, Riga, Klaipėda — are coveted logistical points. Their rail lines, energy grids, and digital networks are crucial to NATO and the EU. But they are also vulnerable.

Russia's aggression in Ukraine has reignited fears. The Suwałki Gap, a 100-km corridor between Poland and Lithuania, remains a strategic pressure point. And in some Russian-speaking districts, particularly in Estonia, the risk of psychological subversion is real. If language laws isolate, and if loyalty is questioned, some may be seduced by false narratives of "liberation."

This, too, is part of the burden — not of guilt, but of responsibility.

## A Bridge, Not a Buffer, A Call for Action

The Baltic States must not be treated as a buffer zone. Nor as fragile peripheries to be coddled. Their burden is also their potential: to be a strategic bridge. In cybersecurity, Estonia leads. In civic innovation, all three countries are laboratories. Their cultural history, from Jewish Vilnius to Hanseatic Riga, deserves recognition, not simplification.

Europe must not only defend the Baltics — it must invest in them. In infrastructure, in population return programs, in nuanced minority policy. And in a narrative that shows: these lands are not the edge. They are part of the center.

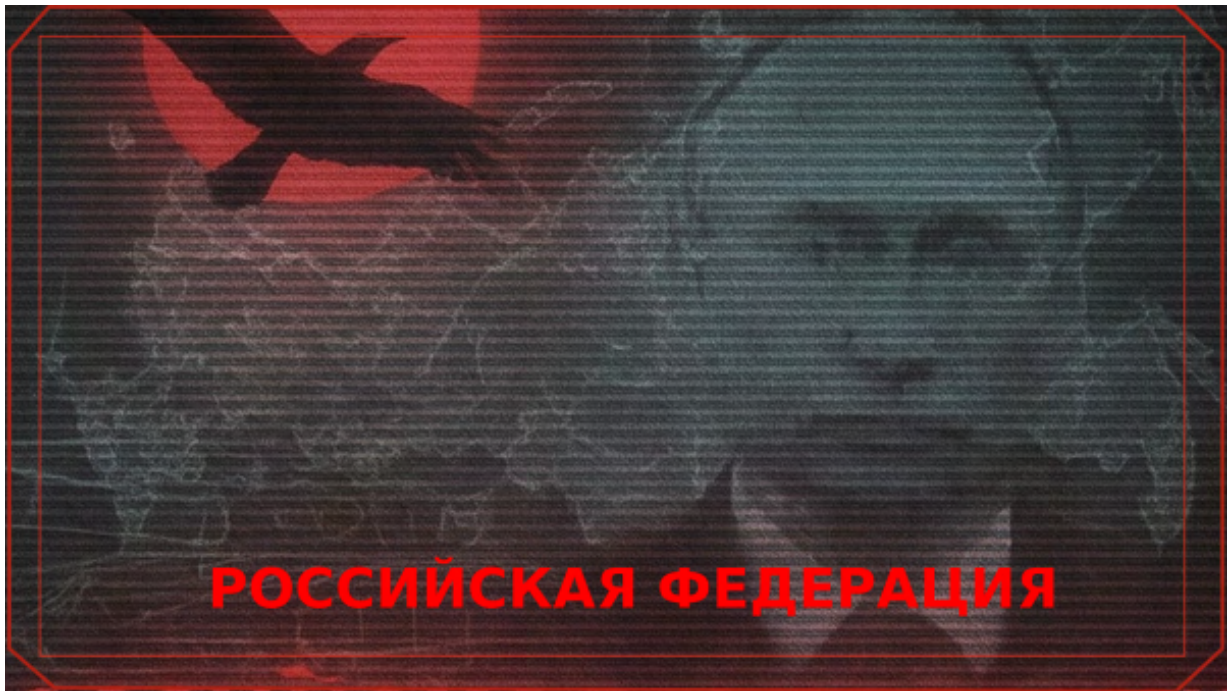
## Background

# Russia's War Machine: How It Fights Without Winning (Q2 2025)

As negotiations flicker in the background of a grinding war, the endurance of Russia's war effort remains a decisive — yet often misunderstood — factor. This is not a war Russia is winning. But neither is it collapsing. It is grinding forward, powered by foreign lifelines, decades-old tanks, exhausted manpower, and an industrial base struggling under pressure. This article explores how Russia's military machine continues to function, what sustains it, and why that fragility matters now — especially as diplomacy reawakens.

## Key Insights

- Russian military operations increasingly depend on Iranian drones, North Korean shells, and Chinese dual-use tech.
- Soviet-era tanks and low-morale penal units form the backbone of current offensives.
- Equipment flow to Syria and Africa has thinned, revealing domestic prioritization.
- Without external disruption, Russia could sustain its current pace another 6–9 months — at high human cost.



## I. Lifelines: Who Keeps Russia Supplied?

Russia's military machine is still moving — but not alone. Beneath the image of domestic resilience lies a growing dependence on foreign supply chains that allow the Kremlin to sustain its campaign without exhausting its industrial base. These lifelines are unofficial, deniable, and in many cases, illegal. But they are also essential.

Three foreign states form the backbone of Russia's external supply chain: North Korea, Iran, and China. Each provides different materials, each operates with plausible deniability, and each fills a gap that Russia cannot close on its own.

- North Korea has emerged as a top supplier of artillery ammunition, delivering an estimated 1 million+ 122mm and 152mm shells since late 2023. These deliveries, largely moved by rail via the Khasan–Tumangang crossing, are now assessed to account for between 70–100% of Russian artillery usage on the Ukrainian front<sup>24</sup>. This dependency grew as Russia's own stockpiles thinned and domestic production failed to scale beyond 2–3 million shells annually.
- Iran continues to ship Shahed-136 drone kits, which are assembled in facilities near Yelabuga, in Tatarstan. These drones are used for both surveillance and kamikaze-style strikes, often targeting Ukraine's power grid and transport hubs. OSINT from Janes and ISW confirms that the Caspian Sea remains the primary maritime route for these shipments<sup>29</sup>.
- China, though less overt, provides a steady flow of dual-use components — including optics, bearings, and machine tools — through overland trade hubs like

Manzhouli. These components feed into Russia's degraded tank and drone production lines, filling gaps left by the collapse of Western electronics imports<sup>42</sup>.

None of these actors admit to supplying weapons. But customs data, satellite imagery, and shipping analysis confirm that Russia's war effort would not be viable without them.

Sidebar – EU Narrative:

European officials warn that Russia has effectively outsourced its logistics. Sanctions regimes, they argue, are now being tested not on paper, but in the gray zone of authoritarian cooperation. These lifelines are fragile — subject to disruption, diplomacy, and strategic interdiction. But for now, they remain the arteries through which Russia bleeds just slowly enough to keep fighting.



## II. Industry at Full Strain

Russia's domestic arms industry has proven more adaptive than many expected. But that adaptability hides a deeper truth: the system is no longer scaling — it is stretching.

The signs are everywhere. From Soviet-era tanks pulled out of storage to factory floors working double shifts to meet bare-minimum quotas, the Russian defense-industrial complex is in a race against its own obsolescence. Production continues, but expansion is limited by capacity, workforce constraints, and foreign component shortages.

- Tank retrofits are the clearest example. In Q2 2025, multiple OSINT threads confirm the deployment of T-55 and T-62 tanks on the Zaporizhzhia and Donetsk fronts<sup>27</sup>. These platforms, last produced in the 1970s and 80s, are being restored in Uralvagonzavod and other regional plants. Analysts estimate Russia can refurbish 80–100 tanks per month — just enough to compensate for frontline losses, but not enough to shift battlefield momentum.
- New production lines remain hamstrung by electronics and optics shortages, many of which were previously imported from Western or East Asian sources. While Chinese components have partly filled the gap, they are not always compatible or timely, leading to bottlenecks in UAV and IFV assembly<sup>42</sup>.
- Export de-prioritization marks another constraint. Russia has significantly reduced arms deliveries to Syria, Mali, and the Central African Republic, rerouting those resources back to the Ukrainian front<sup>43</sup>. Maritime tracking to Tartus shows fewer shipments than at any point since 2019, and Wagner-linked forces in Africa report delays in restocking.

Russian state media points to an industrial revival. In reality, production is real — but not limitless.

- Factories like Uralvagonzavod and Almaz-Antey are operating full-time.
- Yet they face key constraints:
- Lack of skilled labor (due to mobilization)
- Shortage of high-precision electronics
- Aging or sanctioned equipment

Much of Russia's current output involves refurbishing Soviet stocks, not producing modern systems.

In total, Russia's defense base is surviving — but barely. It cannot expand output to match Western aid flows to Ukraine. Instead, it is forced to cannibalize, consolidate, and rely increasingly on allies whose own industries are limited.

This is not a sustainable war economy. It is a defensive posture disguised as persistence.

### III. Manpower: Disposable Battalions and Political Calculations

If weapons are Russia's external lifeline, manpower is its internal gamble.

While the Kremlin avoids a second nationwide mobilization, it continues to feed the front through a system of invisible conscription and expendable formations. The burden is no longer equally shared. Instead, it is absorbed by the country's farthest regions — and by those considered expendable.

The clearest indicator of this strategy is the escalating use of penal units. Often composed of convicts granted early release in exchange for service, these formations are now a standard element of Russian assault operations. In the Avdiivka and Robotyne sectors, UK MOD and independent OSINT sources confirm that penal battalions suffered 50–60% casualty rates in Q2 2025 alone<sup>[35][48]</sup>. These soldiers are typically sent into exposed positions with minimal artillery or armor support.

Parallel to this, Russia has increased the deployment of conscripts from Far Eastern territories such as Khabarovsk Krai and Buryatia. These troops are often far from media attention, face less public scrutiny, and — according to Meduza and Gulagu.net reports — are transferred in low-visibility waves by train or air<sup>[31]</sup>.

The training pipeline has also been compressed. Intercepts verified by Ukrainian military intelligence suggest that many soldiers now receive 30–45 days of basic training — in some cases, as little as three weeks — before being rotated into combat units<sup>[44]</sup>.

- Penal battalions: used for high-risk assaults; heavy losses
- Far East conscripts: less political resistance; quietly mobilized
- Accelerated training: lower readiness; faster rotation

Sidebar – Ukrainian View:

"Russia is burning through people to save its machines," said one GUR analyst. "The T-90 survives. The man does not." The result is a manpower strategy that minimizes domestic unrest by externalizing its costs — geographically, socially, and ethically. It preserves Moscow's political balance, but only by treating lives as a renewable resource. This may prolong the war. It does not make victory more likely.

Narrative Snapshot — Global Times (Beijing, April 2025):

“Russia defends regional stability against Western interference. Its partnerships with friendly states sustain peace and strategic balance.”

## IV. ISR and Surveillance Weakness

Precision warfare depends not only on firepower, but on eyes — and in 2025, Russia’s ability to see the battlefield is increasingly compromised.

At the heart of its intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) effort are imported technologies. Iranian Shahed drones, assembled in Tatarstan, and Chinese optical systems embedded in UAVs and artillery guidance kits form the backbone of this capability. But that backbone is brittle.

According to Janes and the Institute for the Study of War, Russia’s ISR effectiveness is directly tied to the continuity of these imports. Any disruption in Iranian drone kits or Chinese sensor exports could trigger a 30–60 day collapse in targeting precision<sup>[50]</sup>. While Russia touts its domestic innovation, OSINT and intercepted technical complaints point to ongoing integration problems and replacement delays when foreign systems fail or arrive incomplete.

- Shahed drones enable deep-strike targeting and grid saturation
- Chinese optics power artillery spotting, reconnaissance drones, and fire correction systems
- ISR decay is visible in recent strike misses and failed cruise missile raids<sup>29^42^50</sup>

These aren’t just battlefield issues — they’re strategic ones. Without effective ISR, Russian missile strikes become area bombardments. Artillery becomes wasteful. And the cost of every engagement rises.

Sidebar – Western View:

Some NATO planners now refer to Russia’s ISR system as a “house of mirrors” — appearing intact, but fragmented behind the glass.

Russia can survive degraded ISR. But it cannot win with it. Its battlefield visibility now rests on fragile supply routes and diplomatic ambiguity. Cut those threads, and the lights go out.

### Update – Strategic Bombers Hit Inside Russia

In late May and early June 2025, Ukraine executed a series of deep strikes on Russian airbases housing long-range bombers, reportedly damaging or destroying Tu-22M3 and Tu-95 aircraft at multiple sites. These attacks, confirmed by satellite imagery and open-source verification, pierced Russia’s supposed rear-area security and exposed critical ISR failures. Despite Russia’s investment in layered defenses and imported surveillance gear, Ukraine demonstrated the ability to identify, target, and hit high-value strategic assets well beyond the front. The strikes are a reminder

that surveillance degradation is not an abstract weakness — it translates into real vulnerability, even at the heart of Russia’s strategic deterrence infrastructure.

## V. Strategic Outlook: Sustainability Without Victory

Russia’s war machine is not about victory. Not anymore.

### Endurance

By Q2 2025, it has become an exercise in endurance — a military posture calibrated not to advance decisively, but to remain intact long enough to shape political outcomes. The goal is to convince the world that Russia cannot be defeated, and therefore, must be negotiated with.

Our analysis of the Signals suggests that Russia can sustain its current operational tempo for another 6–9 months, assuming no major supply disruption. That estimate rests on the continuity of three conditions:

1. Unbroken foreign supply chains from North Korea, Iran, and China
2. Continued industrial improvisation, including tank retrofits and dual-use imports
3. Human reserves — political tolerance for losses in penal units and distant provinces

If any of these breaks, the war effort will contract rapidly. If all three hold, Russia may still not win — but it will not collapse either.

This is the paradox of Russia’s war in 2025: it is both precarious and persistent. It lacks the strength to overrun Ukraine, but enough scaffolding to remain a threat. Its exports have thinned, its industry is strained, and its soldiers are often undertrained and overexposed — but the system holds.

### Update — June 2025: Military Production Surge

Recent reports suggest Russia is pushing its defense industry to “wartime speed,” with output increases not seen since the Cold War. New plants have opened or retooled to produce drones, missiles, and armored vehicles. Satellite imagery and procurement data indicate expanded operations at key sites in Tula, Nizhny Tagil, and Rostov. While capacity constraints remain (notably in optics and electronics), Russia

appears determined to overwhelm attrition through volume — even if quality and survivability degrade. The logic is simple: produce faster than Ukraine and its allies can destroy.

This acceleration suggests that the Kremlin is not preparing for peace — but for a long war of exhaustion.

## Strategic Leverage: Where Sanctions Could Bite

With foreign supply lines propping up Russia’s war machine, the effectiveness of targeted sanctions deserves renewed attention. Four pressure points stand out:

- Iran: Apply pressure on maritime routes in the Caspian corridor — especially via inspections, regional partnerships, or diplomatic exposure.
- China: Escalate scrutiny on dual-use exports through secondary sanctions targeting firms or logistics intermediaries.
- North Korea: Monitor and disrupt logistics through the Khasan–Tumangang rail corridor and North Korean shipping nodes.
- Africa: Freeze Wagner Group and Rosoboronexport’s remaining operations in Mali, CAR, and other strategic outposts.

A full breakdown is provided in the accompanying Sanctions Brief.

## Predicted Effects

(based on prior sanctions modeling and disruption patterns)

Sanction	Short-term effect	Long-term risk
Iran UAV logistics	ISR degradation within 30–60 days	Escalation in Middle East (retaliation via proxies)
Chinese optics crackdown	Reduced drone guidance & armor production	PRC backlash; export rerouting via SE Asia
NK shell interdiction	Shell shortage within 3 months	Increased black market workarounds
Syria/Africa disruption	Marginal strategic gain	Minimal effect on Ukraine warfront

## Decision Support Summary

Highest Impact: Iranian UAV maritime disruption

Most Achievable: NK logistics interdiction via rail/maritime monitoring

Highest Risk: Sanctioning Chinese state-linked tech firms

Strategic Combo: 1 + 3 (UAVs + shells) yields maximum frontline degradation without immediate global escalation

Forecast Summary:

- Russia's endurance is real, but conditional
- Human losses are the hidden cost of this stability
- Western leverage lies not in speed, but in disruption

In the coming months, policymakers will ask whether Russia is ready for peace. This report offers a different lens: Russia may not want peace — but it needs fewer failures to keep fighting.

# Sanctions Brief: Strategic Pressure Points to Undermine Russia's Wartime Resilience

## Sanctions at the Edge: Disrupting Russia's Lifelines Without Escalation

Version: May 2025

Prepared for: Raven Intelligence / Broad Horizon

As Russia's war effort in Ukraine grinds on, its ability to endure is increasingly tied to a fragile web of external supply lines. This brief outlines four targeted sanctions paths — Iranian drones, Chinese components, North Korean shells, and African operations — that could weaken Russia's operational tempo without triggering full-scale escalation. For each, we assess strategic viability, escalation risk, and likely battlefield impact.

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### 1. The Caspian Corridor: Iranian Drone Transfers to Russia

Strategic Rationale:


Iran's supply of Shahed drones to Russia has become a backbone of the latter's low-cost strike capability. These transfers are maritime in nature, exploiting the Caspian Sea's legal ambiguity and limited international oversight.

Key Pressure Options:

- Expose and sanction port intermediaries in Bandar Anzali (Iran) and Astrakhan (Russia).
- Blacklist shipping and freight firms involved in the corridor.
- Amplify satellite + insurance intelligence to dissuade reflagging and uninsurable voyages.

Risks/Limitations:

Direct interdiction is legally fraught. Denial of services (marine insurance, logistics underwriting, customs facilitation) is more feasible via EU/U.S. coordination.

 Signal Link: [Signal #29 — Iran Shahed Drone Transfers]

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## 2. Dual-Use Electronics: Chinese Support for Russian Defense Assembly

Strategic Rationale:

Russia maintains drone and missile production through reassembled imports — notably from Chinese suppliers in Shenzhen, Hong Kong, and via Erenhot–Manzhouli rail hubs.

Key Pressure Options:

- Secondary sanctions on firms exporting dual-use components:
  - Bearings for UAVs
  - FPV drone chipsets
  - PCB systems
- Monitor rail corridors feeding into Yekaterinburg and Rostov.
- Pressure Chinese banks on trade finance exposure.

Evidence Base:

- Janes Defense 2025 tech reports
- OSINT customs data
- UAV teardown reports (Kyiv, March 2025)

Limitations:

Public confrontation risks escalation. Quiet dissuasion may be more effective (e.g. customs holds, insurance downgrades).

 Signal Link: [Signal #42 — Chinese Electronics & Components]

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## 3. North Korea–Russia Ammunition Corridor

#### Strategic Rationale:


North Korea supplies up to 100% of Russia's artillery shells via the Khasan–Tumangang rail junction, reportedly over 1 million shells to date.

#### Key Pressure Options:

- Track rail flows via satellite/customs data.
- Target logistics intermediaries and Chinese brokers.
- Enforce restrictions on renamed NK defense exporters.

#### Limitations:

Pyongyang likely ignores direct pressure; instead, squeeze brokers, financiers, and shipping choke points.

 Signal Link: [Signal #24 — NK Shell Transfers to Russia]

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## 4. Africa: Disrupt Russia's Low-Cost Strategic Depth

#### Strategic Rationale:

Russia's extractive ops in Mali, Sudan, CAR, and Libya fund war efforts and support Wagner-linked deployments. These zones also serve for drone testing and proxy manpower extensions.

#### Key Pressure Options:

- Designate Rosoboronexport affiliates and Wagner fronts:
  - Gold and diamond trade
  - Telecoms and encryption services
  - Private security contracts
- Raise visibility in U.N., AU, and sanctions coalitions
- Amplify human rights documentation

 Signal Link: [Signal #43 — Export Contraction to Africa]

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## Strategic Forecast

If executed in concert, these measures would:

- Disrupt Russia's resupply rhythm
- Increase operational cost per campaign month

- Create diplomatic friction among partner states

### Decision Matrix Summary:

Target Area	Short-Term Impact	Strategic Risk
 Iran (UAVs)	ISR degradation (30–60d)	Proxy escalation in Middle East
 China (electronics)	Reduced UAV/tank assembly	PRC backlash & rerouting risk
 North Korea (shells)	Ammunition shortage (90d)	Black market adaptation risk
 Africa (exports)	Minimal Ukraine effect	Low escalation

### Recommended Strategy:

- High Impact: Disrupt Iranian UAV logistics
- Most Feasible: NK rail and shipping surveillance
- Risk-Managed Combo: Pair Iran + NK to degrade Russia's firepower without provoking wider retaliation.

## Reflection

# The Sumy Attack: Beyond Violence Understanding the Message



On Sunday, Russian forces launched a strike on the Ukrainian city of Sumy, destroying homes and infrastructure. The timing of the attack, on Palm Sunday, a day of peace, was particularly shocking. It should have brought quiet, brought fire instead.

War is always brutal. But this was something different. A strike on a holy day shared by both Russians and Ukrainians sent a message far beyond military logic. It said: nothing is sacred. Not people. Not cities. Not memory. The target was not only physical — it was emotional, symbolic, cultural. It turned violence into contempt. Contempt into hatred.

“This is not the fog of war. It is a clear act of hatred — and it must be condemned without hesitation.”

We must not look away. Silence will not heal. Some things cross a line so clear that failing to speak is its own betrayal. Attacking a civilian city on Palm Sunday is such a moment. If we do not name it for what it is, if we do not name it for what it is, we risk normalizing the deliberate targeting of civilians — and undermining every honest effort to imagine peace.

If peace is still possible, it will not come through silence or appeasement — but through clarity, justice, and a commitment to rebuilding what’s been shattered. A Eurasian Covenant of Peace may feel out of place in a moment like this. But peace, if it ever returns, will begin not with treaties — but with repentance, justice, and the courage to believe that hatred does not have the final word.

# 3. Power & Projection

Between empires and alliances — how power moves, and how Europe must respond.

## Feature

# Empire Logic

How states exploit minorities, mandates, and maps to hold ground

By G. Raven

## Transnistria: A Beginning

In 2010 I travelled through Transnistria. I had flown into Chişinău and planned to exit through Odessa. I knew there might be an issue — I just didn't expect it to be this kind. When I reached the Ukrainian airport, I was pulled from the passport control line. No Moldova exit stamp. I had entered Ukraine, yes — but via a place that doesn't officially exist. And they made a remark on it.

Yet everything had functioned. The road was paved. The checkpoints stood. The peace army was present. Transnistria has no recognition — but it operates. It exists in a status quo. Moldova cannot join NATO or the EU while this unresolved territory remains. That is the method: create a problem that has no solution. Hold a zone open, not to win it, but to make others lose time.

What looked like absence was presence. That was the lesson.

## Russia's Method, Habit, Doctrine

Russia's recent behavior is not erratic. It is structured. Since the early 2000s, and with accelerating clarity since 2014, Russian foreign and military policy has operated according to a set of internal rules — shaped by history, adapted to weakness, and expressed through calculated action. This is not nostalgia for empire. It is the reactivation of a usable method.

The doctrine emphasizes strategic depth over fixed borders, influence zones over alliances, and control by ambiguity rather than declaration. While European leaders often speak in terms of law, order, and deterrence, the Kremlin speaks — and acts — in terms of reach, denial, and narrative advantage. The result is not chaos, but a reasserted logic of power rooted in imperial habit.

## Influence Over Space

In the Russian system, security is not defined by distance, but by influence over space. A friendly neighbor is not enough if it can act independently. States that refuse alignment are seen as threats by definition. This explains the enduring friction with Ukraine, Georgia, and Moldova — not because they threaten Russia militarily, but because they refuse to belong.

Where Western models define sovereignty by law and borders, the Russian doctrine defines it by control. The space between Russia and its perceived adversaries must remain flexible, influenceable, and, when necessary, contested. A fully independent Ukraine aligned with the West is not just unwanted. It is impermissible.

## Narrative as Precondition

Long before troops enter a contested space, the Russian state constructs the rationale. The role of narrative is not reactive. It is preparatory. Themes like antifascism, Slavic unity, Western decadence, “anti-corruption”, or “protection of compatriots” are part of a long-term vocabulary designed to justify any future move. The words come first. Then the map changes.

These narratives are repeated across channels: MID.ru press briefings, presidential speeches, local referendum justifications, and educational materials. Over time, they create not only legitimacy but a sense of inevitability. By the time an area is annexed or recognized, the justification has already been rehearsed into doctrine.

In time, it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. An accusation of nazism, corruption or Western decadence can easily be reversed-engineered afterwards.

## Identity as Instrument

Russian-speaking populations abroad are not treated as diaspora — they are treated as latent assets. Across Ukraine, the Baltics, Central Asia, and the Caucasus, language and cultural affiliation are activated when geopolitically useful. Moscow presents itself not merely as a state, but as a guardian of a transnational identity.

This structure follows a recurring pattern: assert concern, offer protection, generate presence. In Crimea and Donbas, it was citizenship and media. In Transnistria and

South Ossetia, peacekeeping forces and local parliaments. The people on the ground may or may not support integration — but the identity card makes them part of a broader strategic map.

## Anchoring, Not Conquering

The full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022 was not a return to traditional warfare. It was an extension of anchoring behavior. Even as Russian forces failed to capture Kyiv or secure rapid gains, they achieved structural disruption: seizing land corridors, controlling water access, undermining energy infrastructure, and fracturing Ukraine’s reconstruction timeline.

Victory is not the only outcome the system values. Anchoring — the act of making reintegration, EU accession, or NATO alignment impossible — is often sufficient. This explains why Russia is willing to absorb enormous costs for limited territorial gain. The strategic effect lies in shaping the possible, not just in claiming ground.

And exactly this - is a frightening perspective for Ukraine. To avoid at all costs.

## Toolkit: A Pattern of Control

Russia’s empire logic is not an ideology. It is a repeatable method.

Method	Function	Example
Recognize	Highlight identity to justify attention or presence	Crimea, Donbas (pre-2014)
Protect	Frame military posture as humanitarian or civilizational	Georgia (2008), Ukraine (2022)
Destabilize	Use proxies, cyber, media to weaken domestic cohesion	Moldova, US elections (2016)
Anchor	Seize or deny critical corridors, infrastructure	Crimea land bridge, Zaporizhzhia
Legitimize	Use referenda or legalism to consolidate partial control	Donetsk, Luhansk votes (2022)
Normalize	Shift education, media, bureaucracy toward Russian state	Russian curriculum in Crimea
Project	Export narrative via media, diplomacy, digital proxies	RT, MFA.ru, X/Twitter amplification
Freeze	Sustain unresolved conflict zones	Transnistria, Abkhazia, South Ossetia

## Timeline of Applied Empire Logic (1989–2025)

Year	Location	Russian Action	Empire Method
1992	Transnistria	Conflict sustained post-intervention	Freeze, Influence
1994–1999	Chechnya	Two wars, full reintegration	Suppress, Normalize
2003	Georgia	Rose Revolution rejected Russian-aligned path	Strategic setback
2004	Ukraine	Orange Revolution blocked pro-Kremlin return	Narrative collapse

2006	Ukraine/Georgia	Energy cutoffs, coercion	Leverage, Destabilize
2007	Estonia	Cyberattack after Soviet monument removal	Deter, Disrupt
2007–2008	Bulgaria	Russian espionage and political pressure	Influence, Spy
2008	Georgia	South Ossetia war, recognition of territories	Protect, Freeze
2010–2024	Hungary	Energy dependence, EU vetoes, illiberal ties	Influence, Client State
2013–2014	Ukraine	Euromaidan, fall of Yanukovich	Pretext for territorial method
2014	Crimea/Donbas	Annexation and proxy war	Anchor, Legitimize
2015	Syria	Military base, regime support	Project, Sustain
2016	US/EU	Election interference, disinfo	Destabilize
2016	Montenegro	Coup attempt by Russian-linked agents	Destabilize
2020	Belarus	Lukashenko supported post-election	Buffer maintenance
2021–2023	Bulgaria	Spy ring, energy pressure, diplomatic tension	Intelligence, Pressure
2022	Ukraine	Full invasion, referenda, occupation	Corridor denial, Normalize
2023–2025	Moldova	Gagauzia unrest, Transnistria pressure	Influence, Fragmentation

## Relational Power: Autocracy and Financial Systems

Empire logic doesn't only move through armies or referenda. It also moves through money.

Across autocratic systems — Russia, China, Hungary, North Korea, Venezuela, Serbia, the UAE, even the United States — networks exist to protect wealth, bypass accountability, and preserve rule. These include money laundering systems, offshore vehicles, media alliances, and legal insulation.

Referring to Anne Applebaum: she calls this structure Autocracy Inc. The name is not essential, though it helps understand. The mechanism is what matters.

When power is coordinated across borders without democratic checks, when systems are bent to protect concentrated interests, and when narratives are aligned without transparency — the structure is no longer national. It is cooperative denial. That is empire logic applied across systems.

## Unaccountable Power

What links Russia, Trump, Musk, Orban, and others is not allegiance. It is structure.

Power becomes personal. Decisions are made without oversight. Platforms replace institutions. Leaders act without being corrected. When Musk disables satellite coverage in wartime, when Trump cancels international aid in a single move — the results are not theoretical. Programs stop. People die. No one is held accountable.

This is not rhetoric. It is structural behavior. It operates outside process and beyond reversal. And it is no less dangerous when cloaked in democracy than when driven by Kremlin methods.

That, too, is empire logic.

## Picturing the Past

# Postponed Peace in Transnistria

The existence of Transnistria is the first Post-Soviet example of Russian longstanding influence in its border zone, as referenced in the Empire Logic article. It is still one of the most visible and significant examples too, as it visualizes a real life Soviet Styled state. And it keeps Moldova tight, preventing it from participating in other treaties or cooperational initiatives.

A view inside, in 2010. It's mainly Smirnov, Sheriff and Medvedev that you see.



Barricades at the Moldovan Border



Crossing the Bender Bridge, with the old Fortress on the left where the Russian Peace Army has it's quarters.



UAZ-469 or UAZ-3151-type light utility vehicle



T-34 Tank Monument in front of the House of Soviets.



Walking the Seventies or Eighties, one does not expect LED Traffic Lights



Here, Lenin still stands on high ground



In Cooperation with Russia lays our Power. The handshake is everywhere



Beautiful Soviet Art



Volga GAZ-31105 parked outside a government building. Still used by officials



The promise of Paradise, along the river



ZIL-130 truck still in operation. Long obsolete in Russia. Still used here. The past doesn't return. It just never left



A Watchtower guarding the border with Ukraine



Some borders are the end of the world

## Essay

# The Geographical Pivot of Constraints

How supply chains and constraint, will shape the global struggle

By A. Richter

## I. Three Visions of Expansion

Before the lines of conflict were drawn, the world was seen through the lens of reach.

Alfred Thayer Mahan envisioned power in sea lanes — the ability to project strength beyond sight. Friedrich Ratzel and later Haushofer interpreted space as organic necessity — Lebensraum as the natural hunger of a growing nation. The railway, unromantic but essential, gave empires inland arteries. Steel replaced sails. Coal replaced conquest.

Each vision sought control. Not only over land, but over how land moved — what could be extracted, mobilized, secured. They were not merely military doctrines. They were metaphysical blueprints: maps of how empires understood themselves.

## II. From Mackinder's Pivot to Today

Then came Mackinder. In 1904, he gave voice to a theory that reoriented the axis of geopolitical thought. His Heartland theory didn't just argue for geography. It argued for inversion: that the future belonged not to maritime empires, but to those who could consolidate the heartland — the pivot zone, the inaccessible interior.

He saw the world not as a sea to command, but as a core to hold. Many came after him - though his thesis is still being used in geopolitical thinking.

Today, we no longer conquer space. That was at least the general thought until recently - at this moment we experience a revival of Empire-thinking but more for personal (ego) reasons. The actual thesis is more aligned on innovation and

technology. Whoever has the most advanced technology rules. The offspring of it is visible in a competition on getting Rare Earth for example.

### III. The Philosophy of Constraint

#### Concept

But what do we see, taking a step back. Geopolitics is not winning a race on technology. There will always be innovation. It is not just territory, but continuity. It is not just dependence by political or military power (with spheres of influence) but by a network of Supply Chain Assets. Having flow, constraints and pressure points. This is the new world.

- Imagine Technology and AI: Semiconductors pass from Eindhoven to Taiwan to California. To the world. If Eindhoven (ASML) is hit and taken out, the whole world experiences consequences. There is no alternative - a constraint. Who would take such an action? The one that outgrows first - by alternative or innovation. Or the one that survives best without it
- Think of Water Supply: no matter the situation or time - it is priority. Pakistan relies on the Kashmir Mountains. A pressure point for Israel is Mount Hermon. The Alps are directly connected to big corridors in Europe
- It may take another 100 years before Willem Barentz idea of a Northern Route becomes reality. When it does it becomes a Pressure Point. A reason for China to eye the Northern Mantsjoeria and further north
- Demographic change in the future can or will lead to a change of welfare. Population shifts towards South-East Asia, and then to African Subsaharan areas. Europe could be at the Global Network's Center - a major Constraint, Pressure Point and danger zone

Constraint is not weakness. It is terrain. So are Pressure Points. What happens if becomes the grammar of power:

- What happens if this corridor closes?
- What happens if this narrative shifts?
- What happens if we lose this friend?

This is not about panic. It is about design. Constraint does not prevent strategy — it gives it shape. It gives opportunity.

Power today belongs not to those who stand above, but to those who stand between.

## Essay

# The EU Need To Step Up As Geopolitical Power

State of Affairs: Europe

The current Month is a boil pot of stormy news so far. A point in time with marks that might have an impact on the near future. In this item, we will look at the global issues around and ahead.

## Geopolitical Situation

The War in Ukraine reached a 1,000 sad days. Russia, while facing heavy losses, is slowly securing ground, having a longer breath. Common idea is that Ukraine is forced to the negotiating table — also because supporting countries are steering towards an end. For example, Trump wants a peace deal. The European governments except Germany are talking about staying firm for Ukraine, but it is starting to look like support in peptalk rather than weapons and money. With the US ATACMS Missile Systems, Ukraine can hit Russian targets, but likely it's a short-term help for a slightly better negotiation position. Russia's missiles with nuclear possibilities, likewise.

This might end in a sort of end of war without an official peace agreement. Russia will claim victory and some Ukrainian provinces. Ukraine and Zelenskyy won't lose the whole war, since a heroic battle has been fought and the people are fed up and tired. North Korea and China can breathe a sigh of relief and get diplomatic results from Russia. The USA will claim its world hegemony again with Trump as Dealmaker. The EU might respond that it would be better if Ukraine had won the war and that it would have happened if.

The question remains then: will Putin be satisfied? Probably: he would have taken back part of history, and area's that have been named "occupied" such as Donbas and Crimea will be official Russia. And the rest is relieved not to spend more money on the war in Ukraine. And who's going to pay for the recovery? It might be the bare hands of those who return.

Let's not forget the ones that never return.

Meanwhile, — in the Middle East, the IDF will keep cleaning Gaza from ... terrorists, and slowly working on demising Hezbollah in Lebanon. In Europe, however, many fail to understand that Iran is behind Hezbollah, with a destructive ideology towards everything that is “western”. Let’s hope that an escalation with Iran will be postponed for a while. It could very well be a reason for Israel to wait for it’s promised revenge.

## European Politics

With Trumps election in the USA, there will be a new political situation where Europe has to deal with. The America First approach has an inward focus, where international diplomacy, relations, and agreements should benefit the US. Meaning that if the US wants to make or change treaty agreements, or get involved in a conflict, it is worth seeing what the intended effects are for the US itself.

This year's elections in Europe show a shift in electoral choices, both more focused on the individual and the immediate vicinity than on society as a whole. With fragmentation of the political playing field. We have seen it in Italy, France, and The Netherlands. The outlook points to a similar pattern in Germany. And, as a reflection, a similar movement in the European Parliament.

The European Union is in a kind of identity crisis. The broader opinion is divided by its countries national politics that are turning towards themselves — following the individuals' “need”. There is a risk that this will limit the field of political vision, and fear of “the other” appears. This is not just populism, but more polarizing politics, causing a growing divide between political views.

For example, Immigration policy thus appears to be more focused on limiting new migrants and promoting return, rather than on smoother and more efficient processing of migrants who have already arrived and participation in society and the labour market. It remains a question whether that decision is research & well thought driven, rather than a more short-term succes/result approach (scoring for the individual self).

In the European Parliament, the second period of von der Leyen’s Commission gained the green light. The near future will point out what the details of the Political Guidelines have to offer in detail. It mentions investments but also has contradicting topics such as reducing energy usage (Green Deal) and at the same time investments in AI (biggest energy drain). Furthermore, several topics are divided on multiple commission's, such as digitalization & technology and Ukraine approach. Hopefully, this period will focus on the business topics at hand.

# Industry

At the same time, China is looking to expand its power and knocking on our backdoor, making one-on-one agreements with France's Macron and Hungary's Orban to have influence on people of Chinese-origin and more.

While the EU import duties on Chinese cars are raised, a possible Trade War is still at the horizon. China industry is rapidly improving the quality and durability of its products, catching up the European industries. Mainly Car and Electronic Equipment Manufacturers have to make a move here.

Hand in hand with the industrial development, it should not be forgotten that consumerism and materialism pushes industries and businesses into the wrong direction. It is time to limit the influence of social media platforms (keeping the user addicted), marketplaces (always on sale) to a more responsible and durable direction.

While the EU has invested in regulations, it has a good base on how to work with AI (Artificial Intelligence Act), CS (Cybersecurity Act) and Equal Competition — a catch-up in technology is needed. There are no real alternatives for Cloud Solution Providers (such as Microsoft, Amazon, Google) in Europe, and infrastructure (glass fibre cable networks for internet / communications) depends on foreign entities. With the European Space Agency (ESA), a big step forward is made towards a widely applicable satellite system. More investments are desired.

Space and balance of urban areas and nature remain a challenge. Rather than forcing measure agreements in extending spaces, it is worth looking at the big picture of the EU and looking for internal exchange of landscapes and nature, for example.

## Main Risks to Avoid

- A lack of joint approach on helping Ukraine may leave the country a desolated space for years with the risk of a new conflict
- The EU is getting behind on innovative initiatives and depending on foreign entities
- The EU is internal divided by national politics on important topics, such as internal market, immigration, and environment
- In a growing geopolitical world, the EU lacks influence to negotiate nor position itself as a respectable conversation or negotiation partner — making statements look like rhetoric without meaning or consequences

# Call to Action

In a global multipolar world, where the US takes a step back as safeguarding partner, the European countries need to become self-reliant, in relation to resources, trade and safety. A more united approach on broader topics is needed. Moreover, the EU should consider becoming a geopolitical union in close cooperation with NATO, to become one of the geopolitical factors in the balance of power.

## Essay

# Don't Bet on the Bully: Why Europe Must Stop Investing in the U.S.

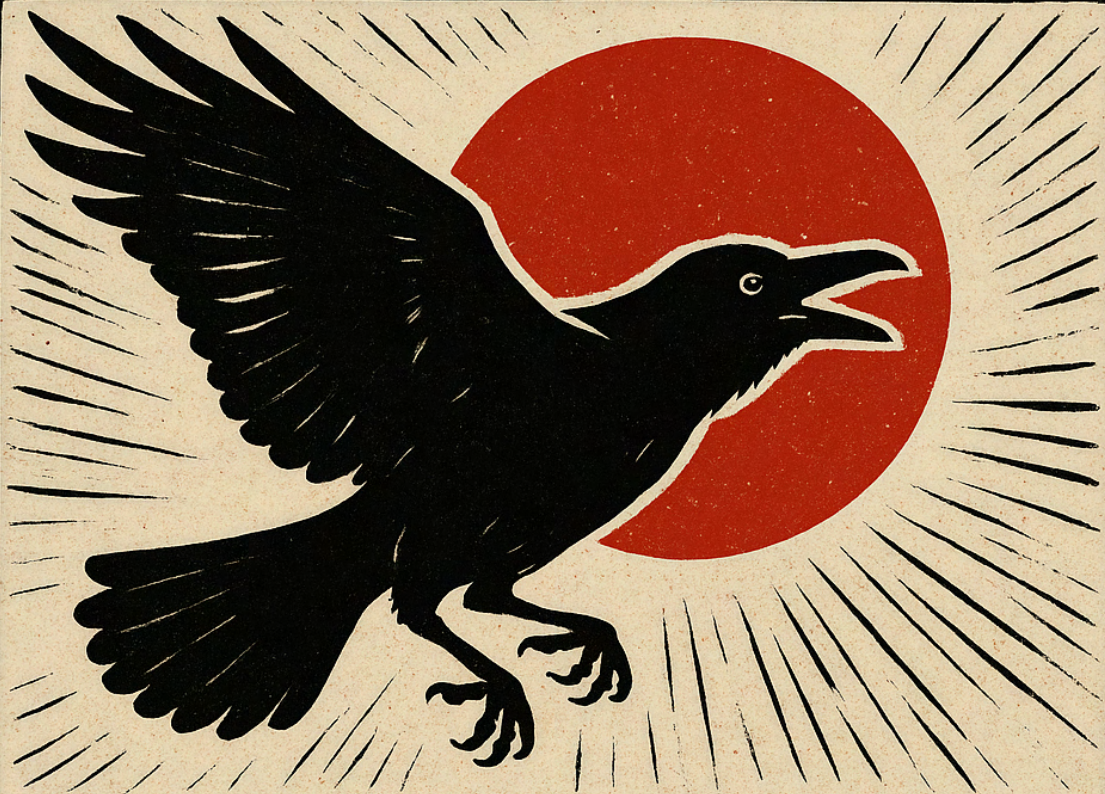
## The logic of appeasement and the American political mind

By G. Kraaijeveld

As European firms like Daimler, Volkswagen, and Siemens expand their investments in the U.S., they risk tying their futures to a volatile partner. Short-term economic incentives and a temporarily favorable exchange rate obscure deeper structural risks: political instability, panic-driven corporate culture, and growing protectionism. Europe is not dependent on the U.S. — not for gas, not for markets, and certainly not for leadership. Strategic autonomy begins with saying no.

## Key Insights

- €9.4% Appreciation: The euro gained strength from Jan to Apr 2025 — but this currency advantage may not last.
- \$17.5B+ EU Investments: European companies are pouring billions into the U.S. despite rising systemic risks.
- Boardroom Volatility: U.S. multinationals often suffer from reactive, short-term decision-making — unlike steadier EU firms.
- Not Dependent: Europe can secure energy from the Gulf and re-engage diplomatically with Russia under the right terms.
- Strategic Missed Opportunity: Every euro spent in the U.S. is one not spent building influence in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.



**KEEP OUT OF  
U.S. HANDS**

**INVEST IN  
EUROPE**

# Introduction: The Illusion of Necessity

For decades, Europe internalized the belief that what happens in the United States eventually happens in Europe — economically, culturally, and politically. That myth is breaking down. The U.S. is no longer a model to emulate, nor a reliable partner. As American politics veer toward chaos and economic nationalism, it's time for European firms to reconsider the logic of investing in a partner who increasingly treats us with disdain.

Under the renewed shadow of Donald Trump, Europe is again dismissed as irrelevant. If European companies continue to channel billions into U.S. factories and assets in the hope of appeasing a post-democratic America, they are not just making poor business decisions — they are undermining Europe's strategic independence.

## European Investment in the U.S. Surges — But at What Cost?

Despite all signals, several major European firms have announced or executed major investments in the United States in 2024–2025:

- Daimler Truck: \$450 million investment in Detroit to modernize EV and powertrain production, creating 600 jobs in Michigan<sup>[1]</sup>.
- Volkswagen: \$7.1 billion over five years to expand EV development and manufacturing across North America<sup>[2]</sup>.
- Siemens: Over \$10 billion committed to American manufacturing and software innovation, including \$285 million in new plant expansion<sup>[3]</sup>.
- Mercedes-Benz (Daimler division): announced new high-volume model production in Alabama by 2027<sup>[4]</sup>.

These moves appear driven not only by subsidy incentives (such as the Inflation Reduction Act), but also by a quiet bet on favorable treatment under a second Trump administration.

## Why It Seems Rational (But Isn't)

From a superficial economic perspective, investing in the U.S. may appear smart — especially in early 2025. The euro has strengthened, making U.S. assets temporarily cheaper. The Biden and Trump administrations alike have rolled out multi-billion-dollar subsidy packages under the Inflation Reduction Act, offering incentives for everything

from battery plants to chipmaking. The U.S. remains a massive consumer market with deep capital pools.

Additionally, the Trump administration has consistently used tariffs and bilateral trade pressure as a strategy to force foreign companies to relocate production to the United States, creating American jobs and boosting domestic economic metrics. This tactic is central to the America First economic doctrine: reward those who move operations to the U.S., and punish those who don't.

What these companies are ignoring is that the American business and political ecosystem is no longer stable, no longer predictable, and no longer trustworthy. That's not a detail. That's the difference between a smart investment and a long-term trap.

## What European Executives Must Understand About the U.S. Business Climate

European boardrooms often overestimate the coherence and professionalism of American corporate leadership. In reality, U.S. multinationals are often locked in short-term panic cycles, driven more by quarterly earnings and stock market sentiment than by long-term strategic thinking.

Decision-making at the C-level can feel erratic, even improvisational — what one insider called “management by Monday mood.” Direction shifts not based on geopolitical vision, but on how the S&P 500 moved last week. Talent retention is volatile, public messaging inconsistent, and internal priorities often contradictory.

By contrast, European firms tend to be more stable, methodical, and context-aware. They don't have to play the Wall Street game. That's a competitive advantage — and we shouldn't trade it away in a desperate scramble for subsidies or influence.

## Pros of Investing in the U.S.

- Exchange Rate Advantage: The euro gained 9.4% vs. the dollar between Jan–Apr 2025, making dollar-denominated investments temporarily cheaper<sup>[5]</sup>.
- Access to Subsidies: U.S. incentives (IRA, CHIPS Act) are appealing on paper.
- Large Market, Familiar Infrastructure: Many European firms already operate in the U.S., so expanding feels “safe.”

# Cons of Investing in the U.S.

- U.S. Political Instability: Risk of authoritarian drift, state–federal gridlock, or legal volatility.
- Crisis-Driven Corporate Culture: U.S. boardrooms often run on fear and improvisation, not strategy.
- Protectionism and Policy Reversals: "Buy American" rules, tariff threats, and hostile rhetoric from both parties.
- Reputational Risk: American social instability increasingly conflicts with EU ESG and human rights standards.
- Strategic Neglect of the Global South: Investing in the U.S. now means not investing in Africa, Latin America, or ASEAN — the real growth zones.

# No, We Are Not Dependent on U.S. Gas

Trump has threatened to cut off U.S. LNG to Europe. The assumption behind such threats is that Europe would have “no choice” but to cave. This is false.

Europe is already negotiating with Qatar and the Gulf states, and its ability to re-engage with Russia under new diplomatic conditions is not out of reach — as proposed in The Eurasian Covenant. Energy diversification is underway, and the EU’s shift toward renewables further reduces vulnerability.

The dollar may still be the global reserve currency — but it is structurally weak. The euro, though underused, is more stable. If Europe starts denominating trade deals, energy contracts, and digital settlements in euros instead of dollars, the global balance will shift. Quietly. Permanently.

Instead of appeasing American power, Europe should be attracting it. Companies like Microsoft, Google, Salesforce, Intel, and Apple should be incentivized to move their labs, data centers, cloud IP, and even headquarters to Europe.

We offer legal predictability, institutional trust, and access to global markets. The U.S. offers... culture wars and tax chaos. A U.S. economic collapse won’t happen overnight — but if we stop subsidizing them with our trust, it will come.

# Conclusion: Strategic Autonomy Starts with Saying No

Europe's future is not across the Atlantic. It's here. In Europe. In Africa. In Asia. In the relationships we build — not in the chaos we bail out.

We don't need to follow the bully. We need to stop investing in his house.

And start building our own.

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# How Donald Trump Could Win the Nobel Prize for Peace

An American redemption fantasy, or the logic of foot-washing diplomacy

By G. Raven

“I should get the Nobel Peace Prize. But they’ll never give it to me.”

— Donald J. Trump, seated beside Benjamin Netanyahu

When President Trump made that remark, it sounded — depending on your perspective — like a boast, a grievance, or a genuine question.

Let’s treat it as a real question:

What would it actually take to deserve the Nobel Peace Prize? Not just to want it. Not just to strike a deal. But to act in a way that truly moves the world closer to peace — not further away from it.

That question leads us deeper:

What is peace, really? And what makes someone fight for it? Is it just a handshake and a headline? A legacy deal, “good for both, better for me”? Or is it something more enduring, more difficult — something rooted not in ego or calculation, but in conviction?

Because peace, unlike profit, demands something from the soul. It doesn’t start with applause. It starts from within — from a leader’s heart.

## The Wrong Signals

This reflection turned sharper after watching the interview between Steve Witkoff and Tucker Carlson. The tone was familiar: confident, dismissive, transactional. Ukraine was accused of arrogance and disrespect. Its defense likened to terrorism. Russia’s aggression reframed as a rightful reclamation. The threat of nuclear escalation was treated not as a moral crisis, but as a financial risk — weighed against the risk of a stock market crash — as if people didn’t matter.

Steve Witkoff made it clear: “I’m not elected. I’m doing a job — and honored to do it. We follow the President.” They were the voice of Trump. And the message was clear: we will do what benefits us — and call it peace.

It was chilling. Not because they lacked intelligence, but because they had lost the plot. Peace was no longer sacred. It was a transaction. A brand. A tactic. Or true believe in this worldview or narrative.

That is not leadership. That is strategy without soul.

## Leadership

True leadership is not about dominance, control, or ego — but about responsibility, clarity, and vision, especially when others hesitate.

Those who disagree with you are not your enemies. They are your mirrors. They don't just reflect — they sharpen. A strong leader surrounds himself with those who see differently, not just those who agree.

True leadership is restraint. The power to build, not break. The wisdom to listen, not silence. The strength to kneel — not in surrender, but in service. It's vision that sees beyond the next election — to the next generation.

Most of all, it is humility.

It's the awareness that you are not here forever, that power fades, and that the only legacy worth leaving is one that serves something greater than yourself.

## Given by Example

There's a story told in John 13 — one that turns every assumption about power upside down. During dinner, Jesus saw His disciples arguing about who among them was the greatest.

He didn't give a speech. He didn't assert His authority. He didn't give a speech. He got up, tied a towel around his waist, poured water into a basin, and knelt down to wash their feet — a task reserved for the lowliest servant.

And when He finished, He said: "You call me Lord — and rightly so. Now that I have washed your feet, you should wash one another's feet."

He knew Judas would betray Him. He knew Peter would deny Him. He washed their feet anyway. That is greatness. Not just moral. Not just symbolic. Unexpected. World-changing.

And I began to wonder: what if a political leader did the same? What if the President would do it?



# Picture it

Imagine the signal it would send.

Not with weapons. Not with speeches. Not with a deal signed behind closed doors — but with a basin of water in the Oval Office.

Twelve chairs in a semicircle. Twelve world leaders — rivals, allies, adversaries. And the President of the United States, kneeling before them. Not in surrender, but in strength. In leadership.

A towel over his shoulder. A gesture of humility. No one would expect it. And that's precisely what would make it powerful. That is leadership.



The image would become unforgettable. It would set a new example.

Who could sit in those chairs?

Volodymyr Zelensky, Vladimir Putin, Xi Jinping, Ali Khamenei, Ursula von der Leyen, Narendra Modi, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, Mohammed bin Salman, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, Shigeru Ishiba, Hakainde Hichilema, and Mark Rutte.

Each one carries history into the room. Each one represents not only a nation, but a narrative. Each one brings tension — and opportunity.

Together, they become more than individuals. They become a statement: That peace is not built by those who agree, but by those willing to face one another — and kneel.

## What if

What if this moment changed the conversation? What if the image — of a man kneeling in service — stayed in the hearts of millions?

Would it win the Nobel Peace Prize? Maybe. Maybe not.

But more importantly — it would win something deeper: a place in history, not just as a man of power, but as a leader of peace.

Easter marks the moment that the world remembers the act of Jesus.

Now is a perfect moment to walk that path. To set a new example — and lead the world.

Therefore I want to ask you, Mr. President. Take up the gesture and set the example. And if you feel you cannot do it — if it feels too humble, too vulnerable, too strange — then that is exactly why you must.

I'd be happy to set the example.

—

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- Trump hints at winning the Nobel Peace Prize
- Tucker Carlson interview with Steve Witkoff (re: peace and leadership)
- The Nobel Peace Prize – Official Website
- John 13 – Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet
- Russian Orthodox Church on Easter

# 4. Traces & Futures

Traces & Futures brings together the human perspective and the broader historical context.

It includes voices, places, and thinkers — as well as archives, outlooks, and resources.

This section closes the journal by looking both back and forward: how people live through conflict, and how we prepare for what comes next.

## Passerby

# 24 Hours in Vilnius

Baroque echoes, Jewish memory, Soviet scars — and a city that stands without spectacle.

Vilnius is slow-paced but not sleepy. Students, programmers, civil servants — they drink black coffee, complain quietly, and vote with conviction. History is never far away, but not always on display. Ukrainian flags show what loyalty means.

### Timeline

07:30 – Gediminas Tower

Begin the day at Gediminas Tower. It's quiet in the morning — just pigeons and the flags. Look out over the red roofs of the old city and the glass of the new.

09:00 – Pilies Street Café

Descend to Pilies Street, and find a small café that doesn't advertise itself. Connect with locals. What's on their mind, what's in their hearts?

11:00 – St. Anne's Church

Late Gothic, in brick not stone — unmatched in Europe. Napoleon wanted to take it home. The silence here is architectural.



13:00 – Cathedral Square

White columns, black dome, bell tower aside — more Rome than Russia. Behind it, the Grand Duke's Palace: rebuilt, reasserted. This is Lithuania's center of gravity.



14:00 – A Working Lunch

Across the square, find a place in a repurposed ministry or post office. Cabbage, beet, potato — peasant food, served with pride.

16:00 – KGB Museum (Museum of Occupations)

Down Gedimino Avenue, past glass shops and tired faces. Cells in the basement. Files upstairs. This is the undercurrent of the European project.

18:00 – Across the Neris

Cross into New Vilnius: banks, towers, luxury gyms. But still — restraint. This country never yells.

20:00 – Nightcap in the Old Town

Back through Užupis or Literatų Street, where verses and jokes fill the walls. Find a vaulted cellar. Have a glass. Lithuania is still here.

### 📌 Factbox

Country Lithuania  
Region Baltics, EU, Schengen  
Population 580,000  
Language Lithuanian (official), Russian, Polish, Yiddish (historic)  
Currency Euro (€)  
Time Zone EET (UTC+2)  
Known For Grand Duchy, Baroque Old Town, Jewish Heritage, 1991 TV Tower Defense

### A City Between Powers

For centuries, Vilnius stood at the center of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania — once stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea. Later, it became part of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, a rare early republic that balanced monarchy with noble governance.

By the 19th century, the Russian Empire took control. During World War II, the city's Jewish population — nearly a third of all residents — was forced into ghettos and exterminated. The Soviets returned after the Nazis and stayed for nearly fifty years, turning churches into warehouses and citizens into case files.

In January 1991, Vilnius rose again. Unarmed civilians built barricades to defend their parliament and TV tower. Tanks came, but the city held. Since then, Lithuania has joined NATO and the EU — but the streets still carry the weight of empire, erasure, and resistance.

## Passerby

# 24 Hours in Tbilisi and Mtshketa

Citadel views, sulfur steam, silent prayers — and a capital caught between memory and movement.

Stretched in a valley - Tbilisi is never cold.

Timeline 08:00 – Mtskheta: Jvari Monastery Start outside the city. Drive to the hilltop where Christianity took root in Georgia. Mist lifts over the confluence of two rivers. The view hasn't changed in centuries.



09:30 – Svetitskhoveli Cathedral In the old capital below, enter one of the oldest Orthodox cathedrals in the world. Kings are buried here. Locals still come to light candles. 11:00 – Return to Tbilisi Follow the river back into the capital. 12:00 – Dry Bridge Market Antiques, Soviet medals, typewriters. A memory market. Not curated — just laid out on blankets. 13:30 – Sulphur Baths & Leghvtakhevi Waterfall Soak where poets and spies once did. Then walk to the hidden waterfall nearby. The city cracks open here — sulfur, moss, and spray.

15:00 – National Museum Gold of ancient Colchis. Photographs of war. A corridor of silence for 2008. Georgia's past is visible — but its future isn't forgotten. 17:00 – Rustaveli Avenue Stroll past theatres, statues, and protest memories. Ask someone where to eat — they'll tell you a story before giving you directions. 19:00 – Dinner: Wine from the Cask In the Old Town, find a place where the wine still comes from the barrel and dishes are handwritten on paper. 21:00 – Gifts & Goodbyes Buy socks from the old woman with a stool near the church. Hand them to the next mother and child you pass. Georgia's gift isn't the thing — it's the gesture. 🇬🇪 Factbox Country: Georgia • Region: Caucasus • Population: 1.1 million (metro) • Language: Georgian (official) • Currency: Lari (ლ) • Time Zone: GET (UTC+4) • Known For: Wine, resistance, hospitality

I A City Between Mountains Tbilisi was built at a natural bottleneck — a river valley between the Caspian and Black Seas, and between empires. For centuries it was ruled by Persians, Ottomans, and Russians, but always retained a distinct Georgian core. In the 19th century it became the capital of the Russian Transcaucasus. After a brief moment of independence in 1918, the Red Army returned. Georgia regained its sovereignty in 1991 — but Russian troops returned again in 2008. That war is recent.

That war is not over. | Georgia walks a narrow road — balancing EU and NATO ambitions with the pressures of geography. In Tbilisi, the old and new run side by side: churches beside telecom towers, polyphonic choirs in tech cafés. There's pride here, and poetry, and a kind of pain that doesn't want pity. It just wants to be seen. |

# The Kissinger Files: Moscow 1973

Inside the Pivotal Summit of Détente

## Introduction

In May 1973, as the Cold War thawed into its uneasy middle period, U.S. National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger arrived in Moscow for a series of high-stakes meetings with Soviet General Secretary Leonid Brezhnev and his top advisers. What unfolded over the following days would shape the trajectory of superpower relations for the remainder of the decade.

The summit — intense, guarded, and occasionally revealing — was not merely about arms control. It was a strategic rebalancing, an attempt to manage rivalry without surrendering advantage. SALT, Vietnam, trade, space cooperation, and ideological conflict in the Third World were all placed on the table. So too was the question that haunted both capitals: Could adversaries build durable coexistence without betraying their own worldviews?

Kissinger, ever the realist, came not as a friend but as a broker of equilibrium. Brezhnev, seeking both recognition and advantage, saw détente as a vehicle for Soviet stature. Between them stood decades of mistrust — and the possibility of a narrow bridge forward.

### Narratives

- narrative\_us: Critical moment in Cold War diplomacy, seeking nuclear stability
- narrative\_ru: High point in Soviet-U.S. relations, showcasing parity with the West
- narrative\_eu: Seen as a stabilizing act that benefited Europe's security
- narrative\_cn: Viewed with suspicion amid Sino-Soviet split

## Why This File Matters

This Kissinger File reconstructs those meetings: not in the sterilized prose of official communiqués, but in dialogue — paraphrased where necessary, restored where possible. Each part offers a window into:

- The power dynamics of Cold War diplomacy
- The psychological interplay between two systems in collision
- The intellectual and strategic logic guiding both empires
- The foundations (and illusions) of détente

It is meant not only as a historical resource, but as a tool for reflection. The questions raised in Moscow in 1973 echo still today — in how rival powers negotiate, signal intent, and search for peace without trust.

## Contents

This file includes:

- Part I: Strategic Framing
- Part II: SALT and Strategic Stability
- Part III: U.S.-Soviet Bilateral Cooperation
- Part IV: Vietnam and the Global South
- Part V: Doctrines of Coexistence
- Part VI: Ceremony and Shadow Agreements
- Full Transcript Appendix

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## Part I – Opening Remarks and Strategic Atmosphere

### Setting

Location: Kremlin, Moscow

Date: May 20–24, 1973

Participants:

- Leonid Brezhnev (General Secretary, CPSU)
- Henry Kissinger (U.S. National Security Advisor)
- Anatoly Dobrynin (Soviet Ambassador to the U.S.)
- Andrei Gromyko (Foreign Minister, USSR)
- William G. Hyland (U.S. National Security Council staff)

- Helmut Sonnenfeldt (U.S. NSC senior staff)

## Summary

The opening phase of the 1973 Moscow meeting set the tone for a week of strategic diplomacy. Amid Cold War tensions, both delegations projected seriousness and formality — but beneath the protocol was a shared desire to solidify détente.

Brezhnev welcomed Kissinger with warmth and ceremony, signaling openness but also confidence. Kissinger responded with guarded optimism, stressing the U.S. commitment to dialogue but highlighting the need for concrete outcomes.

## Key Themes

### Atmosphere of Trust

- Brezhnev emphasized personal trust between leaders as essential.
- Kissinger noted that mutual predictability was as important as goodwill.

### Arms Control Baseline

- Reviewed SALT I progress.
- Agreed to resume discussions toward SALT II framework.
- Outlined disagreements on MIRVs, submarine limitations, and verification protocols.

## Excerpted Dialogue

BREZHNEV: I hope your flight was good?

KISSINGER: Very smooth, thank you. Moscow skies always seem cooperative when the mission is important.

BREZHNEV: [smiling] Then we should hope for more visits.

KISSINGER: We have much to discuss — arms limitations, bilateral exchanges, and the situation in Southeast Asia.

### ◆ Opening Exchange

BREZHNEV: Dr. Kissinger, we welcome you not only as an official, but as a man of influence. We hope that your presence means this time, words will lead to deeds.

KISSINGER: I appreciate your candor, Mr. General Secretary. We come not to deceive nor to be deceived. Let us talk, not posture.

GROMYKO: Then let us talk with the weight of history behind us — and the burden of the future in front.

BREZHNEV: Exactly. The world has tired of slogans. It needs substance.

#### ◆ Laying the Ground

KISSINGER: We believe this summit must produce more than communiqués. It must reduce danger, clarify expectations, and build channels of restraint.

BREZHNEV: Good. But mutual restraint must be mutual recognition. The USSR is not a junior partner.

KISSINGER: Nor do we treat it as such. We accept that both nations act from interest — but let us see if interests can align toward peace.

DOBRYNIN: Interests must be matched with intent. And words with verification.

#### ◆ Framing Détente

BREZHNEV: Détente must not be a mask. If we sign agreements, the people must feel their weight — not just see their photographs.

KISSINGER: I agree. Our public will judge us not by what we say here, but by what we prevent later. And what we don't escalate.

SONNENFELDT: We need durable language — words that survive crises.

GROMYKO: And actions that do not contradict them at the first storm.

#### Sources & Quotes

- Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), 1969–1976, Volume XV.
- Miller Center Archives — “Kissinger Transcripts”
- U.S. National Archives, Memoranda of Conversation
- “Trust is the coin of diplomacy. But verification is its receipt.” — paraphrased from Kissinger’s memoirs

## Part II – Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT)

### Summary

The SALT discussions were the centerpiece of this summit phase — not only a test of strategic logic but of trust. After years of tension, both sides faced the need for clarity: fewer surprises, more structure.

Kissinger emphasized verification and limitations on destabilizing systems like MIRVs and heavy ICBMs. Brezhnev insisted on equality, without appearing to concede Soviet strength.

## Key Points

SALT I had reduced tensions but lacked precision. MIRV deployment was a growing U.S. concern. The Soviets pushed back against restrictions that could imply technological inferiority. Agreement was sought on extending SALT, and setting parameters for SALT II.

## Excerpted Dialogue

BREZHNEV: We believe SALT has helped avoid the worst. But limitations are not yet reductions.

KISSINGER: Understandably. But reductions require trust — and mechanisms to ensure both sides hold.

BREZHNEV: Verification, yes. But not to the point of intrusion.

KISSINGER: Our concern is that loopholes become weapons. We must define terms tightly: MIRVs, throw-weight, submarine-launched systems.

BREZHNEV: [leaning forward] You want us to limit what makes us feel secure.

KISSINGER: We ask you to limit what makes war more likely — to both of us.

BREZHNEV: Then we need a common doctrine. Not just signatures. What do you propose?

KISSINGER: A phased approach:

1. Extend the Interim Agreement.
2. Freeze qualitative improvements.
3. Begin working groups on reductions in 1974.

BREZHNEV: We will study this. But know that the Soviet Union does not accept permanent inferiority.

KISSINGER: Nor do we ask it. We only ask balance — and breathing room.

## Notes

- Kissinger pressed for verifiable definitions, wary of hidden upgrades.
- Brezhnev emphasized strategic parity and Soviet dignity.
- Both sides agreed to expand working groups and avoid provocations.

This set the stage for SALT II negotiations over the next five years.

## Sources & Quotes

- U.S. National Archives – Kissinger–Brezhnev Memoranda of Conversation (May 1973)
- Miller Center (UVA) – Cold War Dialogues Archive
- FRUS Vol. XV, Soviet Union, 1973
- “We only ask balance — and breathing room.” — Kissinger

# Part III – U.S.–Soviet Bilateral Cooperation

## Summary

With arms control framed, the talks pivoted to the infrastructure of peace — trade, science, education, and culture. Both men understood: treaties may signal détente, but daily cooperation cements it.

Brezhnev was emphatic. Normalization, he argued, could not wait on military perfection. Kissinger, cautious, acknowledged opportunity but noted the American political climate. They found common ground in pragmatic ambition.

## Key Points

- The Soviets requested Most Favored Nation (MFN) trading status.
- U.S. officials emphasized Congressional hurdles and human rights concerns.
- Space and nuclear cooperation were discussed — Apollo–Soyuz was greenlit.
- Cultural exchanges expanded: libraries, academic visits, media circulation.

## Excerpted Dialogue

BREZHNEV: Let us not limit our cooperation to the signing table. Let the people of our countries see what peace can produce.

KISSINGER: Mr. General Secretary, that is a vision worth pursuing — and one that requires constant tending.

GROMYKO: Science is neutral. Politics gives it direction. Let ours not diverge too far.

SONNENFELDT: Then our data exchanges must deepen, not just formalize.

## Notes

- Space cooperation became a symbol of trust; Apollo–Soyuz would fly in 1975.
- MFN status remained a thorny issue, foreshadowing later clashes over Jackson–Vanik.
- Both sides emphasized public-facing diplomacy — giving détente a human face.



## Sources & Quotes

- FRUS Vol. XV, Soviet Union, 1973 – Bilateral Discussions
- U.S. National Archives – Joint Statement, May 1973
- Miller Center – "Kissinger's Notes on Trade Negotiations"
- "Let the people see what peace can produce." — Brezhnev

## Part IV: Vietnam and the Global South

### Summary

Brezhnev and Kissinger confront the dilemma of post-Vietnam order. They navigate how to scale down conflicts in the Global South without ceding ideological ground — testing whether détente could reach beyond Europe.

By 1973, the U.S. was negotiating its withdrawal from Vietnam. Kissinger sought Soviet cooperation to limit further entanglements in Southeast Asia and curb revolutionary militancy across Africa and Latin America.

Brezhnev faced a balancing act: reassuring hardliners that the USSR supported global socialism, while convincing the West it wanted peace.

The subtext: control the tempo of revolution.

## Dialogue Excerpt

BREZHNEV: The Third World watches. If we falter, others step in. China is already whispering in their ears.

KISSINGER: And if we fan every flame, we risk a global inferno. Vietnam is not the end — it's the warning.

BREZHNEV: So you want restraint — but from both of us. Without appearing weak?

KISSINGER: Precisely. Let us agree: revolution should not be manufactured, nor its counter crushed without vision.

BREZHNEV: Then we must chart a doctrine: spheres where restraint is mutual, and channels to defuse tensions.

KISSINGER: Call it controlled competition — with off-ramps.

## Notes

Focus shifted from Europe to the Global South. Brezhnev emphasized ideological obligation; Kissinger stressed strategic fatigue. Both agreed that unchecked proxy wars threatened détente itself.

## Legacy

This conversation prefigured future SALT summits and influenced later Soviet engagement in Angola, Mozambique, and Central America.

The doctrine of “mutual restraint zones” never formalized — but informally guided superpower behavior.

## Sources & Quotes

- FRUS, 1969–1976, Vol. XV: Soviet Union U.S. National Archives, Memo of Conversation 104, May 1973

- “Let us agree: revolution should not be manufactured...” — Kissinger, paraphrased from primary source

## Part V: Principles of Peaceful Coexistence

### Summary

By the summit's fifth day, the focus shifted from tactics to philosophy. Could coexistence mean more than just avoidance? Could two ideological rivals, anchored in competing worldviews, agree on rules of restraint without convergence?

This was the moral axis of the summit — not what each side wanted, but what they were willing to leave alone.

BREZHNEV: We cannot build a common future by making our systems identical. But we can agree to keep the world intact.

KISSINGER: Ideology should not prevent predictability. Our systems differ — our survival does not.

GROMYKO: The foundation of peace is recognition: not only of borders, but of legitimacy.

KISSINGER: Recognition must not mean approval — only understanding that interference invites disaster.

BREZHNEV: You fear our system. We fear your interference. Let us codify what neither side should do.

KISSINGER: Agreed. Mutual respect, non-subversion, open channels. Peace is not sameness — it is discipline.

BREZHNEV: And dignity. No people should feel dominated because of their choice of order.

KISSINGER: Then let us write principles — not dreams, not threats. But disciplined coexistence.

SONNENFELDT: Perhaps a draft framework: restraint in propaganda, transparency in crises, protection of minorities.

GROMYKO: And cultural contact — but without ideological intrusion.

KISSINGER: We suggest:

1. Non-intervention in domestic affairs.

2. Peaceful settlement of disputes.
3. Rejection of military superiority as a goal.

BREZHNEV: Then let it be called what it is — a doctrine of stability. Not submission.

KISSINGER: Nor surrender. We ask only for boundaries. That allow endurance.

BREZHNEV: For we all live on the same earth, Mr. Kissinger. Even if our flags fly different colors.

## Key Points

- Explicit recognition that ideological competition will continue, but must be bounded.
- Outlined proposed norms for non-interference, arms restraint, and cultural tolerance.
- Echoed in later treaties and the Helsinki Final Act (1975).
- Reframed peace not as harmony, but as principled coexistence.

Both sides acknowledged ideological competition but sought to avoid existential clashes.

Proposed norms anticipated principles later seen in the Helsinki Final Act (1975).

Created conceptual groundwork for "peaceful coexistence" as restraint, not harmony.

## Sources & References

1. FRUS, Volume XV (Soviet Union, 1969–1976).
2. Brezhnev Memoirs, excerpts on international dialogue.
3. Kissinger, White House Years, Chapter on Moscow Summits.
4. "Peace is not sameness — it is discipline." — attributed to Kissinger

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## Part VI – Ceremony and Shadow Agreements

### Summary

The summit closed with outward celebration and inward caution. A final banquet in the Kremlin's St. George Hall was televised across the USSR, showing unity. Yet the real milestones were informal — handshake understandings on crises, communications, and restraint in contested regions.

These were not treaties, but patterns.

## Dialogue

BREZHNEV: The time has come to end this visit with pride — for both our peoples.

KISSINGER: The substance we've shaped will not fit in headlines. But it may steer history.

GROMYKO: Then let us commit — not only to words, but to recurrence. Regular talks, discreet lines.

KISSINGER: And signals. For in crisis, silence is dangerous.

DOBRYNIN: A signal protocol then. Three levels: non-public, cautious, credible.

BREZHNEV: We must also handle the Middle East. Not with force, but balance.

KISSINGER: A restraint framework: no arms races, no public threats. Quiet influence.

BREZHNEV: And Asia?

KISSINGER: We signal Hanoi: moderation wins respect. Escalation breeds fatigue.

GROMYKO: Then we agree on ambiguity — structured ambiguity.

KISSINGER: Yes. Plausible deniability, but mutual intention.

BREZHNEV: So much of peace is not in the paper — but in the pauses.

KISSINGER: Indeed. We leave not with a pact, but with a shared rhythm.

## Key Takeaways

- Quiet understandings reached on crisis signaling, arms posture, and non-intervention zones.
- Banquet and joint communiqués masked deeper strategic recalibrations.
- Détente's sustainability rooted in backchannel clarity, not treaty terms.

## Legacy

This final act defined détente's character: not naïveté, but managed rivalry. It shaped future summits, Cold War decorum, and the invisible grammar of great-power restraint.

## Sources & Quotes

- FRUS Vol. XV – May 1973 Concluding Memoranda
- Miller Center Archives – Private Understandings
- Kissinger, Years of Upheaval
- “So much of peace is not in the paper — but in the pauses.” — Kissinger (memoir paraphrase)

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This is part of the Broad Horizon Kissinger Files series.

related\_events:

- Détente
- Cold War
- Helsinki Process

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## Editorial

# Raven Outlook: Summer 2025

Strategic Brief on Geopolitical and Humanitarian Faultlines

## ● Global Risks – Systemic Shifts & Great-Power Fractures

US–China decoupling intensifies amid AI, EV, and semiconductor conflicts. Both blocs weaponize trade; Europe caught in the crossfire.

G-Zero world order deepens as the U.S. retreats from multilateralism. Emerging blocs bypass traditional Western frameworks.

Cyberattacks escalate targeting energy and infrastructure across Europe and Asia—blackouts feared.

AI weapons race surges ahead of regulation, reshaping deterrence dynamics and lowering thresholds for escalation.

📌 Signal tag: great-power competition, trade war, cyber, AI weapons, G-Zero

## ● Europe – Ukraine War, Populism, NATO Strain

Russia renews its summer offensive around Kharkiv and Sumy; geopolitical consequences widen as U.S. military backing fades.

Ukraine’s resilience holds, but material strain is mounting. European divisions deepen post-election.

Populist-right parties surge across EU states; NATO cohesion is tested amid shifting American priorities.

📌 Signal tag: Ukraine war, Russia offensive, NATO fatigue, EU populism

## Middle East – Gaza, Iran, and Regional Tensions

Gaza faces confirmed famine risk as Israeli operations block humanitarian access.

Iran threatens Strait of Hormuz closure—20% of global oil flows at risk. Israeli–Iranian clashes narrowly avoided in July.

 Signal tag: Gaza famine, Iran, Strait of Hormuz, regional escalation

## Asia-Pacific – Conflict Zones and Strategic Alignments

India–Pakistan conflict reignites with drone strikes and artillery in Kashmir. Ceasefire remains tenuous.

Thailand–Cambodia border war escalates: martial law declared, 100,000+ displaced. ASEAN unable to mediate effectively.

China retaliates against EU with tariffs on semiconductors and EVs. Trade war deepens, global markets rattle.

 Signal tag: India–Pakistan, Southeast Asia conflict, China trade retaliation

## Africa – Crisis Belt from Sahel to Great Lakes

M23 advances in eastern DRC displace hundreds of thousands; Rwanda accused of support.

Sudan’s civil war spreads famine and displacement across Darfur and Khartoum.

Military regimes in Sahel obstruct aid access. Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso remain humanitarian black zones.


 Signal tag: Congo conflict, Sudan famine, Sahel insurgencies, displacement

## Americas – Strategic Drift, Political Divides

Latin America watches U.S. disengagement and pivots toward multipolar trade.

Political polarization in the U.S. undermines hemispheric stability.

Mexico, Brazil, and Argentina explore closer ties with Eurasian and BRICS blocs.

 Signal tag: U.S. retreat, Latin America realignment, political instability

Editorial

## Reading List

A summer reading list for those tracing the fractures of empire, freedom, and the European condition.



### 1. The Switchman – Geert Mak

A panoramic narrative of the 1930s–40s, where history hinges on fragile decisions.

The book global shifts as Great Depression, New Deal, Spanish Civil War, World War II. With focus on critical figures—particularly Harry Hopkins and Franklin Roosevelt—and key policy decisions Presents that moment as a moral turning point for Europe and America. As flashbacks of current times?

## 2. The Road to Unfreedom – Timothy Snyder

From Ilyin to information warfare, Snyder traces the ideological roots of Russia’s war. It gives background to understand why Ukraine was targeted — and why the West looked away. Although how Snyder takes his conclusions is sometimes “un-European”.

## 3. Autocracy, Inc. – Anne Applebaum

A global system of kleptocrats, enablers, and soft-power decay. Applebaum names the architecture — and the complicity — of modern authoritarianism. It is reality all around us.

## 4. My Russia: War or Peace? – Mikhail Shishkin

A Russian writer breaks with the regime, not with the culture. Shishkin writes like a man mourning his homeland, yet refusing its collapse into lies.

## 5. Alkibiades – Ilja Leonard Pfeijffer

A story on Ancient Greece and the end of democracy, with parallels to our time. I have not read it myself to be honest, but it is high on my list. If it is written in the same style as the authors other books, this book will make you uncomfortable, frustrated, ashamed, laughing – in random order. I should ask the writer himself to open the curtains in his mind a bit to guide the reader.

## 6. Putin's People – Catherine Belton

How the KGB morphed into a global oligarchy. Belton follows the money, the friendships, the silence — from Leningrad to London.

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# Colofon

Broad Horizon Journal

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