



Superpower of Unpeace?

The USA want to prevent a counter-power from emerging on the Eurasian double continent. Europe must emancipate itself from America to ensure peace and prosperity.

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This article is overtly critical of US policy. However, it is an indispensable contribution to addressing the geopolitical effects of the conflict with Russia, based on the aggression against Ukraine, particularly the deepening crisis between the United States and China. Europe will have to define its position in the coming years clearly. Unconditional loyalty to the USA, if only as a reason for self-preservation under their nuclear umbrella or equidistance to the great powers and thus the definition of an independent policy, as recently proposed by the French President. With all these considerations, the interests of the USA and Europe in the Ukraine war are not congruent. Europe cannot aim to "weaken" the Russian Federation as a "war goal" - with a country with which one will later have to find some modus vivendi in the sense of a security partnership - all of this, of course, based on unconditional and unrestricted Condemnation of Russian aggression against a neighbouring country. Regardless, it would be high time the West began to develop its own realistic initiatives for possible elements of an arrangement to end the war and defend them with determination and pressure: this applies to both Moscow and Kyiv. Far from being a military expert, I am convinced that Ukraine cannot "win" this war in terms of its unrealistic demands – something that the US and EU should make abundantly clear to President Zelenskyy and influential circles in Kyiv.

Dr Alexander Christiani

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Europe owes much to America for liberating it from Nazi rule and protecting it against the communist threat from the East during the Cold War. For Germany, there is also help with reconstruction after World War II's destruction and reunification. Even if the USA did not do this out of charity but in its own interest, that does not make its actions less valuable. Pursuing one's interests is the essence of any sensible foreign policy.

"We have neither eternal allies nor everlasting enemies," said the famous British statesman Palmerston, "but our interests are eternal and everlasting. Pursuing these interests is our duty."

America's and Europe's interests largely coincided for more than four decades after the war. However, since the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War in 1991, they have increasingly diverged. At that time, the USA, the only remaining superpower, had a historic opportunity. The massive military expenditures were no longer necessary. There was no longer a rival. America could have reaped the peace dividend, beat swords into ploughshares, retreat to the role of *primus inter pares* in the world, and ensure more democracy and justice at home. Washington decided otherwise. "Power corrupts," said British politician and historian Lord Acton, "absolute power corrupts absolutely." Inherent in monopolies is a tendency toward growing arrogance and ruthlessness. Not only in the economy but also in politics, especially foreign policy.

Instead of helping to integrate Russia into a pan-European security structure after the collapse of the Eastern bloc, to link it more closely to Europe economically and thus bring lasting peace to the continent, Washington deliberately thwarted this. The transcripts of conversations and memoranda from the years 1990/91 in the National Security Archive clearly show that America's leading politicians deliberately duped the gullible Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in the negotiations for the reunification of Germany. After a few years of holding back, they broke their promise not to expand NATO eastward. The defensive alliance advanced to the Russian border. Of the thirty NATO members today, around a dozen once belonged to the opposing camp of the Warsaw Pact, which was dissolved with the Soviet Union.

Whether the rivalry between the US and China (and thus between America and Russia, Iran and other countries) politically damages Europe, makes it poorer, draws it into a new cold and, in the end, maybe even a hot war, depends not least on how Europe itself behaves. The EU has around 450 million inhabitants and weighs about as much economically as the USA and China. With the European Union, the largest transnational structure in world history, its greatest peace work was also created. Europe no longer thinks, at least not primarily, in traditional categories of power and supremacy and has no hegemonic intentions. It is thus prepared like no other for the role of a bridge builder and for solving the major, predominantly transnational problems of today's world.

The chances of a refocus far outweigh the risks. After the Second World War, free and democratic Europe had to defend itself against the neighbouring communist Soviet bloc's desire to expand. It was dependent on America's military support to do so. Today, apart from intensified economic competition, it has nothing to fear from distant China. This gives him strategic freedom and the potential to influence both Washington and Beijing: the United States depends on Europe for a cold war with China. On the other hand, China cannot achieve its main goal of making Eurasia the centre of the world economy and world politics again without the cooperation of the Europeans.

The emancipation of America, the assumption of a bridging function between West and East, and a leading role in developing a peaceful multipolar world order also offer a powerful story that could inspire new enthusiasm for the European project, especially among young people on this continent. The envisaged pioneering role of the EU in warding off the feared ecological Armageddon alone requires that the emancipation of Europe's interests do not coincide with those of the USA or China.

We, therefore, do not have to decide between these two powers, as some people think, but rather choose a third, our own way. The question is not: America or China? But: Will Europe continue to come to terms with the "democratic aporia", as French President Emmanuel Macron once called the condition that Europe's elected politicians could only watch in case of doubt as others across the Atlantic decide the fate of their people? Will Europe continue to be content with the role of deputy sheriff in an unequal Atlantic alliance? Or does it emancipate itself from its big brother, create geostrategic autonomy and consistently pursue its own interests to secure its prosperity and cohesion, values, identity and a leading role in the world? Emancipating oneself from the USA does not mean replacing the Pax Americana, which of late had hardly anything peaceful about it, with a Pax Sinica. Breaking free from the arms of big brother USA does not mean throwing yourself into the arms of China. This would be doubly absurd.

Because, unlike the USA, China does not even share our ideas of democracy, the rule of law and human rights on paper. And it will stay that way, at least for the foreseeable future. Not standing in the way of China's rise and working with it wherever possible to one's own advantage does not mean ignoring the existing systemic contradictions. It just means not projecting Western culture and ideals onto the entire world and respecting other civilizations with different histories, values and levels of development.

It just means not projecting the culture and ideals of the West onto the entire world, respecting other civilizations with different histories, different values and a different level of development and convincing them of their superiority not by violence but by consistently living out your own values to want. Anyone who believes in the universality of human rights must also believe that they will prevail everywhere sooner or later. Anyone who believes in a democracy must allow a say not only on a national but also on an international level. Democracy, the rule of law and the protection of human rights thrive through critical-constructive cooperation rather than through a policy of confrontation, regime change, or cold or hot wars.

The way America has developed can no longer credibly represent the "values of the West". Used as an alibi for striving for hegemony and forcefully imposed on other states, these have already lost a great deal of their attractiveness around the world. A Europe independent of the USA, which lives these values in an exemplary manner in international dealings with one another and trusts in their radiance in the peaceful competition of systems, can give them new validity again. In contrast, in the USA's political, economic and military tow, Europe can no longer present itself with the necessary persuasiveness as a bridge builder, a haven of peace and freedom.



Anyone who fears that an independent path based on the principles of peaceful coexistence and consistent observance of international law could ultimately turn Europe into a Beijing colony is not only misjudging China's development and its geopolitical intentions, they apparently already have our continent written off. Emancipation from America is by no means synonymous with anti-Americanism. Rather, it means the freedom to be able to pursue one's own interests and to be the master of one's destiny. It is an act of pragmatic reason, ultimately even friendship. Hundreds of millions worldwide—and tens of millions of Americans with them—wish for an America that goes back to the basic maxims of their fathers.

(Responsible for the English Translation from the original German: Wolfgang Geissler)