

**Imperialist Danse Macabre over the Peoples of Ukraine ML Currents Today**

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*Protagonists locked in a power-struggle include USA-led NATO encircling Russia's perimeters; as Russia masses troops at Ukraine's border; Germany, the European Union, and Ukrainian oligarchs have all put their oars in; even capitalists of floundering post-Brexit UK. What is behind events and what can we expect?*

*NB: A shorter version of this is at Berlin Left blog.*

**Introduction**

The hijack of the socialist USSR in 1954 by Khrushchev is well understood by Marxist-Leninists.<sup>1</sup> This article is restricted to the events in Ukraine following the then inevitable break up of the Soviet Union – after it had become a capitalist state.

For decades Ukraine has been a cauldron. After the 1991 USSR break-up, all players there share blame, nurturing prior distrust where the Eastern more 'Russian' side, faced a Western more 'Polish' side. Putin's dictatorship supported its' own ruthless supporters inside Ukraine. And the USA and its creature NATO with all European Union (EU) states encircle Russia using West Ukraine as a foil. Underlying today's macabre dance is Ukraine's strategic value (See Map below). It is the second largest country in size (after Russia) in Europe, ranking eighth in population. Coal-rich, with a heavy industrial base from Soviet times, it has a valued technology literate, educated working class - once the major arms exporter to the USSR.

Ukraine is also the second largest country in terms of size (after Russia) in Europe and ranks eighth in population. Rich in coal and a heavy industrial base from former Soviet times, it has a valued educated work force literate in technology. It was a major arms exporter to the USSR. To understand the current Danse Macabre we must return to the break-up of the USSR in 1991.

**1. The march of privatization profit in Russia was matched in Ukraine**

Putin led the gangster "Siloviki ('strong men' or so-called KGB Inc) after 1991.<sup>1</sup> They did not sell Russia to the West, as Jeffrey Sachs preached, and as Mikhail Khodorkovsky and pro-Western oligarchs had wished. The Siloviki wanted Russian capital for themselves. In the recent Navalny case showed clearly that:

"Russia is a capitalist dictatorship, dominated by the clique of oligarchs who surround Putin. Putin's rule (is) by personal decree, where stooges control all arms of the state including the judiciary, (and) democracy has been stifled."<sup>2</sup>

After the Chernobyl nuclear melt-down in Ukraine, disenchantment with the corrupt formerly Soviet state was widespread, leading to calls for independence in 1989 from the party 'Rukh'. But in Gorbachov's referendum on preserving the USSR in 1991, only Western Ukraine (formerly the Habsburg part) favoured independence. The West had always been more nationalistic. Yet across Ukraine, the Chairman of Parliament *Leonid Kravchuk's* proposal of sovereignty within a loose 'Union', won out at 80%.

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<sup>1</sup> Bland WB; 'Restoration of Capitalism in the USSR'; <http://www.oneparty.co.uk/html/book/ussrmenu.html>

<sup>2</sup> Hari Kumar, 'Navalny and Putin – Is there a good guy here?' Left Berlin Blog 01/02/2021; at:

<https://www.theleftberlin.com/navalny-and-putin-is-there-a-good-guy-here/>

But events moved fast after Yeltsin's coup. Rukh was now joined by the erst-while pro-USSR Communist Party, whose Stanislav Hurenko put it bluntly: "We must vote for independence because if we don't we'll find ourselves up to our ears in shit".<sup>3</sup> As the former CP was made illegal, a new popular referendum voted 90.3% for independence. Yet what did this independence mean in the Ukraine of 1991?

Independence in 1991 Ukraine meant freedom for 'red entrepreneurs' to make profits. Leading 'communists' copied Russian capitalists in privatizing (stealing) state resources. 'Komsomol banks' included Privatbank, which laundered \$150 million via Latvia.<sup>2</sup> In rushing the pig-trough, two great rival blocks of Ukrainian oligarchs formed: One in the East steppe region of Ukraine, while one became entrenched in West Ukraine.

## **2. Fervid money making schemes, saw two distinct rival forces emerged.**

*The first group* favoured overt links to the Russian 'Silvoki; and Russia, and was based in Donetsk a mining town in the Donbas. Three corrupt personalities set the mould, all violent with mafioso links, and throughout ensuing decades supported by Putin.<sup>2</sup> The first elected Ukrainian president was *Kravchuk*, who was succeeded by *Leonid Kuchma*, another previous CP member in a 1994 election. Kuchma's ally was the gangster Boris Biurshtein. They set up a company 'Ukraina' to divert state funds, and won out over Kravchuk's mob. Kuchma's platform was to expedite 'reforms' and 'restore' links to Russia, which did not prevent him approaching the European Union also. Another wing of this faction was led by *Viktor Yanukovich*. Though allied to Kuchma, he formed his own party called 'Party of Regions'. Together with Kuchma, they furthered privatization of state resources, and bribed off or physically eliminated opposition members. The Donetsk clan in the region of the Donbas mines diverted subsidies for the large steel and mine corporations into their own hands.

*The second group* was equally ruthless but opposite in alliance being linked to Western imperialism. It had three leaders who joined forces.

*Viktor Yushchenko* began as a private banker, moving to the National Bank of Ukraine. His second wife was 'with KPMG [a Western financial firm] consulting who were advising Ukraine's new breed of financiers'.<sup>2</sup> He formed '*Our Ukraine*'.

Meanwhile *Yuliia Tymoshenko* – or the 'Gas Princess' made huge fortunes in Dnipropetrovsk outside Donetsk. She has long been plagued by charges of corruption and bribery, which were dropped by Ukraine after she became prime minister after the 'Orange Revolution'. Initially her rise linked to Russian enterprises especially *Gazprom* the Russian energy giant took, the same path as the corrupt oligarchs. As a komsomol entrepreneur, she linked with *Pavlo Lazerenko* who ran a CP sinecure. They set up ever larger energy concerns, culminating in United Energy Systems Ukraine (UESU). With payoffs to Kuchma, Lazerenko rose to Premiership. But turf battles with 'Gazprom' broke their money-trail. Former oligarch Lazerenko fled to the USA to evade corruption charges, but was mired in court battles. Politically Yulia Tymoshenko took over the Hromada party, or the 'dissident' oligarchs party. But tensions with Kuchma forced her to leave Hromada, so she 'discovered' Ukraine nationalism, starting learning Ukrainian, and formed the '*Fatherland*' party.

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<sup>3</sup> Cited Andrew Wilson, 'Ukraine's Orange revolution'; New Haven 2005; p.8-24; p.31-37.

Efficient as *Yushchenko* was, Kuchma made him Prime Minister after Lazerenko fled. Yuschenko did reform parts of the economy for the better. Trying to head off the pro-Russian oligarchs, he appointed Tymoshenko as deputy premier for energy. Ensuing battles with oligarchs led an inevitable showdown, as the most egregious greeds were curbed and exposed. But Yuschenko was removed by stacked votes in the Rada (parliament) in 2001, in order to placate Ukrainian oligarchs.

In his place came Viktor Yanukovch. Rapid corrupt privatisations of state property restarted. The orgy of murders, bribery and repression reached a new high with the murder of *Hryhorri Gongadze*, a muck-raking journalist. Major *Mykola Melnychenko* made voluminous secret recordings in Kuchma's office from 1999-2000, clearly exposing many plots.

### 3. The "Orange Revolution" Maidan 1.0

After two presidential terms Kuchma had by law to step down. In 2002 elections for the parliament (*Rada*), Yanukovich won over his opponent Yuschenko by blatant fraud. But the presidential election in 2004 spurred even worse outrages, including an attempted murder of Yuschenko (the main opponent) by dioxin poison. Yuschenko survived, but with serious facial scarring. However his party 'Our Ukraine' entered a coalition with Yulia Tymoshenko's bloc. Their support lay in Western Ukraine and parts of Central Ukraine. Both candidates engaged in illegal spending and bribery, although the Yanukovich camp was far worse, and was heavily funded by Gazprom and Kremlin deputy chief of staff *Vladislav Surkov*.<sup>4</sup> The 'Zoriany' tapes of the Ukrainian Secret Service (SBU) - revealed extraordinary vote fixing by the declared winner Yanukovich.

This time, an outrage was triggered. As the Yuschenko-Tymoshenko forces mobilised huge demonstrations were held in Kiev's Independence Square from 21 November 2004 onwards. They had an agitprop organisation (*Pora*) to mobilise youth. An international allegiance, led by *Colin Powell* publicly condemned the fraudulent elections. Yuschenko took a public 'Oath of office', forcing the pace.

Meanwhile a false flag 'organised chaos' was created, using government sponsored 'fake nationalists' like the *Ukrainian National Assembly (UNA)*<sup>3</sup> and 'anarchist' attacks. Moreover the Ukrainian Secret Service (SBU) brass stood with Yuschenko.<sup>3</sup> In a long stand-off, the Supreme Court forced a new vote which was held under vigilant scrutiny, and appeared to be much 'cleaner'. Yuschenko's electoral victory, after a delay - was followed by Tymoshenko's premiership. Undoubtedly vengeance was taken against the Donetsk rivals. The already apparent significant division in Ukraine even in the second re-run election where Yanukovych had won every oblast in the east and north, became exacerbated.<sup>5</sup> Nonetheless no major politician from the East was in the new government. Yuschenko now rehabilitated the fascist 1929 Organisation of *Ukrainian Nationalists (OUN)*, and the *Ukrainian Insurgent Army (NPA)*.<sup>6</sup> As well the *Ukrainian National Assembly (UNA)* and its paramilitary wing the *UNA-UNSO* were fostered. This organisation was known to the USA embassy (shown in Wikileaks) as 'a coalition of nationalists forces that venerated Mussolini'.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *Wilson Ibid p.39; p. 118; 135; 2.*

<sup>5</sup> *Wilson Ibid p. 131-3; 325-327.*

<sup>6</sup> *Wilson 'The Ukrainians Unexpected Nation'; Yale; 2009; p.131*

<sup>7</sup> *Chris Kaspar de Ploeg 'Ukraine in the Crossfire'; Atlanta GA, 2017; p. 23*

Tymoshenko 're-privatised' (i.e. first 'renationalising' Kuchma's oligarchs industries, but only to re-offer another privatization – for her own clique of oligarchs). Yuschenko paid off those oligarchs who had funded his campaigns, by protecting them against corrupt charges in the “RosUkrEnergo” scandal. But this was only the tip of the corruption scandals. A fast emerging battle between Tymoshenko and Yuschenko – each with their own vying crews of oligarchs, mired the state. Yuschenko even entered into a secret deal with his former rival Yanukovych to be able to replace Tymoshenko with a tamer *Yurii Yekhanurov*. Into this heated setting, Gazprom Russian gas price raises were raised to gouge further. It seemed designed to undermine the Orange government. However in shady deals thereafter, prices were lowered. But the new agreement that committed to a monopoly to import gas *only* from Russian controlled central Asian storage facilities. This enriched RosUkrEnergo.<sup>8</sup> In the new elections of 2006, oligarchic funding was chased by all parties. But Tymoshenko's coalition was out-manoeuvred by a crass pooling of forces between both Yuschenko and Yanukovych. This made Yanukovych Prime minister – albeit briefly. After much oligarchic swapping, new elections resulted in a second orange government with Tymoshenko again serving as PM under president Yuschenko.

We cannot detail all events up to 2022, but in the Maidan events of 2006 and 2013 the Ukrainian state was splintered. Tymoshenko (and a later successor Petro Poroshenko) adopted racist and restrictive policies against Ukrainian Russian speakers. In an inter-regnum the pro-Russian Donetsk gangster Yanukovich became PM. However his government balked at ever more egregious demands of the IMF and the EU.<sup>9</sup> Tymoshenko, brought down Yanukovich's government, in tandem with the US Assistant Secretary of State *Victoria Nuland* (whose recorded indiscretions (“Fuck the EU”) spoke volumes).<sup>5</sup>

Maidan 2.0 was a coup, that was clearly fueled by the USA and the EU. Nuland openly boasted that “the US had invested over \$5 billion USD in Ukrainian democracy”.<sup>10</sup> Moreover both the USA and the EU were setting up several 'NGO's. These poured money into the Orange supporters, led by George Soros (110 million between 2004-2014; and the EU gave 1.3 billion Euros 2007-2014).<sup>10</sup>

During the coup, the open pro-Western Orange fascists were mobilised against Russian Ukrainians. These included *Sovoboda*, *UNA-UNSO (the paramilitary wing of the UNA)*, *Stephen Bandera's Trident*, *White Hammer* and *the Social National Assembly*.<sup>11</sup> Rooftop snipers organised by Tymoshenko shot at crowds with 51 deaths. The cursory “investigation” ignored evidence of Orange snipers, which Estonia's Foreign Minister had informed the EU Foreign Policy chief Catherine Ashton about.<sup>12</sup> However it served as provocation to blame Yanukovich. The Polish Foreign Minister *Sikorski* confirms that at this stage Putin had to persuade a reluctant Yanukovich to step down.

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<sup>8</sup> *Wilson 2009; p. 329.*

<sup>9</sup> *Edward S. Herman and David Peterson 'The Ukrainian crisis & the propaganda system'; in Ed: Stephen Lendman 'Flashpoint In Ukraine'; Atlanta GA; 2014; p.178-180*

<sup>10</sup> *Chris Kaspar de Ploeg 'Ukraine in the Crossfire'; Atlanta GA, 2017; p.54-58;*

<sup>11</sup> *de Ploeg Ibid; p. 29*

<sup>12</sup> *de Ploeg; Ibid p.38-39*

As Yanukovich's government collapsed, the population in eastern Ukraine moved to demand its own rights. This particularly as all of Ukraine was being subject to intense 'austerity'. Throughout this next process as Bloomberg reported USA state presence – including then USA Vice-President *Joe Biden* and US ambassador Pyatt in Ukraine as: "Americans are highly visible in the Ukrainian political process. The US Embassy in Kiev is a center of power, and Ukrainian politicians openly talk of appointments and dismissals being vetted by *US Ambassador Pyatt* and even Vice-President Joe Biden".<sup>13</sup> Three months after Yanukovich was ousted, *Hunter Biden* (son of the US vice-president) joined the board of Burisma Holdings, Ukraine's largest gas producer.<sup>14</sup> Attacks on the Ukrainian economic independence of the EU and the USA were far more targeted at the industrialised Eastern part (the Russian) rather than at the agricultural Eastern (pro-Western Polish) side.<sup>15</sup>

As the Kiev Rada voted 'overwhelmingly' to abolish Russian as the second language in Eastern Ukrainian areas, a signal was given to the fascist ultra-nationalists. They had already been given high government positions.<sup>16</sup> Ukrainian identity was being built on the 'divisive ultra-nationalist' figure of *Stepan Bandera*. There then ensued clashes, in which in Odessa and Mariupol Russian Ukrainians were massacred.<sup>17</sup> The brutalities of the Orange sponsored fascist brutalities of the '*Torpedo*' 'vounteer battalion' and its Commander *Ruslan Onischenko*, were reported by *Amnesty* and *Der Spiegel* correspondents.<sup>17</sup>

By this point as Putin stated himself, Russia assisted Crimean 'self-defense' forces.<sup>15</sup> As well The *Donetsk People's Republic (DPR)* and the *Luhansk People's Republic (LPR)* in the Donbass were proclaimed in May 2014. Both were supported by Russia. Russia organised a referendum in the Crimea, claiming that an overwhelming majority of 97% voted for annexation to Russia. This was duly carried out on February 22, 2014 by Russian troops.<sup>18</sup> By 2015, a very bitter civil war between the East and the western sections of Crimea raged, which in muted form continues till now.

This state of continuing conflict eventually forced the "*Minsk Agreement*" in February 2015. This was signed by the Ukraine, the Donetsk and Luhansk leaders, and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). It called for a cease-fire and was to be mediated by France and Germany. This mediation (called the *Normandy formula* or the *Steinmaier* formula) has been repetitively stalled either by the Ukraine or by Russia. Meanwhile, President *Poroshenko* further escalated anti-Ukrainian Russian tensions.

Since then, support for the Russian state even in the Eastern Donetsk region has fallen.

<sup>19</sup> This despite the Presidency of *Volodymyr Zelensky* – who won 75% of the vote

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<sup>13</sup> *de Ploeg; Ibid; p. 79*

<sup>14</sup> *de Ploeg; Ibid p. 91*

<sup>15</sup> *de Ploeg; Ibid; p. 106.*

<sup>16</sup> *de Ploeg; Ibid p. 115.*

<sup>17</sup> *de Ploeg; Ibid p.132.*

<sup>18</sup> *Guy Chazan & Courtney Weaver, 'Russia's return'; Financial Times March 22, 2014.*

<sup>19</sup> *Bikus, Z. Gallup Poll (2019, March 26); cited Joseph Jack Place, "Zelensky"; in*

against Poroshenko. Likely Zelensky's support of the oligarch Kolomoisky reduced all peoples trust over all Ukraine. As some observers have noted "Ukraine missed the window of opportunity when it would have been much easier to implement the Minsk agreements: when it would have been a question of reintegrating a region that was admittedly hostile, but one that was nevertheless close and understood." In essence now Russia "sees the DNR and LNR as a useful buffer zone on its western border."<sup>20</sup>

#### **4. Putin and USA-NATO understand each other – Where does Germany sit?**

Naturally the USA denies making commitments to *Mikhael Gorbachev* or the USSR.<sup>21</sup> However these are charades, as the LA Times clarified:

"Transcripts of meetings in Moscow on Feb. 9, 1990, Secretary State James Baker suggested (to Mikhail Gorbachev) that in exchange for cooperation on Germany, U.S. could make "iron-clad guarantees" that NATO would not expand "one inch eastward.".. the quid pro quo was clear: Gorbachev acceded to Germany's (reunification) and the U.S. would limit NATO's expansion... by October, U.S. policymakers were contemplating... when to "signal to the new democracies of Eastern Europe NATO's readiness to contemplate their membership."<sup>22</sup>

In 2007 at the Munich Security Conference, Putin laid out the problem:

"NATO is not a universal organisation, as opposed to the UN. It is first and foremost a military and political alliance, military and political! Well, ensuring one's own security is the right of any sovereign state. We are not arguing against this... But why is it necessary to put military infrastructure on our borders during this expansion?"<sup>23</sup>

Meanwhile since German reunification, NATO has added 14 new members (map<sup>24</sup>). One should ask whether the USA would tolerate Russian troops on the Canadian border?

By 2009 the German military considered division of Ukraine enabling West Ukraine to join the EU.<sup>25</sup> The Steinmeier plan (or 'Normandy' talks) puts an 'Ostpolitik' veneer on.<sup>26</sup> Actually this replays *Paul Rohrbach*, an earlier German strategist in the 1910-1920

Carsten Sander Christensen, 'Analyzing Political Tensions Between Ukraine, Russia, and the EU'; 2020, Billund Denmark.; p. 270

<sup>20</sup> Konstantin Skorkin; 'In the Donbas, Russia's Newest Citizens Prepare to Vote'; Carnegie Moscow Center; 26.08.2021; <https://carnegiemoscow.org/commentary/85210>

<sup>21</sup> Peter Baker, 'In Ukraine Conflict, Putin Relies on a Promise That Ultimately Wasn't'; 9 January 2022; New York Times. <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/01/09/us/politics/russia-ukraine-james-baker.html>

<sup>22</sup> Joshua R. Itzkowitz Shiffrin, Op-Ed LA Times; "Russia's got a point: The U.S. broke a NATO promise"; May 30 2016; at: <https://www.latimes.com/opinion/op-ed/la-oe-shiffrin-russia-us-nato-deal--20160530-snap-story.html>

<sup>23</sup> Putin's speech Munich Security Conference February 2007; at: <http://en.kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24034>

<sup>24</sup> Peter Wintour, 'Russia's belief in Nato 'betrayal' – and why it matters today'; 12 January 2022; The Guardian at: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/jan/12/russias-belief-in-nato-betrayal-and-why-it-matters-today>

<sup>25</sup> German Foreign Policy; "East Ukraine - A "de Facto Nation" Dec 1 2009; at: <https://www.german-foreign-policy.com/en/news/detail/4747/>

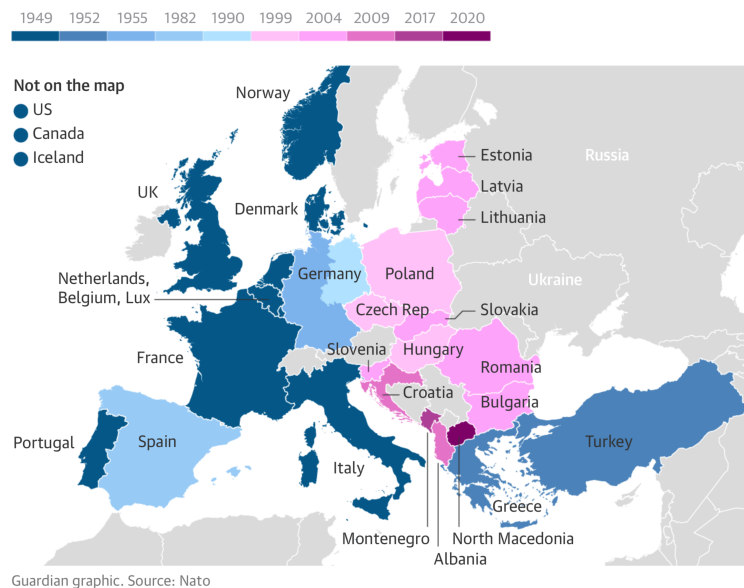
<sup>26</sup> Patricia Daehnhardt & Vladimir Handl (2018) *Germany's Eastern Challenge and the Russia-Ukraine Crisis: A New*

era. He saw Russia and Ukraine as an 'orange' with segments to peel off. His views culminated in Ukrainian-Nazi collaboration with Stepan Bandera. Editors of the "German-Foreign-Policy.com" service, argue this is followed today:

"In 1952, Rohrbach.. wrote.. one must "unleash the centrifugal forces within the Soviet Union." The "strongest "... is "the national self-consciousness of the Ukrainian people, with its will to obtain national sovereignty." ... Since then Berlin has been systematically working to bring the Ukraine into its hegemonic sphere of influence on an exclusive and permanent basis." <sup>27</sup>

Steinmaier's Normandy plans for such a division. <sup>28</sup> Other German intellectuals authorities Like Prof. *Johannes Varwick*, see "Finlandization" of Ukraine as a possible solution. <sup>29</sup>

### Nato has added 14 new members since German reunification



### 5. What brought the cauldron to boiling point?

In February 2021, Yelensky ratcheted up tensions, moved further to the Western Ukrainian side:

"Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky's actions are in sharp contrast with the peacemaker image that he cultivated... he closed down three pro-Russian TV channels, accusing their owner of financing Donbas separatists. This was followed on February 19 by a barrage of sanctions against a number of Ukrainian and Russian individuals and companies on the same charges. The most notorious name on the sanctions list was *Viktor Medvedchuk*.. (who) heads the

*Ostpolitik in the Making?*, *German Politics*, 27:4, 445-459,

<sup>27</sup> *Expansive Ambitions* 6 Dec 2013; <https://www.german-foreign-policy.com/en/news/detail/6144/>

<sup>28</sup> Dmitri Trenin, 'Why Russia Officially Broke With NATO'; October 20, 2021; *Carnegie Moscow Center*; <https://carnegiemoscow.org/2021/10/20/why-russia-officially-broke-with-nato-pub-85611>

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.inforadio.de/rubriken/interviews/2021/12/7/kriegsgefahr-russland-ukraine-usa-johannes-varwick-politologie-universitaet-halle-wittenberg.html>

Opposition Platform 'For Life', the country's leading pro-Russian party... Vladimir Putin's right-hand man in Ukraine for the past two decades." <sup>30</sup>

Increasingly opinion polls see voters becoming disillusioned with Zelensky. Putin frustrated at the inertia of the Normandy talks previously invited US Secretary State John Kerry to participate. But Germany and France vehemently rejected this. <sup>16</sup> Current troop massing is aimed at forcing division of the Ukrainian state. Russia and the USA and Germany see this as inevitable, but persuading Ukraine requires a brinkmanship.

### 6. Where to now?

Well before December 2021, the Ukrainian situation was untenable. It was about par economically with the Soviet Union before 1990. Since then GDP per capita halved by 1996, and is now 20 percent lower than in 1990. <sup>31</sup>

The Ukrainian national vacillations, opposed to Russian desire for a 'safety zone' division – blocked progress in Normandy talks. The former US former U.S. National Security Council official *Fiona Hill* acknowledged to 'Der Spiegel', that German 'responsibility' for today's situation is visible:

*Der Spiegel*: The US government is open to supporting a Ukrainian insurgency with arms in the event of a Russian invasion. The federal German government refuses arms deliveries. Doesn't that undermine a powerful anti-Putin coalition?  
*Hill*: What we need is a coordinated response. Because it is Russia's goal to play everyone off against each other. If the German government does not want to supply weapons for historical reasons, it could help launch a much more powerful diplomatic initiative. Germany shares responsibility for the situation we are in now. It was Angela Merkel who opposed an action plan for the accession of Georgia and Ukraine at the 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest. At the same time, however, it did not prevent a compromise that held out the prospect of both countries joining at some point, albeit without a concrete timetable. I believe our problems can be traced back directly to 2008, when everyone involved was trying to find a face-saving compromise." <sup>32</sup>

The USA has suffered withdrawal from Afghanistan, following evident failure in Iraq, and is seriously internally divided. Hill recognises that Russia tries to take advantage of this:

*Hill*: I think Putin sees that the USA - also due to the withdrawal from Afghanistan - gives a weak picture. Britain is at odds with France and most of the EU. Poland is at odds with Brussels... Of course, Putin knows that there are many in Germany who sympathize with the Russian perspective.... The Iraq war in 2003 was a real turning point for Russia. I think the US invasion was a serious strategic mistake."

<sup>30</sup> Maxim Samoruko, "Why Russia Is Unmoved by Kyiv's Sanctions Against Putin's Friend"; 24 February 2021; Carnegie Moscow center; at: <https://carnegiemoscow.org/commentary/83930>

<sup>31</sup> Adam Tooze: *Chartbook #68 Putin's Challenge to Western hegemony - the 2022 Ed*; Jan 12; at: <https://adamtooze.com/2022/01/12/chartbook-68-putins-challenge-to-western-hegemony-the-2022-edition/>

<sup>32</sup> "Kriegsgefahr in Osteuropa – "Wir sollten uns nicht beluegen und glauben Putin bluffe nur"; Interivew Rene Pfister with Fiona Hill, *Der Spiegel* 21.01.2022  
<https://www.spiegel.de/ausland/wir-sollten-uns-nicht-beluegen-und-glauben-putin-bluffe-nur-a-1d335406-0d71-466a-b35a-7f83de166096>



### Conclusions

Predictions are usually tricky. However it does seem unlikely – for now - that either Russia or NATO-USA want a war right now. As for the EU - France has long called for an ‘independent’ European military force. Germany has been more cautious trying to ride several horses. But the increasingly tense race between USA and Chinese imperialism as tensions rise Germany will have to choose.<sup>33</sup> That choice will pull on the EU. In the meantime as NATO-USA draws the net tighter at the Russian state boundaries, Russia itself is hardly defenceless and has been seeking to build its own Eastern based alliances:

“On 7-8 August, 2016 in Baku was held tripartite Summit of Azerbaijan, Iran and Russia with focusing on dealing regional security arrangements to the South Caucasus and to make deal regarding Caspian Sea legal status disagreements among the littoral states. The Summit was characterized with face to face long-standing negotiations between the per se participating nation leaders (Azerbaijan, 2016). The longest talking were demonstrated by the leaders of Russia and Iran and very soon the results were at hand. Moreover, on the second day of the Summit, Turkey’s President Recep Erdogan paid official visit to Sankt99 The Caucasus Geopolitical Dilemma Petersburg and hold how he identified with his “best friend” President of Russia’s Vladimir Putin either long-standing bilateral negotiations.”<sup>34</sup>

Marxists see that a new world re-division is in the works. The world’s powers grappled with capitalist crisis after the great crash of 2008. Invariably rivalries become clearer. Just before the 2022 Winter Olympics, China made clear its position. It has put its chips on Putin’s table, or perhaps Putin has put Russia’s chips on China’s table.

USA imperialism will face off at some time in the coming decades against a coalition of the two imperialisms of China and Russia. Probably now is not that time. Yet, it is ever clearer also – that the working class - has no independent party of strength in either those countries or in Europe. Signs of a Marxist-Leninist international unity are just as slender.

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<sup>33</sup> Hari Kumar, ‘An Initial Assessment of Angela Merkel’s Legacy’; Berlin Left blog; 25/07/2021  
<https://www.theleftberlin.com/an-initial-assessment-of-angela-merkels-legacy/>

<sup>34</sup> Vakhtang Maisaia; Chapter 5; *The Caucasus Geopolitical Dilemma : A Land Between Eurasian Union and Euro-Atlantic Community – A Rimland for New Cold War: Introduction, New Cold Confrontation*; In: Editor Carsten Sander Christensen; *Analyzing Political Tensions Between Ukraine, Russia, and the EU*; London; 2020