

# Goucher College

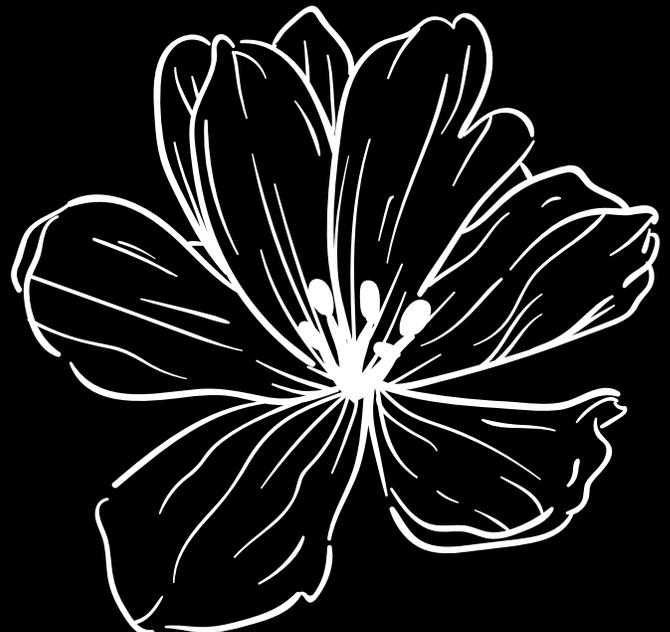
## Journal of International Relations

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Sam, Chad Smith and Sal Suarez

The Management - Dr. Eric Singer



# Project Overview

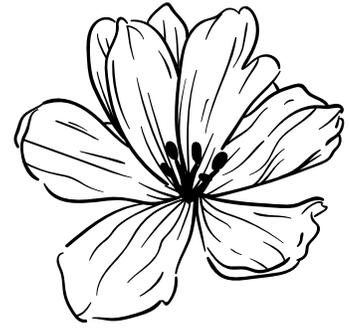
The following collection of op-eds is a production of the Spring 2022 Capstone Class in International Relations. The collection is subdivided into three sections: *The Nationalist Problematique*, *The Scope International Institutions: Progressive or Problematic?*, and *Great Powers, World Order, and the Future of Liberal Internationalism*, which address pressing topics about the future of global conflict and prospects for peace.

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All essays were written under the guidance of Dr. Eric Singer, Professor of Political Science and International Relations. We hope you enjoy our work.



# Goucher Journal of International Relations



## Issue 1: The Nationalist Problematique

### **Ignore at your own Peril** 9

North Korean Nationalism and its Threat to the  
International Order

*Chad Smith*

### **Ukrainian Nationalism Will Outlive the State** 11

*Sal Suarez*

### **The US Has Taken the Philippines for Granted for Too Long** 15

Its Turn Towards Autocracy Should be of Little Surprise

*Jibril Howard*

### **Pan-African Nationalism as a Strategic Approach to Globalization** 19

*Nadean Sam*

## **The French 2022 Election Signifies More Than 22 Just a Replay of the Macron/Le Pen Battle**

*Hannah Garrett*

## **The 2022 French Elections: Democracy's 26 Victory or its Delayed Demise?**

*Uyen Nguyen*

### Issue 2: The Scope of International Institutions

## **The U.N. Security Council Faces 33 Unprecedented Challenges to its Efficacy**

It May Not Be Able to Withstand the Pressure

*Jibril Howard*

## **NATO's Identity Crisis and its Implications 36 for the Post-Cold War Period**

*Sal Suarez*

## **ASEAN: an Unexpected Player in Global Politics**

*Uyen Nguyen* 39

## **IMF: Help or Hindrance? 43**

*Nadean Sam*

**The IMF is Problematic for Developing Countries** 46

*Chad Smith*

**Does Amnesty International Have a Positive Impact on Global Stability?** 48

*Hannah Garrett*

Issue 3: Great Powers, World Order, and the Future of Liberal Internationalism

**The Way the World Crumbles** 55

*Uyen Nguyen*

**Forget About the US and Russia** 58

The Balance of Power Between India and China is the Future of the International System

*Jibril Howard*

**China's Economic Presence in Africa: Friend or Foe?** 62

*Chad Smith*

**The South-South Economic Order May be the Newest Path for Global South Liberation** 64

*Nadean Sam*

**The New World Order Must Incorporate Cyberspace** 69

*Hannah Garrett*

**Updating Liberal Internationalism** 72

*Sal Suarez*



# Goucher Journal of International Relations



## The Nationalist Problematique

Volume 1, Issue 1

Edited by Jibril Howard and Sal Suarez

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# Introduction

The development of nationalism is long and Euro-centric. The Treaty of Westphalia initiated its development, but it failed to garner mass-appeal as a palatable supra-identity until the French Revolution, after French citizens asked themselves “what is the nation, and how can the state represent it?” The nation, to traditional nationalists, is defined by a historic geographic presence and consists of people with similar values/norm, ethnicity, and self-expression; there is always an in-group that corresponds to the Nation’s identity, leaving little space for other groups. Using history as a unifier has its problems, as we’ll discuss below, especially if a nation’s fascination with its history becomes an obsession. It would also be foolish to argue nationalism is inherently malice; it is an amoral supra-identity whose moral-leaning is purely decided by the individual.

Regardless, the allure of nationalism in the modern age is immense. From its inception as a purely European ideology, to the advent of both World Wars, nationalism contributed to the consolidation of state/societal expression in the international system from one of duchies, tributary states, and empires, to one of nation-states bound together by inter-state relations and internally oriented around nationalist expression. Colonial empires dissolved under the weight of native nationalist movements for independence because it

gave colonial groups consciousness of their subjugation.

In the post-Cold War landscape, nationalism once-again became a legitimizing force of the nation-state structure defined by America’s Liberal International order. The *problematiqué*, or issues associated with nationalism, including ethnic prejudice against “stateless people” or a government’s inability to secure legitimacy among its citizens, are muted by economic prosperity. The US-led system could maintain “security,” muting these issues vis-a-vis economic growth. However, the global system is once again entering a period of profound change. The US’s once unquestioned hegemony, and the liberal international order, is under threat. Russia’s invasion of Ukraine created two problems: poses existential questions for European about the legitimacy of Liberal institutions, such as NATO, the European Union, and the United Nations, to maintain peace. Similarly, the rise of far-right nationalism that seriously damaged the credibility of European institutions.

It is amid this uncertain time in foreign affairs that we seek to situate our following essays on the nationalist *problematique*. Each piece takes on a particular framework to understand current events and discuss significant questions about the nationalist threat in

the broader post-WWII liberal international order. Realism, Liberalism, Constructivism, and so on—each piece employs a unique framework that allows one to examine the same problemaqué from alternating perspectives. In our pieces, we'd identified a few commonalities: 1. they initiate discussions about the antagonistic relationship between populist nationalists and existing states; 2. The address the relationships between and within existing international institutions among states. Each essay interrogates how the modern-state grapples with threats, real or perceived, to its national identity.

*- Jibril Howard and Sal Suarez, Editors*



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# Ignore at your own Peril: North Korean Nationalism and its Threat to the International Order

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*Chad Smith*

Kim Jong Un and North Korea are determined to establish themselves as a significant nuclear power and military threat to both South Korea and the rest of the world. By relying on military might as a determinant of overall strength it relays an unrealistic and shallow gauge of North Korea's place in the global political spectrum. This year the country has increased their weapons tests and demonstrations by launching intercontinental ballistic missiles capable of reaching the United States. As tensions continue to rise between North and South Korea, talks about a potential reunification seem increasingly more unrealistic.

Having an established nuclear presence, since capabilities were available, has been a top priority of the Kim Dynasty in North Korea. A fearsome nuclear weapons program that forces the world to pay attention and proceed with caution when addressing the nation's play into the hands

of its leader, Kim Jong Un. Economically, the country is in desperate need. There are constant reports of starvation and other humanitarian crises that have completely crippled the population of civilians there. In addition, they are heavily reliant on foreign aid, mainly from China, in order to keep the country's economy afloat and avoid a complete collapse. Despite these conditions, the sense of nationalism within the country remains extremely high for two reasons. The way that North Korean elites have been able to convince its citizens that they are an extremely powerful and influential nation that is feared by the rest of the world. This fuels the nationalism and pride of the citizens who continue to serve the corrupt needs of the regime. North Korea has also been able to portray itself as a threat to the world order by taking on the image of a nuclear threat capable of causing the most extreme of destruction. This is a reality the United States and the west have paid

little to no attention to. Their usual response consists of a statement of disapproval associated with some sanctions that only hurt the general population.

Following North Korea's latest ballistic missile test, the U.S. and South Korea have begun joint military drills. This joint operation comes in hopes of reigniting talks of denuclearization within North Korea. This has resulted in the North severing all ties of cooperation with the South. This comes right as North Korea is gearing up for a large military parade during which the country plans to ramp up missile tests. North Korea maintains the position that it needs an extensive weapons armory, which includes nuclear warheads, to ward off attacks from South Korea and the U.S. However, this line of thinking stems from the warped reality the country exists within. The US has no incentive to launch any type of nuclear missile on North Korea; such an unprecedented action would bring no political or social benefit. North Korea is most likely aware of this fact while speaking from a perspective of self defense while acting as the aggressor. Because their actions are so unpredictable, continued denuclearization talks are extremely important.

All of North Korea's actions point back towards its increased reliance on a Nationalist agenda. By isolating itself

from the rest of the world they have left themselves with extremely limited allies and resources. The increased tensions and escalation, specifically between the North and the South has global implications and should be a concern for the United States, especially with so many U.S. soldiers present at the DMZ border. A significant effort by the United States government to facilitate denuclearization efforts in North Korea would not hinder their Nationalist agenda. It would shift the focus from a dangerous reliance on military demonstration and strength to one that focus more on stabilizing.

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# Ukrainian Nationalism Will Outlive the Russian State

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*Sal Suarez*

Putin initiated his invasion of Ukraine by proclaiming Ukrainian sovereignty—its status as a nation—was artificial. A product of Lenin. He’s not wrong, but he’s also incorrect. Ukrainian identity existed before Lenin, and it’s only grown in palatability among Ukrainians since his death. Putin’s conservative, centuries-old Russian-centric historiography prevents him from appreciating the strength of Ukrainian nationalism, and it will, in all likelihood, cost him very dearly in the years to come.

***Ukrainian Nationalism: from Lenin’s Project to its Modern in Application***

The “nations” inside the Tsarist Empire already existed before the October Revolution. An Empire of Nations, as Marx calls it. However the collapse of the Tsarist system allowed Lenin to divide the empire, now the Soviet Union, into fifteen Soviet Republics, or SSRs, in a project of national delimitation. He believed nationalism, be it Russian, Kazakhstani, or Ukrainian was a prerequisite for transnational socialism; local populations

needed to perceive governments as being representative of their interests/ identity before they can reorganize society along socialist principles. Therefore, these semi-autonomous states used Communism, or the pursuit of socialism, to legitimize themselves. Ethnic-based national consciousness could form without disrupting the Soviet order.

In this respect, Putin is correct: modern Ukraine, in terms of borders, is a product of Lenin. However, Putin ignores the century between 1917 and his invasion of Ukraine. He ignores Russia’s reckless abuse of power throughout the Ukrainian SSR that killed millions and resulted in native Ukrainians welcoming the Nazis as liberators. The seeds for Ukrainian nationalism existed from the onset of the Union’s formation, but the SSRs did not seriously consider succeeding until the 1980s. Turbulent economic conditions renewed nationalist sentiment, and after the first SSR gained independence, it wasn’t long until the other fourteen followed suit.

As a newly independent state, the Ukrainian government needed a supra-philosophy to help legitimize its existence as a Ukrainian nation-state distinct from Russia. Without communist dogma, the Ukrainian government, like all other post-Soviet states, used nationalism as a convenient supra-identity to unify the population under a common identity. Ukrainian nationalism looked as far back as Kievan-Rus,' tying Ukrainian identity to historic occupation of the same territory, a common ethnicity, language, Orthodox Christendom, and a shared historical experience as a centuries-long victim of Russian colonization and imperialism. Russia also took a nationalist bent following the fall of the USSR. Its nationalist elites, all of whom grew up during the Soviet period, viewed Ukraine from a completely different perspective, similar to how the United States viewed the secessionist South: one of righteous indignation. A "subgroup" falling out of the fold. Any attributes of Ukrainian society they attempt to attribute as distinct aspects of their national identity Russia dismisses are intentionally inflated cultural distinctions no different from other inter-regional differences one normally sees in large nations.

Russia allied to its *true* feelings about Ukraine throughout the 1990s to placate the Americans, whose president

feverishly advocated for NATO expansion to promote Western, values and Liberal institutions. A democratic redesign throughout post-Soviet Europe. During times of mutual financial prosperity, Russia begrudgingly agreed to the arrangement during period of economic stability, however Russian elites reversed course after a decade of continuous economic strife during the 2000's. Taking notes from Russia's institutional history, they sought to emulate Tsarist Russia by aggressively redefining Russia's national identity in alignment with conservative Russian values: authoritarianism, ideas of great power status throughout the Orthodox and Slavic world as the Third Rome, and using foreign conquest and imperialism to legitimize a strong-man's rule.

### ***Conflicting National Pathways: The Road to War***

It should be no surprise the Russian state invaded Ukraine once it had the military capabilities. Not only had Putin hinted at it since Russia's annexation of Crimea, but Putin's very legitimacy is now tied to his military abilities. This is why he engaged in petty conflicts in Transnistria, Kazakhstan, and Georgia; he approached these conflicts with the same Tsarist entitlement arrogance he approached Ukraine: as break-away state in need of Russian "guidance."

Unlike previous post-Cold War conflicts, which were simple "invade and

persuade” missions, the Russian experience throughout the Ukrainian invasion reveals Ukraine’s situation is unique. The nationalism its government and people clung to after the Soviet-period is stronger than Putin predicted. Ukrainian nationalism framed Russia as an antagonist; all-levels of Ukrainian society, unlike Belarus and Kazakhstan, perceive Russia as a bully. Its historical experience routinely features instances of Russian brutality that sets Ukraine apart from Russia’s other former territories. Tales of the Holodomor, collectivization, Russian colonization, and brutality—what was once a story, the current Russo-Ukrainian War turned into a living experience.

***National “Tracks:” Nationalism  
Outliving the State***

Contrary to what Western media reveals, it is difficult to imagine Ukraine winning the Russo-Ukrainian War. The Russian government has historical experience occupying the region; its geography effectively funnels the Russian army into the Ukrainian heartland, and without a defensible internal border east of the Dnieper River, Ukraine cannot act offensively. These same features allowed Russia to control Ukraine for four hundred years prior. Moreover, the Ukrainian military’s longevity depends solely on NATO support. These

conditions severely restrict Ukrain’s opinions, making it highly likely the state will collapse after extensive pressure. This is not to say Russia can control Ukraine long enough to remove the social force of Ukrainian nationalism. There are several factors favorably Ukraine’s favor that will likely prevent Russia from controlling it in the long-term. First, the internal divisions Ukraine faced during the 2010s were gone before the invasion. In his arrogance, Putin further strengthened Ukrainian national by providing them national mythos—an identity-defining conflict. Moreover, the same ignorance that underpinned America’s NATO eastern expansion now blinds Washington to the nuances of the conflict that might normally caution one from engagement. President Zelenskyy convinced America this conflict exists in a vacuum as a nation being simply invaded. As a result, America provides Ukraine with a blank check to buy US weaponry while other former Soviet NATO nations offer direct assistance. Ukraine struck a nerve with the West and its post-Soviet European counterparts. It reminds them why their parents joined NATO: Russia is predisposed toward expansionism.

Unfortunately for Putin, his attempt to re-orient the status quo in Russia’s favor miscalculated the strength of Ukrainian nationalism, revealing the weakness of the

Russian state. It lacks the financial capabilities and international clout it once enjoyed.

Moscow's struggles controlling Chechnian nationals gives one a small glimpse into the struggles it will face attempting to subdue Ukraine. Russia will try to strongman its way in, as it tends to do, but doing so will provoke an even harsher counter-reaction. If the government were to fall, Ukrainian nationalism will remain, pushing the conflict underground as the Ukrainian people rely on guerilla warfare.



# The US has taken the Philippines for granted for too long.

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*Its turn towards autocracy should be of little surprise*

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*Jibril Howard*

There's an adage in U.S. elections that voters hate being taken for granted. Every voter must be treated as if they're up-for-grabs, teetering on the brink of flipping, no matter how reliably they voted for a specific party in the past. To do otherwise would risk coming across as condescending or even lazy. While this is longstanding logic in U.S. elections, the same could not be said for U.S. foreign policy towards the Philippines. Indeed, the US-Philippines relationship was considered for decades to be among the strongest in the world, a strong, stable, and democratic ally in Southeast Asia. It was assumed the U.S.-Philippines allyship was unquestioned. The came 2016; the Philippines sent shockwaves across the political spectrum with the election of populist leader Rodrigo Duterte. In an instance, the US suddenly couldn't take its alliances with the Philippines for granted any longer. With China having emerged as a strong counter US power in Southeast Asia

the US requires a critical reassessment at where its once unquestioned relationship with the Philippines has soured. Since the Philippines achieved independence from the U.S. in 1946 following decades of occupation and anti-colonial conflict, the U.S has cultivated a strong relationship with its former colony, maintaining a strong military presence under the Visiting Forces Agreement and striking numerous economic partnerships. However, the supposedly strong alliance has often hidden problematic dynamics that has exploded in recent years. The U.S. propped up former-dictator-and-President Ferdinand Marcos for 21 years as a strong anti-communist crusader, turning a blind eye while he and his wife enriched himself to the country's detriment. The economic partnerships forged between the U.S. and the Philippines stand accused of being exploitative and one-sided. Thousands of Filipino men and women can immigrate to fill gaps in the U.S. economy, often as

field workers, rural teachers, or nurses but there is little investment or opportunity flowing in the opposite direction. Indeed, the Philippines' relationship with the US is consistent with Immanuel Wallerstein's observations on the capitalist world economy, a system which prioritizes the production of endless, continual capital and in which large, quasi-monopolistic nations such as the US can use their comparative muscle to prevent smaller nations such as the Philippines from imposing protectionist measures that would harm their interests. Through this lens, it should come as little surprise that despite its longstanding relationship with the US, the Philippines remains among the poorest and economically underdeveloped nations in Southeast Asia.

Amid the malaise, it should come as no surprise that Filipinos eventually would seek change. That change came in the form of the 2016 election of Davao City Mayor Rodrigo Duterte. Initially a dark-horse candidate, Duterte ran on a populist campaign bashing corruption among the Filipino political elite and skyrocketing numbers of Filipino drug use. Duterte also called for an "independent foreign policy" less dependent on the U.S. – memorably capping one of his diatribes off by calling then-U.S. President Barack Obama a "son of a whore" – and for more friendly relationship with China. While Duterte's soundbite undoubtedly captured most

American's (and the world's) attention spans, it was the proposed rapprochement with China that was much larger shock for the U.S. foreign policy establishment. It should not have been a shock. The basic facts are that the Filipino people were tired of being taken for granted in what has always been a junior, inherently exploitative, partnership. The US has often been accused by Filipinos of abusing the Visiting Forces Agreement to shield US military personnel from oversight by the Filipino government such as during the 2006 Subic rape case. The violence perpetrated by U.S. soldiers towards Filipinos, especially women and LGBTQ+ individuals (oftentimes sex workers), has been a longstanding concern that has been neglected by authorities. Thousands of Filipinos took to the street to protest the U.S. military presence the anti-base protests during the 1990s and discontent remains about the maintenance of the Visiting Forces Agreement. In 2020, LGBTQ+ Filipinos protested the U.S. military presence following the pardon of Lance Corporal Joseph Pemberton, a Marine soldier who raped and killed Jennifer Laude, a Filipina transgender woman in 2015. Many of those who protested saw striking comparisons of US immunity between the 2006 Subic rape case and the death of Jennifer Laude. The US was able to maintain jurisdiction over both perpetrators. The protests in the Philippines

are like ones seen by Okinawans over gendered violence perpetrated by military personnel and Native Hawaiians over environmental degradation and pollution of drinking water that highlight gross negligence obscured in the interest of international security and “standing together against the rise of China.” Such are the shortcomings of traditional international relations discourse, at both the academic and policymaking levels, that none of these factors was ever meaningfully evaluated prior to Duterte’s shocking election. Montiel et al. note that Duterte’s populist rhetoric decrying drug use, criminality, and corruption among the political elite resonated with a Filipino public dissatisfied with the status quo (522). Duterte employed the same framing when talking about foreign policy after took office, announcing in 2016 that the Philippines would initiate closer ties with China in exchange for much-needed infrastructure investment (523). Duterte further announced in 2020 he would end the Visiting Forces Agreement with the US but later walked back his decision, retracting the termination the following year. Soon attributes some of Duterte’s enduring popularity to a dissatisfaction with status-quo governance in the post-Marcos era. Specifically, Duterte’s calls for political realignment and bashing of drug use are an appeal to a collective memory of law and order that has been lost (307).

Having seen little change in their material conditions, Filipinos voted decisively for a figure who represented nothing but change. They’ve certainly gotten their wish. Duterte, who leaves office at the end of this year, has presided over a brutal drug war that has claimed the lives of an estimated 12,000 Filipinos, awarded contracts to Chinese companies which have largely gone unfulfilled, prosecuted independent journalists such as Rappler’s Maria Ressa, and overseen a disastrous response to the Covid-19 pandemic which has killed a further 60,000 Filipinos. However, his popularity has remained largely intact throughout his tenure. As Duterte nears the end of his term in office and the prospect for American-friendly leadership reemerges, the U.S. must reevaluate its foreign policy towards the Philippines. Due consideration must be given to the needs of its people and the harms perpetrated, past and present. Chinese aggression in the South China Sea will not obscure very real problems posed by the inequitable relationship between the U.S. and the Philippines. A dramatic re-thinking is required, or U.S. leaders may find Duterte to be only the beginning of a trend.

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# Pan-African Nationalism as a strategic approach to globalization?

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*Nadean Sam*

The economic situation in countries on the continent of Africa often poses confusion for many as we ponder how it is that a nation so rich in content finds itself so depleted of capital. The whole paradox of the resource curse is that despite the continent's profuse natural riches from the resources of the land, they find themselves in a "less developed" position economically and politically as compared to nations with considerably less natural resources.

The West African nations, Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire, are two of the world's largest cocoa exporters, growing 60-70 percent of the world's cocoa. They specialize in the agricultural production stage of cocoa for chocolate products. Unfortunately for most developing countries with their economic value tied up in the exporting of raw materials to the west, the value does not reside in raw materials but rather the finished product. This results in an accumulation of the cocoa capital residing outside of Ghana regardless of the country's invaluable

labor development, and provision of the main raw material for chocolate production. This leads to the labor exploitation of many cocoa farmers who are not being paid fairly. The Ghanaian cocoa farmers have been receiving less than 3 percent of the \$100 billion chocolate industry while Western nations are accumulating the entirety of cocoa profits. Both countries together represent less than 6% of the global cocoa value.

This global dynamic, of accumulation and exploitation, has been upheld between many nations rich in natural resources and nations that are well rich ... in capital at least. These nations' riches come from the poverty of the naturally resource abundant nations. They accumulate capital through globalization, capitalism, and an outdated (yet updated) colonial global division of labor model. This dynamic exploits countries that were former African colonies while former colonizers & imperialists accumulate and benefit at others expense. The nature of the relationship that globalization among other factors forms is

a renewed dynamic of colonialism dubbed neocolonialism for developing countries. The structures leftover by colonial rule in the global system and trade institutions within it are heavily influenced by the history and elements of colonialism established in the past. Personally, from this perspective I must logically conclude the “resource curse” is more of a myth imposed by colonialists than a reality. One that colonized education and ideology perpetuates.

This situation hinders not only Ghanaian development but more widely the development of all countries that are somewhat trapped in a state of perpetual development and poverty. It is important to understand the caveats of globalization and the current trade dynamics between countries naturally “blessed” by resources and ones not. This understanding will guide a vision of the future where the global south is able to elude this trap by building an alternative opportunity solution that acknowledges the trap that is globalization to utilize it in our favor. The current president, Nana Akufo-Addo announced in 2020 during a state visit to Switzerland, Ghana’s major trading partner, moreover one the largest chocolate producers in the world that “There can be no future prosperity for the Ghanaian people in the short, medium, or long term if we continue to maintain

economic structures that are dependent on the production and export of raw materials...” The Ghanaian government has assessed the situation and has concluded that if they are to develop it will require a shift from external dependency to internal independence and interdependence between other African nations – in a sense what some may classify as nationalism, African nationalism. Pan-Africanism if you will is essentially an adaptation of their view point of globalization and turn from ongoing neoliberal ideology.

One of the governments’ of Ghana and Cote D’ivoire first actions towards national independence and African interdependence vs global dependence was the living income differential (LID), a \$400 premium on the big chocolate companies. The goal of getting these companies to pay this premium is that it would mean famers had 30 percent more wages than the previous year. This is a small fraction of the profits big companies are making and really helps to support the welfare of cocoa farmers and their families. Unfortunately some companies like Hershey have reportedly been reluctant to pay the premium. When it's clear that the premium not only helps farmers but encourages them to increase their cocoa yield which can be seen in the record high tons of cocoa beans being exhibited since it was implemented. The European Union is currently building a

case to ban cocoa trade in order to manage the industry's harmful impacts on the environment and human rights. Though the cocoa supply chain impacts forest deforestation as well as utilizes child labor it is not just for the European my the Union to decide it is their job to oversee a clean up of it. Especially just as Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire seem to be working together to uplift themselves and each other rather than the West.

The current cocoa and chocolate dynamic is one that is built upon the foundations of the exploitative and extractive practices of colonialism and needs to be reworked so that countries with these raw materials receive some benefits as well and maintain mutual benefits instead of only the western nations benefiting. As well as gaining the benefits of the cocoa industry independent of the fluctuating, self-serving agendas of Europe and the Americas. This reliance would also require an increase of demand for cocoa within the continent of Africa. This has resulted in a rise in artisanal chocolate companies in Ghana which are increasing the potential for Ghana to export final product chocolate and maintain more of the value instead of exporting raw material cocoa for almost nonexistent value. Many developing countries of former colony status find themselves in similar economic situations. It is important for them to come

together in solidarity, brainstorm and collaborate on alternative economic structures to bring prosperity to not only their nations but more importantly their people—their laborers.



# The French 2022 election signifies more than just a replay of the Macron/Le Pen battle

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*Hannah Garrett*

What can the French 2022 elections reveal to us about the political landscape and trends in France today? French nationalism has always been rampant throughout political discourse in any election. It only makes sense that it would be the same in this election as well, especially in the midst of a bolstering of the ideals of the “République”. It is difficult to look at some of the debates and programs of these candidates without being reminded of French colonialism and the popular rhetoric during said period. So let’s first take a look at the candidates: the two that got through to the run-off were once again Emmanuel Macron (La République En Marche !) and Marine Le Pen (Rassemblement National), mirroring the last election in 2017; other candidates include Jean-Luc Mélenchon (La France Insoumise) and Éric Zemmour (Renconquête). There were many other candidates not mentioned but none who won over 5% of the vote in the first tour.

Éric Zemmour, of the four that I’ve mentioned, only received 7.1 % of the vote—certainly not enough to go to the run-off, but an impressive number for a newcomer. He created his own political party representing his far-right ideals. There are eight points of focus for his candidacy: “Identity, Immigration, Islam, Insecurity, Instruction, Taxes, Industry, and Independence (...) These subjects are fundamental as they determine the destiny of our country, its way of life and its place in the world. Politics must raise to the height of these civilized challenges and not lose itself in an endless list of technocratic reforms without an overall vision”. [1] His candidacy was unabashedly flush with racist, Islamophobic and anti-immigrant rhetoric as the man believes in the theory by Renaud Camus of “le grand remplacement”, which is “rooted in racist nationalist views (...) [purporting] that an elitist group is colluding against white is “rooted in racist nationalist views (...)”

[purporting] that an elitist group is colluding against white French and European people to eventually replace them with non-Europeans from Africa and the Middle East”. Such notions go as far back as the early 20th century, particularly gaining ground in the 70s and 80s—a period right after many countries had freed themselves from French colonial rule. The next candidate, Jean-Luc Mélenchon, nearly made the run-offs with 22 % of the vote, but in the end, didn’t make the cut. Contrary to the other three candidates I mention, Mélenchon represents the political left. Rather than discussing a return to the values of the French republic or bolstering republican ideals, he discusses the creation of a new republic, moving on from the current fifth republic whose institutions he describes as dangerous.

Let’s get down to the two main candidates that we again felt tension between, just as in the election five years ago: Emmanuel Macron and Marine Le Pen. To get a better understanding of each of their political leanings, Macron holds himself to be closer to the center, while some critics contend that his presidency has revealed him to be more right-leaning than he presents himself; Le Pen, however, is overtly right-wing. You can simply scroll through her twitter to find bits and pieces of Republican nationalism

and Islamophobia. I present several examples below:

People of France, stand up! I am ready to return to you your dignity, your confidence, and your grandeur! (April 22, 2022) [2]

The veil is a uniform imposed by Islamists. I want to push back the Islamists and to do that we must ban the veil in public spaces. (April 20, 2022) [3]

Mr. #Macron knows perfectly well that I am an absolutely and totally free woman, that I defend, because I am a patriot, France and the French. Always! (April 20, 2022) [4]

In France, all women must be able to live freely. I want to fight against the totalitarian Islamist ideology, which attacks secularism, equality between men and women, and the freedom to choose or to leave a religion. (April 15, 2022) [5]

The manner in which she discusses returning dignity to French citizens and placing major importance on “Islamist ideology” and the veil, Marine Le Pen uses nationalism to her advantage to rally French citizens behind her. By also claiming to be a warrior for women’s rights, she disguises the reality of such policies—which is that they strip the choice

from Muslim women to wear the headscarf in public. Le Pen makes claims of liberation and freedom of Muslim women—which she believes is contrary to “Islamist ideology” as Arab countries ruled by Islamists have forced the veil and instead diverts attention from racist and anti-immigrant propaganda by asserting the same philosophy as these countries that she criticizes: eliminating choice. One cannot ignore the similarities with the politicization of the veil in Algeria during the war for independence, in which France would claim—in the same vein as the “civilization” mission—that their presence in Algeria was in fact benevolent, as they were protecting women from the “oppressive ideologies and beliefs of Islam”, thus taking away from their own oppressive presence in the country for over a century at that point. Of course, this rhetoric of “saving” Muslim women has been and continues to be a crafty illusion—now just as it was over fifty years ago. Despite my criticisms of Marine Le Pen, newly re-elected Emmanuel Macron does not easily escape the same fate. Let us not forget his proposed law in 2021 which is commonly referred to as “La loi contre le séparatisme” or the law against separatism, which essentially misrepresents the relationship of minorities with the state; instead of the separation of minorities in France being a historical and legislative occurrence—which it is—it is being

interpreted in this law as an intentional act by the minorities themselves, which only continues to make them the “other”, contrary to the supposed goal of said law. In fact, this law is entrenched with nationalist thought of defending republican ideals: its official title is “loi du 24 août 2021 confortant le respect des principes de la République”, translated to “law of august 24 2021 strengthening the respect of the principles of the Republic”, with its major point defending one of the most crucial laws in French identity: that of laïcité AKA the secularism law of 1905.

What importance does this have? Nationalism, particularly right-wing nationalism in France is growing. It’s explicitly clear through the rhetoric of major political candidates, but also in the numbers of the election on Sunday, April 24. Such rhetoric, particularly that which refers to the ideals of the Republic and in reference towards marginalized communities, has incredibly strong ties to France’s colonial history. Then, comparing the numeric data of the elections from 2017 to 2022, we see that Le Pen grew 8% in popularity, resulting in a tighter race this year and showing an increase in support for right wing parties such as RN. So much of the rhetoric used and the republican ideals are intrinsically tied to France’s legacy of colonialism, mirroring the same narratives used decades ago. Thus, this trend only makes the future of power relations in Europe—and the world—that much more uncertain. If the political landscape of Europe is heading in the

direction of the right, as this case of the French elections suggests, could this signify the end of “European unity”? The focus of right-wing politicians in France on anti-immigration policy could suggest a bolstering of ideals that benefits should not be so liberally shared. Such sentiments will expand from domestic policy to foreign policy, threatening the current world order that we know.

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[1] Original in French: « Identité, Immigration, Islam, Insécurité, Instruction, Impôts, Industrie et Indépendance (...) Ces sujets sont fondamentaux car ils conditionnent le destin de notre pays, son mode de vie et sa place dans le monde. La politique doit se hisser à la hauteur de ces enjeux civilisationnels et non se perdre dans une liste sans fin de réformes technocratiques sans vision d’ensemble. »

[2] Original: « Peuple de France, lève-toi ! Je suis prête à te redonner ta dignité, ta confiance, ta grandeur !

#DimancheJeVoteMarine »

[3] Original: « Le voile est un uniforme imposé par les islamistes. Je veux faire reculer les islamistes et pour cela il faut interdire le voile dans l’espaces public.

#2022LeDébat #MarinePrésidente

#DébatMacronLePen »

[4] Original: « Monsieur #Macron sait pertinemment que je suis une femme absolument et totalement libre, que je défends, parce que je suis une patriote, la France et les Français. Toujours !

#2022LeDébat #MarinePrésidente

#DébatMacronLePen »

[5] Original: « En France, toutes femmes doivent pouvoir vivre librement. Je veux lutter contre l’idéologie totalitaire islamiste, qui s’attaque à la laïcité, à l’égalité entre les hommes et les femmes, à la liberté de choisir ou de quitter une religion. @RMC

@BFMTV »



# The 2022 French Elections: Democracy's Victory or its Delayed Demise?

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*Uyen Nguyen*

Sunday, April 24th saw the victory of Emmanuel Macron as he defeated his far-right rival, National Rally's candidate Marine Le Pen to hold onto the Elysée for another five years. The incumbent holds 58.5% over Le Pen at 41.5%. Macron received congratulations from world leaders and championed as "defending democracy." However, despite his success, the future of France and the global liberal system remains precarious.

Over the last few decades, there has been a rise in nationalistic resentment across the world. Accompanying this is the victory of far-right leaders in several national elections: Donald Trump's in 2016, Bashar al-Assad in Syria (2021) and the most recent Victor Orban in Hungary. Global politics have decidedly been dominated by right-wing nationalists. France is no exception. The French 2022 election was fought on a right-wing battleground, with issues like immigration

and national identity taking center stage. Founded on nationalism and nationalistic pride, France's values and ideologies are embodied in the Republic. And the Republic dwarfs everything else. During the first round of the French election, almost all candidates expressed a deep-seated desire for a nationalist France, from left-wing socialist "French Unbowed" Jean-Luc Mélenchon to the obvious extreme-right "Reconquest " Éric Zemmour. Even the winning Macron, a die-hard centrist, also found himself moving towards a more right-wing leaning rhetoric.

The progression of the French election may be domestic but it also reflects an uncertain future of a liberal Europe as war between Russia and Ukraine escalates. The invasion has shed light on the weaknesses of Europe in dealing with regional conflicts, not to mention the dwindled power of the West as contrast to

the gradual rise of China. The EU's military spending has decreased in the past as its members diverge their attention to economic partnerships. This is no longer the case. Almost all European nations have increased their military budget in the last year, already foreshadowing a fragmented alliance. The EU's overfocus on economics and underestimation of Putin's ambition has materialized into a militaristic nightmare and a costly war.

NATO's ignorance of Ukraine also destabilizes the cooperation among member states in the international system. While Russian oligarchs and Putin are being punished by economic sanctions, the death tolls in Ukraine continue rising. The desire to limit dependence on the US backfires as European nations are caught in a grid-lock between preserving sovereignty and not wanting to antagonize Russia any further. Macron's over-reliance and advocacy for the European Union could be detrimental for his next term. He has involved the EU in almost every aspect of his policy-making decision, from combating climate change to bolstering collective security in the Schengen Area. The supranationalism of the EU was an easy solution in the past but it has become rather restricting or even imposing for its member-states. Emmanuel Macron is no Angela Merkel. His persistent push to even more integration could anger and even severely damage valuable diplomatic relations.

All politics is local and all elections are won locally. Ever since his election to the office, Macron has failed to shake off his title as the "President of the rich." Coming from a financial and economic background, the technocrat angers a lot of the French middle-class with his tax policy that continues to benefit the elites. The superficial promises Emmanuel Macron has made to drive his campaigns both times only tarnish his image in the public eyes, and give further rise to nationalistic resentment as voters feel a disconnection from their government. Five years in the Elysée was a rocky journey for Macron and it has left the youngest president of the Republic with a series of failures in his track-record. Presidents in tumultuous times often witness a higher chance of being re-elected. Whether this election is one of those speculations or an actual reflection of the French's public opinion is rather unclear. Inflation rising with a looming economic crisis on top of an ongoing war, the president is expected to fail, or at least become unpopular.

Despite her second defeat, Marine Le Pen has succeeded in laying the groundwork for the continual rise and stability of the far-right party in French politics. In contrast to Emmanuel Macron's stray away from intimate issues of the French citizens, Le Pen's redirected attention to the French middle-class has

gained her popularity. The margin between the candidates is much smaller this time at only 17% compared to 32.2% in 2017. Le Pen's reinvention of herself, from scratching Frexit entirely off her political platform to posting selfies with her cats on social media, the National Rally's leader became more empathetic and even likable by many constituents. The extremity of Éric Zemmour further contributes to Le Pen's popularity as a candidate who has the interests of the French people in mind and is logical enough to lead the nation.

The world in 2022 is different from the one in 2017. Macron may have won with the majority of the votes. However, there is still a staggering 28% of abstention rate - the highest in a French presidential election since 1969. High abstention rate usually indicates two emotions: people don't care enough or people care too much to the point that they refuse to make a compromise with either candidate. The electoral apathy represents not only the increased doubts in liberal ideals but also an imminent restructuring of European politics, if not the entire world. While five years is a long time, with global politics, it is merely a paragraph in a history textbook. Hailed as a democratic exemplar, up until the 21st century, France has enjoyed a rather tranquil political landscape despite its various internal problems. However, with Putin's obsession to regain the power of the Soviet

Union, the flaws of the current world order are becoming much more visible. The national election of France is signaling the swinging of the pendulum from a democratic world-system to a much more terrifying one.

Marine Le Pen may have suffered double defeat in 2017 and 2022 but she has accomplished an insurmountable task in a French presidential election - bringing the far-right vengeance closer to winning the game. The anti-far-right resentment has not only worn off but proved to be useless in a world that is slowly derailing from its liberal and democratic comfort. As Macron made his emotional speech at the Eiffel Tower after his victory, we shall wait how the world unfolds.





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**Goucher Journal of  
International  
Relations**



**The Scope of International  
Institutions: Progressive or  
Problematic?**

**Volume 1, Issue 2**

**Edited by Nadean Sam and Chad Smith**

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# Introduction

The creation and incorporation of international institutions into the international political system has been shaped by the post World War 2 world order. The international and intergovernmental institutions examined in the following opinion pieces were developed following WWII. While the specific reasoning for their creation may differ, they all emerged under one guiding principle – increasing the ease of state relations, both economically and politically. This was an essential addition to the international system simply because the war had left the world devastated and in a vulnerable untrusting state in need of repair and change.

When observing the framework of these institutions it is clear that they were designed to centralize the position of the West to push efforts for their agenda, primarily many relations center around the United States specifically. Just as many others in the international sphere, these pieces question whether international institutions are more progressive or more problematic? The general consensus of the following opinions acknowledge that Intergovernmental Organizations (IGOs) have some concerning foundations and aspects that can be viewed as problematic (not all find them problematic). We all agree that reform of some sort be it restructuring or complete annihilation is necessary because their foundations limit their priorities to be centered solely on the affairs and well-being of western states and that lacks relevance in a century trying to right inequalities. Neglecting the needs of other states who would also make use of these organizations is no longer an option. The six articles below examine each of these IGO (the UN, NATO, and ASEAN) and international institutions (the IMF and Amnesty International) while aiming to deconstruct their intentions and in the process answer the question – is reform necessary? The first half of pieces reflect on IGOs. We start out with an overall liberalist, constructivist perspective on the United Nations (UN). Howard takes a critical yet somehow favorable stance for the UN in that its role yet shortcomings in the global balance of power due to the lack of global authority and weight international law carries. He also takes a bit of constructivist realist spin to invalidate the widely used critiques of post-colonialist. Though they found the UN progressive the growing lack relevance and invalidation by the global public at the sign of was deemed reason enough for reform.

Following, we pivot into critiques of negative Western influence within international or intergovernmental institutions. Suarez introduces the conversation by critiquing not only the dominating US influence on identity and actions of the North Atlantic Treaty

Organization (NATO) but also the indifference of European states to maintain peace and security between them and Russia. They apply a constructivist framework supported by historic and ideological backing to point to the problematic nature of NATO and the need for restructuring with strong guidance from the European member states and NOT the US. Next we branch into another regional intergovernmental institution—ASEAN, who similarly to European NATO members, have fallen to prey to their own indifference. Nguyen displays a critical constructivist view on ASEAN having failed to exert their position in the global context as a vital key to China-US relations. She points out the not only how their indifference has been problematic for the region in the long run and now requires reform and redirections of focus; also how China's strong influence and ties to the Southeast Asian members is a testament to the relevance of geopolitics in shifting the post WWII order and contributing to China in their challenge of the US hegemony.

The second half reflects on international institutions. We the co-editors both examined the International Monetary Fund (IMF) with post-colonial and critical theory perspectives of its failure to aid in supporting postcolonial and developing states. However, our opinions veer off concerning reform as Smith perceives the problematic approach of the institution towards developing nations he sees possibility for recognition following improvement (more neoliberalist); whereas Sam sees no potential for this institution as its foundations and structure holds an agenda that could never politically be to truly support development in the Global South, reform would rather come from self-reliance and interdependence within said developing nations (more neorealist). Finally, we end on quite the optimistic note on the power of individual uproar in creating accountability in the international sphere as well as seeing the liberalist ideals of international institutions in a beneficial context for global human rights at Amnesty International. Now it's your turn to reflect on our thoughts and decide if intergovernmental and international institutions as progressive or problematic and where they can employ reform.

*Nadean Sam and Chad Smith - Editors*

# The U.N. Security Council Faces Unprecedented Challenges to its Efficacy

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## *It May Not Be Able to Withstand the Pressure*

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*Jibril Howard*

Since its inception, the United Nations has been subject to withering debate among both academics and policymakers over its true purpose and role in international politics – and whether it even matters. Much of its mandate and power in the global system comes at the pleasure of the states it proudly claims to represent which can be withheld or increased on a whim. In 2020, the U.S., contributed more than \$11 million to the UN despite threats from President Donald Trump to suspend funding. Despite efforts from countries such as China to close the gap, the US remains the largest overall benefactor to the UN and has specifically used its diplomatic power atop the UN Security Council to promote liberal values such as liberal democracy, human rights, and the supremacy of international law as a counter-weight to the illiberal, autocratic norms and values of Russia and China. However, while many advocates, especially from countries in Latin America and Africa, accuse the United Nations and have long bemoaned the lack of representation at the top of the UN Security Council and the geopolitical blindspots it engenders., Their criticisms could be easily shelved or otherwise ignored. Each nation guards its seat at the UN warily, using the threat of veto power atop the UN Security Council to vigorously stymie proposed reforms such as permanent member expansion.

These criticisms have become foregrounded with the onset of the Russian invasion of Ukraine that the UN, in its idealized conception, should be uniquely equipped to handle. The UN was designed with the failures of idealist reformers to prevent the onset of World War II through the League of Nations. E.H. Carr, in *The Twenty Years Crisis* noted that the idealists lacked acknowledgement of the balance of power and

that the supra-national concepts such as international law lacked any sort of metaphorical “stick” to wield against nations who unjustly wage war. With the aftermath of World War II still firmly in mind, the winners sought to create an international forum where all nations could pursue diplomatic solutions to inter-state conflicts and the disharmony of interests. The Russian invasion has put paid to any such delusions, violating the doctrine of territorial sovereignty and committing numerous humanitarian atrocities such as the massacre of civilians in Bucha and accusations of using cluster-munitions. The UN general assembly adopted a resolution by a two-thirds majority of 93 nations to strip Russia of its seat on the Human Rights Council; Russia resigned from its seat on the council in response shortly thereafter with Deputy Permanent Representative Kennady Kuzmin declaring,

“These States for many years have directly been involved in blatant and massive violations of human rights, or abetted those violations...In spite of their membership as members of the Council, they are not ready to sacrifice their short-term political and economic interests in favour of true cooperation and stabilizing the human rights situation in certain countries.”

While Kuzmin may have been engaging in a bout of good old-fashioned whataboutism, his statement is not without merit. Each permanent member of the UN Security Council: US, UK, France, Russia, and China, routinely uses their veto (or lack thereof) to further their respective geopolitical interests. The US has deployed its veto power in the past to prevent condemnation or investigation of Israeli settlements in Palestine. While China has not cast a lone veto since 1999, it often joins with Russia to kill potential legislation, notably blocking a statement of condemnation of the 2021 military coup in Myanmar. There is also a fodder for postcolonial critics who argue that the unity and support of Western UN Security Council members for Ukraine against Russia was nowhere to be found during the Rohingya genocide and throughout the Syrian Civil War. For all the rhetorical statements affirming the principles of human security and the Responsibility to Protect, refugees from both conflicts can attest to the lack of real unified energy and investment in their respective plights. Populist leaders from Hungary to Brazil to the Philippines have described the UN’s general focus on human rights as Western-backed hypocrisy and have used the lack of reform at the UN Security Council as a tool to stir popular discontent and successful platforms to accrue political power.

The ongoing Russian military invasion of Ukraine underscores the need for change. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy blasted the Security Council's failure to remove Russia, declaring,

“Either remove Russia as the aggressor or, if you can't do anything, then dissolve yourself as an entity...”

While Russia can be removed from bodies such as the Human Rights Council, it still maintains its presence and veto power at the Security Council. Richard Gowan, at the International Crisis Group, notes that without its place at the Security Council and its veto power, Russia would have little incentive to even be present. Gowan also points out that any attempt at reform is dead in the water. Votes to either expel Russia from the UN or to expand the Security Council permanent status and veto powers to other nations such as Brazil, Japan, or India (the likeliest contenders) would require Russian approval – an ironic nonstarter. The UN Security Council thus remains a body distinctly out of step with the global will and unable to meet the demands of the current crisis.

Despite the criticism that is often legitimately leveraged towards the UN Security Council and broader UN, both ultimately remain more good than bad. UN organs such as the UNHCR and UNFAO among many others work to re-home thousands of refugees and feed countless people living in famine-struck nations. The UN General Assembly remains a public forum for multilateral diplomacy and rhetorical – if not actual – commitments to liberal goals such as combating climate change, enshrining women's and children's rights, and nuclear disarmament. The UN Security Council remains a vital organ simply by placing representatives (from most) of the world's most powerful nations into a room together and forcing them to communicate with each other. However, the limits to the UN and the Security Council are there for all to see, each international humanitarian crisis, from Rwanda to Bosnia to Myanmar to now Ukraine, giving more and more people and nations reason to distrust its legitimacy and use. While the UN Security remains the world's preeminent inter-government group charged with promoting international peace and security, it depends on its constituent nations to fund and affirm its legitimacy. But that support wavers with each passing year, even the US can't be considered a reliable contributor. The UN Security Council must reform itself sooner rather than later or risk absolute irrelevance.

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# NATO's Identity Crisis and its Implications for the Post-Cold War Period

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*Sal Suarez*

At the time of its conception, NATO's purpose during the Cold War was clear: a military force against the USSR. It was built in a Western-centric frame of Europe that divided it in two: the "West" versus Russia and its allies. Regardless of prime minister or president, or even economic conditions, NATO was valued as a necessary pact whose values transcend internal or external stressors. Now, however, NATO cannot reimagine itself because the institution surpassed the Cold War's framing of Europe. It is difficult for institutions to exist without common values that transient societal stresses because bonds are formed through normative values (and reinforced with conflict). Countering Russia is not unifying enough. NATO presumes member states will follow conflict (Russia) mutually, regardless of historical norms or prejudices; it is likelier nations will succumb to traditional values—expressed through nationalism—and fracturalize NATO in the process. Why is this, and what can NATO do to ensure it remains relevant on the global stage?

## ***Historical Framework Restricted Conflict-Analysis into Binaries***

NATO is a product of its time. Designed during a period when the world was in binaries, its member states, and the USSR alike interpreted conflict as a defense of civilization—the infamous Tsar (Slavic "East") against West Europe; the philosophical aspect of the conflict muted traditional prejudices, allowing states, such as Yugoslavia, to exist without conflict. The end of the Cold War impacted the West much differently than Russia (the state). Western society thought the collapse of the USSR symbolized a defeat against a global menace with theologically conflicting values. As for Russia's former satellite states, they gained independence without without changing the state-boundaries Lenin carved for them. Russia was nearly

crippled.

NATO's sugar daddy, America, and the Russian Federation entered the 1990s with value-conflicting understandings of the post-Cold War world order. American leaders reimagined NATO's purpose. They wanted it to function as a security "wall" to protect post-Soviet states while they are "Westernized." America framed it as ensuring a peaceful Europe. Russian society—the proud bear (if one personifies the nation)—was humiliated and weakened. There was more to its Western buffers than Mearsheimer's security dilemma. Generational norms spanning centuries made Russians understand the distance between the West and Moscow as a measure of civilizational survival, reaffirmed by societal similarities.

Russia lacked the capacity to resist militarily, and the state wanted to attempt Liberalization to secure American loans. The actions of the state did not reflect the beliefs of the Russian people. If NATO wanted to ensure Europe stayed united in the long-term, as in over multiple generations, not presidencies, it would have recognized this, knowing Russia would likely lash out if it felt cornered by NATO expansion. The USA ignored these red flags.

Voters (and elites alike) during the Clinton and Bush presidencies wanted NATO to socially engineer Europe along American values. Its purpose corresponded to American polls. But American polls did not reflect the region's societal behavior nor norms. The consequences of this were not felt until NATO crossed Russia's red line in 2008. NATO rationalized its plans to include Ukraine and Georgia by claiming NATO's was maintaining European security. Yet this action is ironically

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*The USA ignored  
these red flags*

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responsible for destabilizing Europe by effectively cornering Russia. Which led to Moscow wrecking Georgia to bufferize it, which inflamed populist nationalism to undermine the region's commitment to NATO by normalizing pro-Russian stances. The current Ukraine conflict is another symptom of the gap between NATO's understanding of Russia's societal norms (as projected in state behavior) and the actions of the institution in accordance with those understandings.

European states knew the ramifications of America's actions. They understood the depth of the norms; it is tied to identity. Yet European states gave up their bargaining power by letting America offset their NATO two-percent minimums, a populist talking-point not sufficiently readdressed until Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Waiting until the invasion highlights the institution's lack of accountability and loyalty.

### *Preserving the Institution in the Age of Nationalism and China*

It is difficult to imagine NATO surviving under European guidance with unresolved disloyalty. American supervision and funding allowed NATO to exist without much consequence, but European states overestimate the extent of America's commitment. If the "China threat" fully materializes, Washington will deprioritize NATO so it can pivot West to address Beijing. Nationalist rhetoric whispered today will turn into foreign policy objectives. The institution's ability to act uniformly will be undercut. NATO's Article 5 guarantee would likely turn into a "coalition of the willing," making the institution merely symbolic, if anything.

NATO's Ukraine response might give the appearance of unity, but don't let immediate displays of support cloud one's historical memory. The invasion, falsely compared to Hitler's Barbarossa, was catalyzed by NATO, a fact they would like to downplay. It highlights the institution's failure to prevent conflict, and its predisposition to traditional prejudice. NATO would be wise to use this war as a lesson. An opportunity to develop a post-Ukraine strategy, on foundation of sustainable, transnational values, while Russia is preoccupied in Ukraine. It is unlikely America will create the framework for these ideas to flourish, however it would be foolish for NATO's European member-states, particularly those on the European Plain, to use America's presence as an excuse to remain indifferent.



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# ASEAN as An Unexpected Player in Global Politics

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*Uyen Nguyen*

The inclusion of ASEAN (Association of Southeast Nations) in a headline usually does not intrigue readers. Despite being the most prominent regional organization in the area, the organization has not exactly done a stellar job of what it sets out to do. However, with the looming threats of China on its path as the next hegemon, ASEAN may be the solution to limit the influence of the autocratic state in an increasingly unstable world order.

If there is an important lesson that we learned in the last two years regarding international relations, it would be that geopolitics is still relevant. Nation-states that are geographically close to great powers remain under immediate political and militaristic threats, as shown with the escalation of Russia - Ukraine War. Similarly, China's interest in expanding its control over Southeast Asia is nothing new—from bilateral economic partnerships to aggressive disputes in the South China Sea. To not repeat the mistakes in Europe, regional organizations need to reevaluate their methods and involvement as they represent the potential mechanisms to diffuse conflicts and maintain global stability.

Unlike Europe, there is no NATO in Southeast Asia and there will never be one to constraint the gradual expansion of Chinese militaristic power. Southeast Asia does not enjoy a relative homogeneity in liberal politics like Europe. The government structure ranges from communist-socialist Vietnam to democratic Singapore, with autocracy slowly dominating the region. The lack of democratization post-Cold War and solidification of authoritarian regimes over the years has made collective cooperation almost unimaginable as national interests have been more concerned with the survival of the regime rather than regional security.

The birth of ASEAN in 1967 in Thailand was one of the hopeful attempts to stop the spread of Communism, promote a new democratic order and foster a collective identity for the region.

Soon enough, the Western-imposed idealist aspirations crumbled in the newly-decolonized region. The lack of strong leadership, increasingly diverging goals of its members and heightened economic instability have revealed the many weaknesses of the organization as it engages in a post-Cold War world without the enjoyment of protection from the US.

ASEAN's two most representative principles, the ASEAN Way as it is known, is the non-interference ideology and total-consensus model. Ever since its creation, almost none of ASEAN's policy has been fully ratified by every member. In addition, the non-interference policy has led to the mainly Muslim state of Indonesia deciding to turn a blind eye to the prosecution of the Rohingya people in the military-led Myanmar. These two outdated operating models have transferred into ineffective cooperation and prevention of international coherence. ASEAN's cowardice is not only irrelevant but also fatal as the region is becoming much more turbulent.

Despite being a great asset due to its geographical advantages during the Cold War, ASEAN has often been neglected by the United States and Europe in the current world-systems. In contrast, China is making efforts to cultivate relationships with ASEAN. Culturally, half of ASEAN members share more social and historical similarities with China rather than with each other. Vietnam was under China's rule for centuries and the Chinese-descent population in Malaysia and Singapore overwhelms other ethnicities. Economically, China is also the number one trading partner for almost all ASEAN nations. None of the ASEAN states are each other's number one trade partners but almost all of

them have had China as their number one partner in exports and imports for decades. In 2021, ASEAN states surpassed the United States and the European Union, becoming China's top import partner at 2.55 trillion yuan.

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*a China with a collective of postcolonial states still bearing resentment against Western imperialism is a different story*

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Nations in Southeast Asia have always been considered a buffer in the games of great power politics rather than active agents. Combined of mostly postcolonial nations, the ten-member states in the organization were busy with maintaining the internal stability of their own nations rather than engaging with global players. As a consequence, as China's gaining more power and influence, many ASEAN states are finding themselves relying on China for economic and political stability. A China

without regional support can crash and burn like the isolated Russia, but a China with a collective of postcolonial states still bearing resentment against Western imperialism is a different story.

Yet, this does not mean that ASEAN is at the beck and call of Xi Jinping. China's increased aggression in the South China Sea can be its own demise for its influence in Southeast Asia. One of the most lucrative and important assets of Southeast Asia is the South China Sea. South China Sea provides bountiful economic benefits for resource exploitation, fisheries and trade shipping. The body of water also employs an incredible opportunity for militaristic advantage. There are too many ASEAN economies stakes in the South China Sea that many members have refused to compromise with an agitating China. Xi Jinping's overconfidence and underestimation of ASEAN members has not only further antagonized a delicate relationship but could also sever future cooperation, making the region more prone to support from outsiders.

Like many other international organizations in a post-Cold War era, the overfocus on economic partnership has cast collective security on the sideline. ASEAN may not want to depend on China but it obviously lacks the collective defense mechanism to guard its members from possible militia attacks. The members need to rethink its over 50 years of silence and inefficiency and realize the chokehold China has on the region. However, if ASEAN wants to revamp itself and be more proactive in managing regional security and stability, it would need both internal and external renovations.

Internally, the outdated ASEAN Way needs changing. If ASEAN remains in its bystander position, the region will only become more entrenched with Chinese influence. Externally, the United States needs to reconsider their partnership with ASEAN. Furthering multilateral economic trade partnerships and assisting with reinforcement of regional autonomy can help the US to foster a more amicable relationship with the ASEAN states. Having a willing alliance in Southeast Asia not only can counter China's rise but also be extremely advantageous to Western powers.

China said that it is not seeking hegemony although we all know that this is a lie. China's unhinged power in the region does not only come from its attention to national and economic development but also due to a badly-supported political body that could not safely diffuse conflicts when they arise. ASEAN's lack of significance and negligence of responsibility has contributed to China's effortless domination of

global politics. While the imperfections of ASEAN is what made the region relatively peaceful in the beginning of its creations, a restructuring is much needed.

The world order is changing. ASEAN has potential as a regional organization to not only constrain China's power but also bring prosperity to its members. Whether ASEAN wants to continue its mediocre track-record or actually seeks to assert its position in global politics, it is time to make that decision.



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# IMF: Help or Hindrance?

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*Nadean Sam*

International institutions and their history of outcomes can easily be seen as a questionable system. Whom they claim to be, what they do, and the effects of their actions do not always align, leading to much of the global community having mixed, controversial feelings and thoughts about a system that does not seem to be exhibiting the work it says it is doing which has caused many to feel deceived and lose any faith in the possibility of international aid as a positive.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is ostensibly an International Financial Institution with a mission to support countries with monetary aid and policy advice for the purpose of promoting sustainable growth and prosperity for these nations. This policy “advice” instead leads to (financially) unstable economies, financial crises, lower welfare standards for citizens. The monetary aid is provided in the form of loans attached to neoliberal policy stipulations, making it less of advice and more of force hidden in a trick that creates the perception of choice where there is none, an explicitly covert operation if you ask me.

This illusion, if you will, deceived or trapped many countries making an effort to develop their countries but did not have the resources to do so as part of the bottom billion of nations in growth rates. Unfortunately, this hooded black hole sole path to development was one of a continuous loop that keeps countries stuck in a stage of developing never to reach development. It consists of the following cause and effect elements. First, countries found themselves in a position where they needed extra funds to support plans for growth after liberating from their colonizers and becoming independent, “sovereign” nations. Being that many of these countries were financially supported and therefore dependent on their colonizer they were in a deficit once that support was abruptly removed. Accordingly, they sought loans from the IMF. These loans came with conditions – neoliberal policy plans, high interest rates (currently 0%), and absence of opportunity for countries to govern themselves. The neoliberal policies that the IMF encourages are in favor of globalization, interdependence, and cooperation; conversely, they discourage independence, self-

reliance, mutual benefit over beneficial superiority (aka when the West's benefits are prioritized over all others). All good values for the international dynamic in theory but in practicality the way they are implemented only benefits the few, the nations viewed as developed—the West. Then governments must use those funds not how they will best benefit the country's growth but how they can help the country within the bounds of the stipulations, which is not much help. Naturally, the loans do not achieve growth and the capital maintained neither meets the debt repayment amount on the loan nor does it reduce poverty. Nevertheless, they go back for more loans to keep supporting their governments that are lacking in capital and the debt grows with every default and every payment restructuring plan. As this cycle occurs these countries' situations do resemble a sort of trap as they find themselves stuck in the black hole no matter how much they try to escape their gravitational pull.

There are multiple countries who have been trapped not only by the IMF but more broadly the exploitive and post or neocolonial dynamics between nations around the globe. Many of these countries' agreements with the IMF have turned out to be truly disadvantageous and, in some cases, even lamentable. There are countries throughout Africa, the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean plus others. One of these countries, quite honestly swindled, by the IMF is Argentina, whom are currently in a major crisis. In 2018, the IMF lended Argentina the largest loan package ever of \$50 billion following an additional \$7 billion with the intention that it would rehabilitate the currency and repair the economy from the recession.

Their central banks are applying the economic approach known as contractionary monetary policy by increasing interest rates to record highs however their strategy is failing as it solely technocratic and does not seem to be taking note of the fact that the

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*they find themselves stuck in the  
black hole no matter how much  
they try to escape their  
gravitational pull*

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Argentinian people are taking their own contradictory approach by spending, spending, spending. The instability of their currency and in affect their economy as inflation keeps rising and maintains no constant has led to an

ideology among Argentinians. Being that saving their disposable income in the form of the pesos is worthless and extremely silly at this point. Alternatively, instead of saving some have been finessing the system by changing their pesos into dollars as soon as they get it in order to maintain the value of their money against the constantly

fluctuating prices of goods and services. Others immediately spend their income essentially by investing it in commodities in order to get the most value out of it before the currency inflates.

The government has negotiated a restructuring of the debt payment for now (even without the IMF's usual harmful conditions). Hopefully, the economic decline does not further replicate the 2001 crisis, and they are able to repair their economy. This is just one of many crises caused and exacerbated by the IMF. This debt incurred by countries to the IMF negatively affects the balance of payments which is directly in contradiction to the IMF's mission to rather maintain that balance. It is clear that something about this model is deeply unmanageable and alternative opportunities for growth must be sought.

This poses an inquiry on the intentions and origins of the IMF. One characteristic that most international institutions attempt to claim is being apolitical. Unfortunately, that is far from the reality of the dynamic within these organizations. These organizations are run in an international capacity however their hierarchical structures are dominated by the West. As a matter of fact, the IMF and world bank were formed out of the Bretton Woods institutions (1944, USA) to aid Western or European states reconstruction (prior to colonial independence) after the devastation of WWII as the effects were becoming more economically visible. Logic would not dictate apolitical intentions but rather a Western agenda as they adapted these institutions to the post-colonial world to benefit the imperial decency the West formed on their former colonies. So that the West could take money from the desperation of former colony countries, mostly in the East, specifically Africa, in addition to others.

Of course, they push globalization and cooperation values that do not develop these nations, but they do bring profit and capital into the West. Making them wealthier as they continue growing and receiving their capital through multinational companies as governments outsource their public services, and profit industries by exporting the raw materials to be processed and consumed elsewhere. If this isn't problematic, I am not sure what would be... These nations' core aspects of their economies and societies like education/schools, healthcare/ hospitals, demand/supply, local vs private goods and services are all underdeveloped and/or in crises. If we are to see true change in international institutions not only does their need to be reform but ultimately a complete shift towards internal innovation and solutions for development and a future where the global dynamic becomes more equitable and less imperialistic.

# The IMF is Problematic for Developing Countries

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*Chad Smith*

Established in 1944 during the Bretton Woods Conference in New Hampshire, United States, the International Monetary Fund is an integral institution as the crux of Global Finance. By supplying short-term loans to countries who are in desperate need of financial assistance, in theory the service they provide should work to the benefit of the countries who acquire the institution's help. However, when the institution's framework was designed it did not have the economic interests of developing countries in mind, specifically European colonies because they had yet to gain their independence. Therefore, as these countries began to gain their independence and had to integrate themselves into the global economy they experienced crippling debt and financial struggle. Developing countries who turned to the International Monetary Fund for short-term loans to fund their country's economy ended up diving further into debt because of the institution's severe interest rates that came attached to the loans they received. This was especially problematic because the IMF knew that these countries had very little room to negotiate and needed the assistance that only they could provide.

We can look no further than Jamaica as an example of how the International Monetary Fund can take advantage of a developing country in a desperate financial situation. Following Jamaica's independence from Great Britain in 1962 their economy completely crashed. The economic support they were receiving from Great Britain disappeared therefore, they were stuck running a country and its infrastructures that they didn't establish. In addition they hadn't received the knowledge on how to properly run a country once they lost ties with Britain. As a result, the government couldn't stabilize the economy enough to support its citizens and run on its own. Prime Minister at the time, Michael Manley, had no other choice but to seek financial assistance from the IMF. The economic conditions of the country kept deteriorating leaving the citizens without government assistance

since there was no cash on hand. He was forced to take the unfair conditions of the IMF loan. The conditions for the IMF loan were to limit the amount of goods they could produce and export, while increasing the price of foreign currency.

This placed a heavy reliance on imported goods which made Jamaica's economy even more dependent on foreign assistance. They also required a limit on spending in sectors such as healthcare and education which diminished the supply of medicine and educational tools for students. On top of the crippling interest rates from the loan that Jamaica was unable to pay, they were not able to invest in their own domestic agricultural market in order to generate substantial revenue for the island.

Despite this case study the International Monetary Fund is an essential economic institution. It acts as the only institution capable of providing international loans to countries in desperate financial needs when they have nowhere else to turn. Funding provided by the IMF has provided substantial economic benefits for many states. The criticism of this article is directed primarily towards its action taken on newly independent countries who experienced unjust and cruel conditions of the loans they were offered.

# Does Amnesty International Have a Positive Impact on Global Stability?

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*Hannah Garrett*

When looking for data on an array of human rights issues, one might turn to Amnesty International for information. This NGO is based on conducting large amounts of research that they will use to try to persuade influential actors such as governments, corporations, and policymakers to “do the right thing.” Their benevolent mission: to aid those in need and to stop human rights abuses. A large part of the way Amnesty acts is through mobilizing and promoting individuals to work together to be the change that they want to see while having the facts to back them up. Since 1961, Amnesty has done research on a number of issues all across the globe. The organization stands firm in not accepting any funding from any governments or political parties as an attempt to remain neutral in its research and upholding human rights. It is also a part of Accountable Now and prides itself on being transparent at all levels of the organization, which Amnesty claims will help deliver the most impact on creating change in the world.

But how does Amnesty measure and define what “human rights” contain? In their statute, Amnesty’s vision is that everyone around the world would be able to have their full set of human rights, which they align with the United Nation’s “Universal Declaration of Human Rights.” Proclaimed in 1948, the declaration has 30 articles such as “all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights” (Article 1), “everyone has the right to life, liberty and the security of person” (Article 3), and “no one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment” (Article 5).

So, we now know what basis Amnesty is developing its research on for human rights. Working on this, Amnesty had a set of five goals for 2016-2019, the first of which is titled “reclaiming freedom”. This goal is simply allowing more people to

know about the rights that they are entitled to, empowering individuals to fight and protest to get access to these rights. Naturally, the next goal is “securing equal rights for all”, focused on fighting discrimination of sex, gender, sexual orientation, race, culture, etc. through campaigning and once again giving tools for individuals to demand equality of their governments. They believe that supporting UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) will help ensure equal rights. Following this is the goal

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*Slowly but surely, Amnesty International is making an impact around the globe, whether people like it or not*

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“responding to crises,” which would encompass demanding action by the UN Security Council during times of conflict, limiting use of weapons on civilians, protecting those in need, and supporting refugees. The penultimate goal is “ensuring accountability”, which recognizes the failure of many justice systems to hold perpetrators of violence accountable, particularly when there is a skew of hierarchy or power. This goal aims to bolster justice systems in many nations, extending to foreign policy as well. Finally, we reach “maximizing our resources and engagement.” Pretty short and sweet, this goal targets the maximization of resources through more funding and a larger number of people taking action to pursue equal access to human rights (their goal was 25 million people per year). Through these five goals, we can see the emphasis that Amnesty puts on mobilizing the individual, that the individual will take action to persuade bigger movements in the local and national levels.

A realist may point out that combating human rights abuses across the globe is an incredibly daunting task, which is near impossible in the anarchic system where there is no overarching governance to actually hold a nation or leader accountable for its actions. While yes, a daunting task indeed, Amnesty does not let our anarchic reality hold them back from pursuing international justice. In fact, it claims that there are several mechanisms already in place that can be expanded on in order to pursue it. These include the International Criminal Court (ICC), Hybrid Courts, and Universal Jurisdiction. Amnesty recognizes that the only way for the ICC to be completely reliable is if all states join the court in pursuit of international justice, while eliminating safe havens so that perpetrators of crime can be held accountable. This can be seen as idealistic as states that knowingly commit human rights abuses would obviously not want to join such a court and put themselves at risk for prosecution.

However, slowly but surely, Amnesty International is making an impact around the globe, whether people like it or not. In 2018, Amnesty released a “end-of-year-round-up” of the year’s “epic human rights wins” showing one win in each month of the year. They are also working to continue to spread information about many subjects. And as we know, knowledge empowers people, and people can collectively make great change.

One of the more “controversial” reports by Amnesty is the one from February 1, 2022, titled “Israel’s apartheid against Palestinians: Cruel system of domination and crime against humanity.” This report is almost 300 pages long and it outlines what an apartheid is defined as and how it functions, then discussing how the state of Israel has oppressed and segregated Palestinians, also discussing the abuses in human rights against Palestinians such as the act of torture. Amnesty also gives recommendations and campaigns for action from Israeli authorities, the ICC, the UN, and the International Community. This report pissed off a good amount of people, such as Israeli Foreign Minister Yair Lapid. The question now remains if the report’s reframing of the “Israeli-Palestinian Crisis” will help alleviate human rights abuses in this specific case, or if it will not be strong enough to enact major change.

Taking from Amnesty’s handbook, one should not underestimate the power of knowledge in the hands of individuals and their ability to enact change in their own governments and thus their governments’ foreign policy. People and individuals make up society and states. When provided with knowledge, these individuals can act collectively to demand change within the system that they live in. By knowing their rights, they will be able to push for reform in governments and governmental institutions. They will also be able to hold institutions like the UN accountable to defend its own human rights charter. Thus, what makes civil society organizations such as Amnesty International important and influential is their ability to empower individuals to make those first steps to create change.



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**Great Powers, World Order,  
and the Future of Liberal  
Internationalism**

**Volume 1, Issue 3**

**Edited by Hannah Garrett and Uyen Nguyen**

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# Introduction

There is never a singular and immediate event with great power politics. Each behavior from nation-state actors, especially with great powers, has rippling effects throughout the world order. Russia's annexation of Crimea in 2014 was mistakenly ignored by both regional and international powers. While at the time, the military conflict did not cause immediate threats, what it represented was the silent approval from the international society of Putin's malicious behaviors. Eight years later in 2022, Russia's unchecked and unaccounted behaviors have materialized into one of our worst nightmares - another standoff between great powers. But this time, both Europe and the United States no longer maintained the same power as they did.

The Russia-Ukraine War also brings up the existential question for global actors in the international order, most notably will be China. The autocrat is slowly inching up to reshape the current liberal order through amassing influence in political, military/security and economic geopolitical planes. The collection of essays in this issue will address the different ways traditional Western's views of International Relations have become outdated in reacting to the reality of global politics. China has been operating

in the shadow, but we now see the ramifications of the international order's underestimation of its influence. China has artfully embedded itself into the current world order but also harbored a desire to expand its power. We will also be discussing the influence of new emerging technology and post-colonial sovereignty in shaping how nations engage in the new world order.

The first set of essays will look at the change of political power in parallel with the diminishing power of the United States in global politics. Uyen Nguyen's essay illustrated the limited knowledge of Western audiences has enabled the rise of China, which has created our own tumultuous reality. Similarly addressing the political influence of China, Jibril Howard's essay discusses the changing polarity of the international order as the US and Russia are slowly ending their career as global hegemony.

The next two pieces operate more so on the economic plane of the world order. The essay by Chad Smith focuses specifically on China's gaining influence on the continent of Africa by asserting its economic dominance and providing economic aid. He seeks to understand the intentions of China as they are becoming a larger world power. Nadean Sam's

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essay, by comparison, takes a closer look at South-South relations that are trying to breach into the current order. Her argument is that their increasing presence could challenge the current hegemonic economic order and that the growth of African countries could switch up the world dynamic built on hegemonic colonial structure.

The last set of essays look closer into modes of engagement within security and military conduct. Hannah Garrett's piece introduces the realm of cyberspace as a new threat to the current world order. She asserts that cyberthreats are a reflection of geopolitics and could have a significant part in reshaping the liberal world order. Sal Suarez discusses the ideological conceptions of the assertion that European must mean Western. He believes that international institutions will not be abandoned by the West as a result of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Within the structure of the world order, Suarez claims that there will not be a decline or end of liberal internationalism, but rather reform and rebolstering.

Throughout these six essays, it is clear that the liberal world order will not remain as it has been. With so many new and changing variables, the dynamic of the world will be adapting to the new realities. These works outline that there needs to be a reframing of the world order to incorporate the various nuances of global politics that have previously been overlooked. These questions now remain: what will the new world order look like and when will it take place?

*Hannah Garrett and  
Uyen Nguyen - Editors*

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# The Way the World Crumbles

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*Uyen Nguyen*

Russia's invasion of Ukraine has never been just about the democratic future of Ukraine but it is also a war against the current liberal system and solidifies a change of balance of power for global politics. Among the chaos, one important actor remains rather quiet - China. As the war escalates, the potential success of Putin's Russia is a seal of approval for China's continuous domination of global politics. Although Russia and China may have many similarities, Vladimir Putin's Russia and Xi Jinping's China are still very different. And it is because of those differences that China's silence is rather deafening.

We make choices for our present with knowledge of the past, and the past for both Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping is the glory days for totalitarianism. Both are grabbing onto the nostalgia of their idealist past to justify their current actions, from shutting down public protests to starting unprovoked military conflicts. But that is just the most significant similarity between Putin and Xi Jinping. It is easier to have an opinion

on Putin, while Xi Jinping has historically operated in ambiguity. Being in the spotlight of Western hatred for 22 years, Putin's political activity and psyche has been monitored and analyzed at length. The Eurocentric view of international relations has cast non-Western actors to the sideline, consequently, China remains an enigma to political analysts.

When Putin initiated his war in February 2022, he had knowingly marked the end of his political career regardless of the final outcome. He has succeeded in angering the entire Europe and threatening the rest of the world. Even if Putin manages to gain control of Ukraine, that control would require more resources and support than Russia currently possesses.

On the contrary, Xi Jinping has enjoyed a modicum of peace due to the underestimation of Western eyes. Since his inauguration to the office in 2012, Xi Jinping has created personable relationships with many nations, especially the Global South. While it is rather obvious that Putin received

immediate condemnation from the international society, it will not be the same for Xi Jinping. The success of Putin in diminishing international rules and norms only legitimizes whatever Xi Jinping is planning for the world.

As such, Russia and China operate similarly under the kleptocracy of Xi Jinping and Putin. The increase of governmental-monitored news and censorship solidifies the regime's control over its citizens. The authoritative silencing of intellectuals and information creates an isolation of ideas from outside sources. But current China is more influential than Russia in the past. China has imbued itself in the global economic system much more than Russia did. China is a global producer of market goods besides energy resources and everyone's favorite alcoholic beverages. China also invested heavily in other regions, not limiting itself to its geopolitical constraints. As a result of the liberal order which is predicated upon economic openness, economic interdependence is a double-edge sword. The economic sanctions that the US and the EU placed on Russia have great ramifications on the rest of the world, and that only will get much worse when similar punishment is applied to China.

Moreover, Russia's obsession over gaining control of Ukraine mirrors

China's desire to take over Taiwan. What is going to make the China-Taiwan war different is the position of Ukraine and Taiwan in global politics. Since its release from the Soviet Union in 1991, Ukraine has solidified as a sovereign nation, with recognition from other state-actors.

Taiwan, on the other hand, is a contested mystery. China has succeeded in taking over its position in several organizations. Only 14 nations and the Holy See recognized the government of Taiwan. It would be easier for China to justify its overtaking of Taiwan than Russia over Ukraine.

There are also many external factors that contribute to the rise of China and Russia's confidence. The dwindled power of the US has paved the way for China's global influence. The lack of measures for accountability in the international order is also enabling the two autocracies to steadily gain power. Regional organizations's diverged attention to economics post-Cold War over military defense further allows the recklessness and militaristic penetration of Russia.

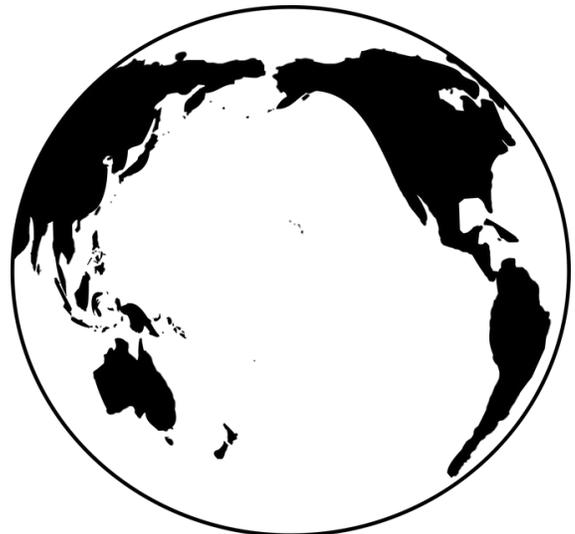
This is not the first time that a superpower has committed itself to an irreversible blunder. In the international playing field, nations have been making the mistake of playing an infinite game with a finite game mindset. France's militaristic operation in Chad and the

wider Sahel region failed to account for the amount of resources needed to maintain regional stability. US's misdirected involvement in both Vietnam and Afghanistan only illustrated the weaknesses of a system that sings praises for violent actions in the name of democracy. The snapshots of history is being repeated in Russia and Ukraine.

We have been naively operating under the assumptions of security in a liberal order, without realizing that it is something that would need to be maintained. Every war is a race against time, resources and ultimately morality. Surrounded by yes-man, Putin commanded his military thrust with the belief that his aggression would be at least compensated, if not awarded. The courage of Ukrainians has derailed Putin's plan and exposed his miscalculations. The backing of the Western alliance gives tremendous power to Ukraine and promises to the anxious world.

But when Russia loses, China will be close behind. China is watching Russia very closely and hedging its bets. Unlike Western powers, China wants to maintain strategic relationships with Russia but it also does not want to explicitly support an obvious infringement upon national sovereignty. China understands that if it wants to bend the rules and change the game, it would first need to wait for the end of this one.

The scaffolding that we have been building to support global politics is showing its flaws. The reality of liberalism that nations enjoyed post-Cold War is nothing but a house of cards. The war will eventually end and nobody knows how it will unfold. But surely, it will mark the crumbling of the current world order and the beginning of a new one, with the shadow of China slowly replacing Russia as the next global threat.



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# Forget about the US and Russia

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## *The Balance of Power Between India and China is the Future of the International System*

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*Jibril Howard*

Much of the world has rightly been focused on the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the swift US-led response. Working through NATO and UN channels, the US has been largely successful in rallying nations across the world to diplomatically and economically isolate Russia. However, India has not joined the US in UN condemnation (choosing to abstain instead) nor severed economic ties to Russian oil which it claims are vital to its development, weathering scorn at home and abroad over its political neutrality. Similarly, but perhaps less surprisingly, China also has not joined the US effort to isolate Russia; Chinese President Xi Jinping was criticized by international observers for his tacit endorsement of the Russian invasion, hosting Russian President Vladimir Putin in Beijing on February 4th in the immediate military buildup to the conflict, promising a “no limits” partnership.

While the international dispute between the US and Russia occupies the media's oxygen right now, the growing dynamic

between India and China should receive more attention. Both countries are collectively home to nearly 3 billion people, are undisputed economic powerhouses, and are armed with nuclear weapons. They also share a long-disputed, icy, and mountainous 2,167-mile-long border in the Himalayas. Where India and China are growing, both economically and militarily, Russia has a comparatively tiny economy and the standing of its military's power and reputation has been badly damaged by an inferior but resilient Ukrainian defense force. The US's status as the undisputed leader of the post-Cold War international order is also increasingly under question. Its military failures in Iraq and Afghanistan and four years of erratic, populist isolationism under former President Donald Trump have led many long-time allies such as Germany to openly question whether they can count on the US for support. Following the 2021 border clashes in the region of Ladakh – which remains in stasis per the latest round of diplomatic talks – it is increasingly clear that while the US and Russia are in decline,

India and China are on a collision course for regional and perhaps international supremacy and their quest for international domination at the cost of the other will define the future of the international system.

The world-system for much of the last 20 years has been led by the US, and for 40 years before that by both the US and the USSR in a bipolar dance of death for the ages. During the Cold War, the US and USSR used their relative political, economic, and ideological strength to fund proxy conflicts across the world and gain a pivotal, consequential edge over the other in the quest for domination. The US since the fall of the USSR has used its power as international leader to build consensus around the supremacy of international institutions such as the UN and the IMF and World Bank, spreading the norms and values of democracy and free trade as a way of lifting countries out of poverty and reducing inter-state conflict, while often breaking those norms, values, and laws to intervene in matters of national security (or using that rationale as justification). The result has been a rapid rise in the overall wealth and prosperity of nations and rapid advancements in health, science, and technology amid worsening, growing inequality, both internal and external to nations, and a retrenchment of civil conflict, far-right populism, and authoritarianism in developing nations. But if the rise of China and India portend the future, how do they

fit into the current, US-led international order and how will they seek to change it?

As growing powers, the rise of India and China presents a security dilemma to the other with each seeking to grow their economic, military, and political strength relative to, and at the expense of the other. China supported Pakistan during the 2019 crisis in Kashmir while India continues to draw Beijing's ire over its housing of the Dalai Lama, an outspoken supporter of Tibetan independence, although it has so far failed to adopt a consistent diplomatic approach. Under the leadership of Deng Xiaoping and more recently under Xi Jinping, China opened its economy to the West, growing from a middle-income nation economically lagging the regional counterparts such as South Korea, Japan, Singapore, and Taiwan to a global economic powerhouse home to internationally-recognized companies such as Huawei, TikTok, and AliBaba. Even so, while China has operated under the auspices of the US-led neoliberal economic and political order, its leaders treated the openness with skepticism, especially in its policy towards pro-democracy movements in Hong Kong and its increasing military aggression towards Taiwan.

The Chinese government has sought to reap the economic rewards of an open, Western-oriented economy while maintaining absolute state power over its political and economic process, in contrast

to the clear separation between market and state long favored in the international economy. The Chinese economy is thus both integrated and vital to the flow of capital in the global economy while historically remaining a political outsider. China has taken a large step towards regional and international supremacy through its leveraging of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) which it has used to partner with developing countries on infrastructure projects. An ideological and political rival to the US Marshall Project, the BRI has been criticized as “debt trap diplomacy” which saddles nations with unsustainable debts and reliant on China for support, sometimes even handing control over the finished infrastructure project back to China. It has also successfully exported its surveillance technology to countries across the world. China has bolstered its military throughout the past decade, bolstering its military spending and building military installations throughout the disputed South China Sea.

India currently lags China economically, India has also sought to reap the rewards of the global market. After persisting with a centrally-planned economy for nearly four decades after decolonization, India since the 1990s has sought to economically liberalize many sectors of the economy, leveraging its growing population - over 600 million of which are under the age of 25 - into successful IT, technology, retail,

and industrial sectors. It has also sought to bridge the military gap with investments in Russia, American, French, and Israeli missiles and an aircraft carrier. India is also the world’s largest democracy with flawed but pluralistic institutions, the kind that would, according to Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson in *Why Nations Fail*, encourage creativity and entrepreneurship and discourage graft and corruption. While Modi has sought to tighten his grip over Indian political and civil society in recent years, his popularity remains sky-high per the last elections, and there would be nothing like the international conflagration over Chinese tennis star Peng Shuai who was silenced last year for speaking about sexual assault perpetrated by political leaders. However, President Modi was forced to backtrack on proposed economic reforms to the land and agricultural sectors following a massive protest from farmers who blocked roads into Delhi, showcasing the relative advantages and disadvantages of the democratic process and liberal values of protest and freedom of speech that China’s government bypasses. The Indian government also retains broad control over other sections of the economy such as defense, banking, and power that are deemed vital to the national interest, resisting attempts to open them up to interested investors and concentrating economic power fully under the state. We can surmise from the scrapping for

regional hegemony, that any coming international, perhaps bipolar, dynamic between India and China will have long-lasting implications for the international system. Already there exists a tension between mutual economic cooperation with features of the neoliberal international system such as open markets and unencumbered capital flows and conflict with attempts by the US and Western nations to fully economically-liberalize and embrace the norms of democracy, human rights, and the supremacy of international law. Already, China has sought to bend the liberal order along its own lines through its partnership with Russia, the debt-trap diplomacy of the BRI, and stifling of international dissent over the ongoing genocide of the Uighurs. While it remains to be seen what an Indian-led international system might look like, we can already see the impact of Chinese foreign policy which through its support of despots such as Putin and the rollout of the BRI projects is politically centralized, normatively illiberal, and economically coercive. It is perhaps little wonder that the US has boosted its rhetorical and economic support for India, perhaps seeing both a kindred democratic spirit in the region and sensing an opportunity to boost an anti-Chinese rival.

However, it is possible that India's illiberal political turn under Modi can also perhaps push India into cooperation with China

rather than conflict, although that cooperation would likely be a sort of junior, subservient partnership given its smaller economy. However, political antipathy towards China remains high following the 2021 border crisis in Ladakh with a number of Chinese social media companies thrown out of the country over the dispute. Discussions remain ongoing in 2022 over whether to ease restrictions on Chinese investment. The US also remains a powerful player on the international stage, having recovered some of its damaged standing under President Biden, that will likely continue to influence foreign affairs.

However, the relative US decline in international standing allows for greater possibility for both China and India to change and subvert (or uphold and maintain) the current globalized financial system. While China may consider itself an economic, political, and ideological outsider to the world-system it now must contend with its rise to present status as an insider. Heavy is the head who wears the crown. India finds itself at a crossroads over whether its present economic and political model will continue to sustain its current economic growth or whether it will eventually plateau. The international sphere remains as unpredictable and anarchic as ever, but the emergence of both India and China may define the international system for the decades to come.

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# China's Economic Presence in Africa: Friends or Foe?

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*Chad Smith*

In recent years, China's economic presence within the continent of Africa has led to some heavy debate as to whether or not Chinese involvement is truly beneficial for Africa. The arguments are mostly swayed by the fact that Chinese investments within Africa grew from a measly 210 million in 2000 to a staggering 3.17 billion present day. Economic aid has been an important instrument of policy for China and is their tool of choice when it comes to relations with Africa, making Africa one of its top benefactors of Chinese foreign aid globally. While this aid has been widely accepted by the continent it does raise questions as to what China's true goal and initiative is. It is no secret China is one of the Great Powers of the world and is on track to economically surpass the United States in time. Therefore, every step China takes towards that end goal has rippling global impacts on the world order.

All of this Chinese foreign aid being deposited into Africa has raised the

questions and debate as to why. While Chinese leaders claim that its assistance is completely selfless and altruistic, the reality behind its intentions is far more complicated than that.

During the Cold War, foreign aid was an important political tool that the Chinese used in order to gain the diplomatic recognition of various African nations. This was used as a method to gain leverage over The United States and The Soviet Union in terms of African support. This competition initiated the Chinese economic aid effort to Africa and set into motion all that would take place decades in the future. Since the beginning of China's reform and opening up, especially after 2000, Africa has become an increasingly important economic partner for China. Africa enjoys rich natural resources and market potential, and urgently needs infrastructure and development finance to stimulate economic growth. Chinese financial development, combined with the aid, aims at not only benefiting the local recipient countries, but also China itself. Much

Chinese financing to Africa is associated with securing the continent's natural resources. Using what is sometimes characterized as the "Angola Model," China frequently provides low-interest loans to nations who rely on commodities, such as oil or mineral resources, as collateral. In addition to securing Africa's natural resources, China's capital flows into Africa also create business opportunities for Chinese service contractors, such as construction companies. Through this, China is able to serve both their domestic and foreign interests while maintaining diplomatic relations. So how can we interpret the relations between Africa and China and are China's intentions truly as friendly as they claim? When observing this relation at a surface level it is very easy to assert moral judgements in the assessment of the Chinese aid. We are very quickly able to view China's actions as selfish and see them as taking advantage of African nations and stealing their natural resources. However, if we dive deeper than that, China's aid to Africa fills an economic void left by the west and works well to promote the development of African states. By continuing to further their investment in these nations, China has created an economic avenue through which development can take place. Despite this, a point of criticism stems

from the fact that China is relying on the short-term benefits of its assistance to cover for the long-term consequences of neglecting issues of governance fairness and sustainability. When the foreign economic aid is linked to the profitability of Chinese companies, it becomes questionable whether China would prioritize Africa's interests or its own. It also raises the question of how this economic partnership will affect the changing world order as China continues to grow and expand as a global superpower.

**Resources:**

<https://qz.com/africa/1605497/belt-and-road-africa-mineral-rich-nations-export-mostly-to-china/>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/wadeshepard/2019/10/03/what-china-is-really-up-to-in-africa/?sh=15080a405930>

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# The South-South Economic Order may be the Newest Path for Global South Liberation

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*Nadean Sam*

The global world order has always favored a hierarchical-hegemonic structure where Western nations are at the top and all others fall beneath them. It is why we have binaries and classifications like colonizers and colonies, the West and the East, the Global North and the Global South, Developed and Developing nations. These classifications instill demarcations of power dynamics in the global world order that evolve over time but maintain the same colonial structures. In terms of the hegemonic side of the dynamic, the Western nation that has consolidated most of the global power has been the United States. Their influence in international institutions, trade dynamics and military intervention & funding has been heavy as they are integral to many nations' economies all over the world. The US enjoys dominance in all areas of the liberal world—political power, economic influence and military and security supremacy. Though in recent years China has been experiencing rapid and consistent growth and have proved themselves a worthy contender in this rivalry to be the greatest power in today's world order. The US has enjoyed unipolarity over the years, but other nations are growing, and China might just rise above them becoming the next unipolar. Though the China – US dynamic holds the spotlight, a less acknowledged growing possibility for a truly new liberal world order has been that of the Global South leading through south-south cooperation and collaboration towards independent and communal growth.

Cooperation between Southern nations is an opportunity for nations with mutual grievances and challenges to work together in mutual benefit – growth. History has displayed that the development crisis in the South will not be improved by external solutions like foreign aid, international financial institutional loan packages and more.

They have all proven to have agendas in opposition to development in the South because it is more advantageous that those countries remain stagnant and within exploitative, non-beneficial relations. Whereas possibilities for bilateral, regional, intraregional, or interregional cooperation can make a big difference to their growth levels while also being sustainable growth. This cooperation would be in trade, foreign direct investment plans, regional integration in different sectors, infrastructure, housing, education, sanitation, environment, technology, transfers & sharing of solutions & expertise, in addition to other forms of exchanges.

On the African continent we are seeing renewed confidence in Pan-Africanism and nationalism as well as new models. Many enthusiasts of the continent are betting that Africa might just become the next China in the liberal world order due to the high rate at which the population is expected to grow. The UN “predicted that by 2100 one human being in three will be an African” though it might spark concern for job and food demand in relation to supply, it is also a possibility to fill the global employment needs. Currently, African nations are taking initiatives to fill employment in different industries like tech and reworking their agricultural sectors.

Currently, in the cocoa industry bilateral cooperation between Ghana and Cote d’Ivoire on Cocoa economic policy are making moves to change exploitive dynamics and create more mutually beneficial relations for their workers, especially farmers, in those regions. There has also been interregional cooperation between different parts of the continent to source raw materials, labor, and capital from each other to build up industries in tech, manufacturing, selling of goods and services within the continent. They are building up the market to maintain capital within the nations and the continent instead of it going into more developed nations with little to no benefit or return to them. This is improving self-reliance, which most developing countries need more of while maintaining some amount of interdependence since the international system leans so heavily into liberal state relations. South-South cooperation will be a way for countries to develop themselves through participating in sustainable and equitable globalization practices. An organization that is enhancing South-South cooperation is the United Nations Office for South-South Cooperation’s (UNSOCC). The cross country and even continent transfer of best developmental practices for different sectors with similar challenges and factors in areas of trade, finance, investment, technology and more. This knowledge exchange hub is a clever and effective way to replicate and adapt solutions and practices that have worked in one country or continent to solve the problems of another. Naturally it is to be expected

that this peer-to-peer learning can increase the scale countries are growing at as they can learn from each other's mistakes and wins in order to speed up their understanding of how to develop. This collaborative effort will also allow them to address mutual challenges that have been and are difficult to solve independently as a single nation.

The Chinese have seen the opportunity in south-south cooperation to not only establish their regional influence in Asia but throughout the South. They have been in a large number of the partnership programs at UNSOCC as well as a big contributor financially. I have no doubt that they are not doing this solely out of kindness and support for other Southern nations but more likely to up their position in the global order by making more nation closely integrated with them so that they become even more indispensable and powerful.

During a visit to Costa Rica for my undergraduate study abroad, I observed many similarities between my home country of Ghana and Costa Rica in geography, climate, agriculture, environment and more. This led to thoughts of how I could see policy and programs that have worked there working in other developing countries like Ghana. The country is making massive strides in environmental sustainability and using it to fuel sustainable development for their nation. For instance, for the past seven years they have been generating 98% of their electricity from renewables. A large part of their renewable sources resides in hydropower (72%) then geothermal (14.9%), then a smaller percentage of it in wind (12%) and solar power and biomass (0.54%). They are working towards carbon neutrality through decarbonization strategies in the transport sector by electrifying it along with other social or educational changes. Another industry that has been a large part of their economic success has been eco-tourism. As a student of both International Relations and Environmental studies I could visualize the intersectional possibilities and benefits of an exchange of development practices between these two nations that are facing the same challenge of development while having similar geographies, climates, and prospects in (eco)tourism.

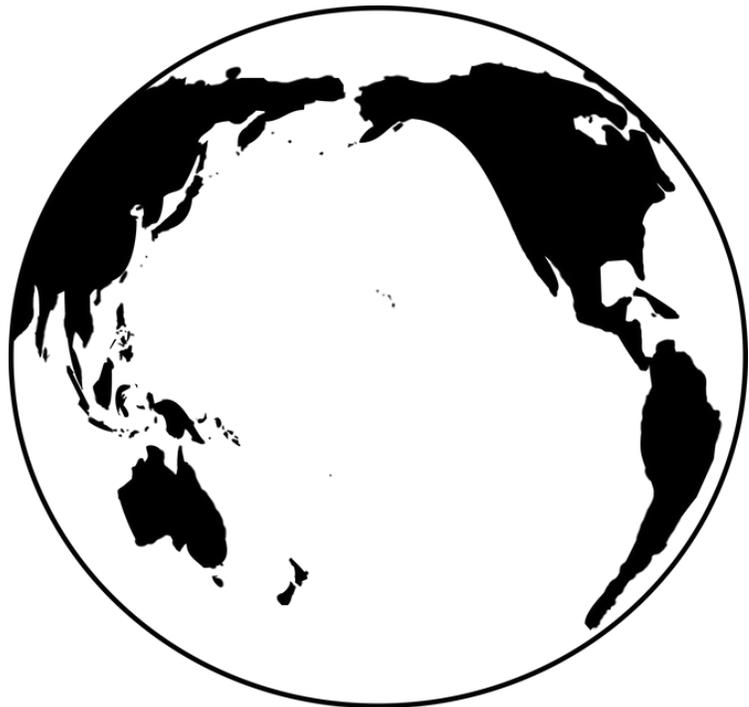
Being intrigued in ideas of knowledge exchange and south-south sustainable development research led me to programs out there like this. The South-South Galaxy platform is “a global knowledge sharing and partnership brokering platform” which is supported by UNSOCC and other development partners. One project published by them currently which displays the efficiency and benefits of knowledge

exchange programs is ‘ the Brazil-Mexico Exchange Programme: Agroforestry and Sustainable Production Systems ’ from 2019 to 2020. It allowed farmers in semi-arid regions of Mexico and Paraíba, Brazil to exchange agro-ecological and agroforestry solutions and solve their challenges together. They successfully adapted solutions from the Brazilian situation to farmers in Mexico. The efficiency in this development design being that the Cariri and Seridó Sustainable Development Project (PROCASE) had already tested and implemented these solutions in Paraíba to know they work which allowed Mexico to benefit and save time rather than going through that process on their own. The South-South Galaxy solution platform shows many circumstances where positive results have been seen in other programs of exchange.

South-South economic order is an opportunity for cooperation between developing nations to grow together on their own terms. It takes note of what has not been successful as well as the realities of the global dynamic and post-colonial structures integral to it in order to pivot and adapt into an alternative option outside of the narrow bounds given. What gives me optimism is that it is a realistic approach with potential to create change, though it might be different from the usual and it takes time to see lasting change. It is key that the South countries create institutions and spaces that will allow them to channel this potential and power in whatever direction they conclude without influence and interference from the West.

For this autonomy amongst the South to be possible – education and leadership will be crucial. Some institutions that are part of the movement making this happen in Africa are African Leadership Academy (ALA), African Leadership University (ALU), and ALX Africa. Ala is a high school and ALU is a university both training and educating young leaders. ALX Africa is one of the many innovative initiatives for tech. They are training the next generation of coders as well as providing opportunities for employment on the continent while creating more remote work options. Fred Swaniker is the founder and CEO of these initiatives; he has been a philanthropist and advocate of discovering, supporting, and educating the next generation of leadership in Africa to ensure that they make positive, powerful, effective strides towards change. Each of the institutions he is working on bring the future of African nations being – “the next possible China” closer. The People's Republic of China is an example of a Southern nation, a former developing nation that has not only developed but is now the one of the most powerful, stably growing nations to the point that they are challenging the establishment of the US in the

unipolar liberal world order. They have achieved this success working around the system to make it favorable for them by investing in industrialization to provide workers and factories allowing them to dominate manufacturing globally. The Chinese state's role in global manufacturing has become indispensable to many nations' and companies' production of goods. African nations might be able to adapt that approach and see similar if not better results in industries in technology and services. The UNSOCC 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is hopeful to see that as a reality by 2030 so let's watch and see, who knows this time the order may be in their favor. Their success is living evidence that it is possible to challenge the dominant liberal, hegemonic world order and find a way to grow despite the colonial and extractive roots of the system that hinders south-south nations. China has liberated itself from the bounds of the liberal world order all while not completely submitting to its hegemonic power structures but altered it in their favor. China might just replace the US in the unipolar world system, but African nations would truly transform the dynamic of the world order and the colonial underpinnings of it. A truly new liberal world order.



# The New World Order Must Incorporate Cyberspace

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*Hannah Garrett*

In today's age of rapidly advancing technology, not only are we finding ways to use these resources to communicate with each other more and from greater distances, but we are also adapting them to be used in political affairs and conflict. We are able to conduct surveillance unlike anything we have seen before, and war does not simply mean physical combat but can refer to cyber-attacks that have major effects in the physical world. As of today, states have not totally grasped the extent to which cyber threats play into international politics.

Oftentimes when one hears of cyber threat, it is spoken of in terms of individuals or non-state actors. We might think of phishing, ransomware, scammers, identity theft, etc.; all aspects that might affect an individual or a business. The reality is that the threats and dangers that lurk within cyberspace are more integrated with larger global geopolitics than we think—it is both an extension of geopolitics and a contributor to the changing world order. So, while it is true that there are many cyber threats on smaller planes such as individuals or corporations, states are increasingly implicated as they use cyberspace as a realm to act on geopolitical rivalries. And non-state actors within cyberspace can often be used as proxies for state actors.

One of the most famous governmental effects from cyber involvement is the 2016 US Presidential Elections. Investigations showed that, while Russian hackers did not hack any voting machines and physically change the votes, they ran a long game of information warfare with the goal of influencing perceptions that would support Donald Trump in the election. Goals of Russian actors in cyberspace were also to undermine American trust in democracy and their political system. Again in 2020, there was evidence found that hacking and cyberspace as grounds for election influence from Russia and Iran. It is clear that states or state-sponsored individuals are now using the sphere of cyberspace to influence world politics and advance their own goals within this changing dynamic.

Across the pond, in 2017, the National Health Service (NHS) in the UK was hit hard in the midst of a wave of WannaCry ransomware attacks in hospitals and general practitioners, bringing them to a halt for several days and costing a hefty monetary sum. Such attacks are linked to an organization called Lazarus Group originating from North Korea. When so many aspects of the world are becoming increasingly reliant on the internet and global communication networks; individuals, companies, and by extension states are also increasingly vulnerable to attacks that have the potential for more devastating effects.

Starting in 2009, there were a series of attacks on computer systems in Iranian uranium enrichment plants in which a virus called Stuxnet would shut down the centrifuges that were used to enrich the uranium gas. Not only do we see this as one of the first cyberattacks that heavily impact the physical world, but it is also evident that these attacks are connected to the geopolitical realities in Iran at the time. The 2009 elections went poorly for the Iranian people who believed that it would be a close race between incumbent Mahmoud Ahmadinejad and Mir-Hossein Mousavi. When Ahmadinejad won by 26 percent of the vote, protesters took to the streets and were met with violence and suppression in the form of tear gas and live ammunition. Then, ten days after the election results, there was a Stuxnet attack. This new “digital weapon” is shown as a tool of protest and sabotage with real, physical effects.

We can also see China as a large player on this new field of cyberspace, contributing to the creation of cyber norms internationally and domestically. The growing power has been implicated in cyberattacks on companies such as Microsoft

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*This new "digital weapon" is shown as a tool of protest and sabotage with real, physical effects.*

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in 2021 as well as cyber-espionage. China is also setting norms on social media, “The Chinese government’s monitoring of the internet and social media is based on its potential use as a platform to disseminate information that could cause similar [to the Arab Spring] social unrest to spread, which could lead to large-scale social and political instability” (Lyu Jinghua). While China’s cyber capabilities do not meet that of the US, it is an important player in cyberspace that should not be overlooked, considering that they are creating their own cyber norms.

It is a widely accepted reality that the global order is one of anarchy. There is nearly no real institution or facility that can hold states or leaders of states accountable for international crimes or human rights abuses. There are

intergovernmental institutions such as the UN that give an attempt at upholding international law but doing so requires a large amount of international cooperation—even from who is accused. Even within the confounds of international law, there is no set ruling on how to handle cyber-crime. According to Carnegie, there are many reasons that international law hasn't yet breeched into this aspect of contemporary global politics such as states either disagreeing on the relevance of applying international law to cyberspace or simply not talking about it at all. There are also difficulties in holding actors accountable, they say. "States that accuse other states of malicious cyber behavior rarely invoke international law in doing so. The absence of international legal rhetoric may imply that the behavior may be lawful, even if unwanted." Despite a growth in cyber-attacks, particularly state-sponsored ones, there hasn't been any major movements towards how to handle them or hold the offenders accountable for the damage they do.

Much like any new technology that enters the field as an influencer of global politics, surely there must be a path for leaders and policy makers to be able to tackle the threat of cyber warfare, right? Joseph S. Nye, Jr. talks precisely about this in a Foreign Affairs article he calls "The End of Cyber-Anarchy? How to Build a New Digital Order." He claims that there is hope in establishing norms for combating cyber-threats, just as norms have been created and strengthened with the advent of any other influential aspect within global politics. Nye also points out the necessity of recognizing the fact that "the domain of cyberspace is inherently transnational" and there must be a rethinking of the way cyberspace functions. The internet and the networks within it are not simply weapons owned by a government and they don't have such concrete conventionality as weapons of mass destruction. It does not work along traditional avenues such as threatening loss of life. Turning back to international law, Nye refers us to the UN General Assembly in 2015 that introduced nonbinding norms tying international law to cyberspace. Still, there are remaining tensions between actors and problems with instituting a clear-cut cyberspace norm.

It is time to re-analyze the global order that incorporates the digital realities of our lives. Only when we can begin to understand the underlying causes and influences behind cyberthreats can states begin to effectively lay out a defensive strategy and establish cyber norms. By ignoring geopolitical tensions that foment cyber-attacks, states cannot properly adapt to this new threat and new world order. When this new mode of engagement is neglected, the growing powers that begin to operate more and more on this plane will be overlooked, allowing a shift in who is creating the norms in the world order.

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# Updating Liberal Internationalism

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*Sal Suarez*

A cornerstone of Western Liberal philosophy is the belief that war, in all its ugliness, can be regulated out of practicality through its many bureaucratic norms and a civilizational association of transnational cooperation as emblematic of humanity's "progress." This philosophical (Kantian) pillar always existed, but its current manifestation is a trauma-response born from the World Wars' "total warfare" and the Holocaust. At Europe's behest, America acted as the guarantor of European peace by adopting Liberal Internationalism, believing the West now had the capability and commitment to finally end war—the collapse of the USSR only added to the enthusiasm. The end of history, it was called.

It was not the end, only a pause.

### ***Post-War Arrogance, Ukraine, and What It Means to be European:***

Western hubris created the crisis in Ukraine. From 1990-2014, policymakers constructed a European Liberal order

around two presumptions: 1). the deeply held, yet misguided, belief that one cannot be European without being Western; 2). America's genuine belief spreading American values and institutions into the post-Soviet sphere was an unquestionable, universal good—a missionary-like impulse. As a result, NATO rapidly expanded, Russia tried and failed at Liberal economics, and many slavic, formerly Russian controlled territories gleefully accepted Westernization. This pan-European order, whose values, norms, institutions, and economic prosperity were touted as unabashedly European and civilized, told Russia one thing: you no longer belong. Russia predictably returned to its expansionist predisposition after NATO compounded its fear of strategic isolation.

This is not to condone Russia's *choice* to embrace expansionism, nor is it to say the blame rests entirely in the hands of the West. Those Liberal Internationalist policymakers had a genuine, if not

misguided, belief Westernization would improve the lives of eastern Europeans. This is to say, though, that the West ignored a simple truth: if you have a strong non-Western state, whose people and elites identify as European, they will perceive Westernization identity erasure and fight tooth-and-nail to prevent it. It is an ugly truth, one that forces the West to create space for other groups within Europe it would otherwise exclude. But failure to change one's attitudes about non-Western will only precipitate into more conflicts in Europe as groups seeking Western approval will grow to resent it.

This question of Europeanism—is European identity geographic, or is it about civilizational roots and norms?—has existed for centuries, affecting the development of both Russian and Western identities as both sides frame one another as adversaries. So it is unlikely Western and Russians alike are even capable of undoing this prejudice, as both sides wish to use it for their geostrategic interests. The West, for instance, failed to assure Russia NATO expansion was anything but benign, and Russia's invasion of Ukraine failed to undermine the post-European order among NATO allies. If anything, it reaffirmed their mutual commitment against Russia. This conflict will be one of many, dividing the continent along its ideological trenches.

### *A New Framing for Liberal Internalism in Europe: NATO as “Big Brother”*

People presume this conflict marks a decline, or an outright end to Liberal Internationalism. A frequent critique is that the conflict will undermine existing Liberal institutions in Europe due to nationalist flare-ups, as the conflict brings the prospect of war closer to Western Europe than previously anticipated (risking nations, such as France, de-committing to NATO). Their assumptions are built on some truth; Western Europe has seen a rise in populist nationalism, particularly fueled by the perception transnational institutions undermine a nation's sovereignty.

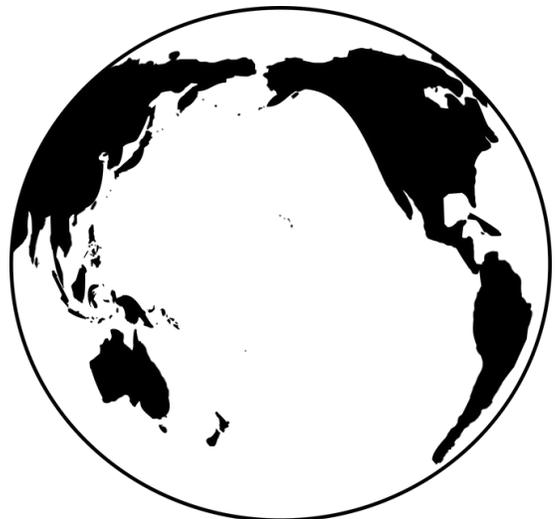
However that assumption was developed during peacetime, and it is extremely likely the West's attitudes during this period of conflict will be very different. Western Europe, for instance, had a rise in populism because there was a lack of adversarial nations for the government to deflect attention on to. It is easy for populations to hyper-fixate on their own government when their international security appears unquestionable. It is very unlikely Western Europe's nationalist predisposition will affect its commitment to transnational institutions, especially during conflict, because NATO normalized itself throughout Western Europe as a

“guardian” of Westernism against Russia.

So what will occur? It is likely the West will double-down in its commitment to Liberal Internationalism, perceiving the conflict as putting Westernism on the backfoot. Western policymakers are framing the Ukraine Crisis as a sort-of “conflict on the frontier,” using Cold War imagery to fear-monger its populations into supporting increases to national military budgets and commitments abroad. They are already trying to economically isolate Russia from the West’s immense capital while giving Ukraine a blank check on Western goods and weaponry. The economic dimension of this conflict will grow in prominence as the conflict monetarily drains both governments (Ukrainian and Russian).

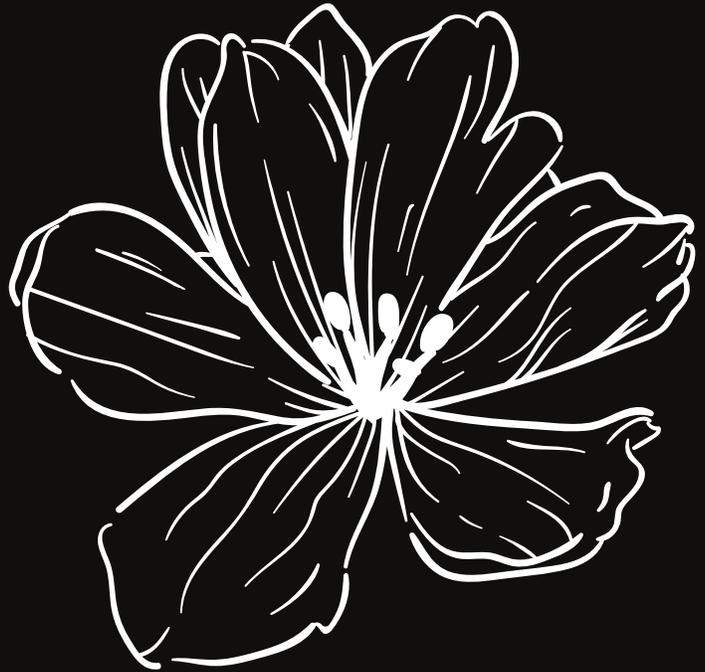
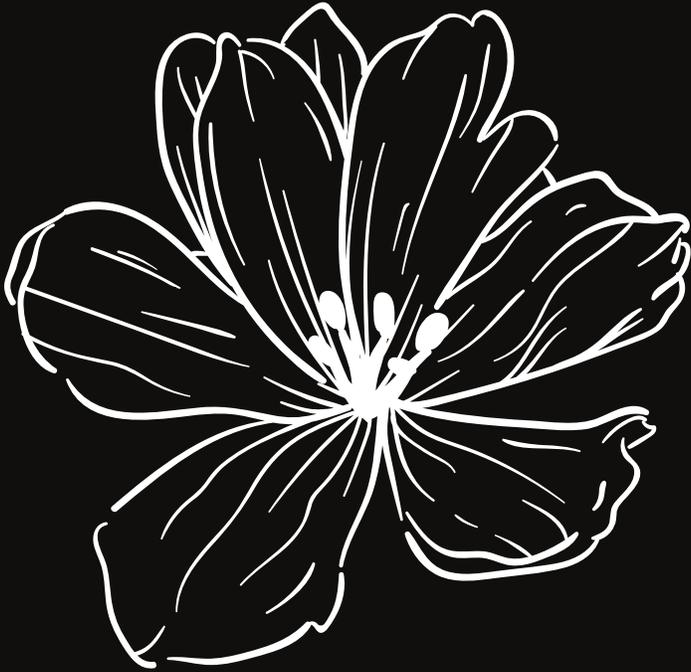
Additionally, it is unlikely the West’s commitment to Liberal Internationalism will subside due to nationalist tendencies. Western European nationalism will put the “Russia Threat” front and center, similar to American nationalism’s framing of the “China Threat.” These “threats” contribute to domestic commitment to previous institutions, including NATO and the EU, that have normalized themselves as

guarantors of national security, as NATO has for Europe. This is great news for America, the financial legitimizer of Liberal Internationalism, as the largest threat to Liberal Internationalism was American nationalism’s growing resentment against Europe for paying its fair share. But if Europe takes ownership of its continental direction, as it is likely to do so, America can pivot to address the China issue in the Pacific while it works with Western Europe in its frontier fight against the Russians.



# **Thank You for Reading!**

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