

Advice for the EU: The war in Ukraine is more important than Trump’s trade war. Strengthen international democracy and rule of law, negotiate with China and Russia

Thomas Cool ¹ & Thomas Colignatus ²

2025-05-12

Abstract

Russia gives three options for Ukraine: (1) Russia wins by conventional means, (2) Russia deploys tactical nuclear weapons, (3) Ukraine surrenders on Russian terms, leaving room for details. The advice for the EU is: There is also option (4): a role for the EU together with China and Russia, temporising the role of the USA that is in social, economic and political chaos. The EU has learned from its past wars and consistently opts for democracy and the rule of law, so that this is predictable for all countries. The EU expects and relies upon protection under the NATO umbrella and best agrees with Russia what greater defence is possible in the EU without being seen as a threat to Russia. Within the framework of the UN, Ukraine can be a neutral free country, with both Russia and Ukraine e.g. in EFTA / EEA. The USA must accept its containment and temporary exclusion since it would not want to lose the EU. The EU can offer the USA democratic and social liberal ways to resolve its internal chaos, in particular by changing its proto-democratic electoral system into proper democracy, namely from district contests into equal or proportional representation (i.e. what UN Human Right 21 sub 1 requires).

Abstract..... 1

Introduction and summary..... 2

A quote on how John Maynard Keynes got eventually listened to 6

A context given by Mahbubani 2025..... 7

Trade war..... 7

Architects behind Trump’s policies 8

The “political science on electoral systems” is not a science..... 9

The real problems are Ukraine and this “political science” 10

The role of mathematics education..... 11

¹ I am also taking a personal stand, so not all is science.

² Thomas Colignatus is the name in science of Thomas Cool, econometrician (Groningen 1982) and teacher of mathematics (Leiden 2008) in Scheveningen, Holland. See thomascool.eu or orcid.org/0000-0002-2724-6647

Rise and fall of empires	12
Harrison on the new Russian empire under Putin.....	13
Background to the war in Ukraine, and the mistake of Ukraine joining NATO.....	14
China and the rule based world.....	18
China's path towards democracy	19
Tariffs and the price of carbon	20
Conclusion	20
Appendix 1. The mission of IMF and WB includes environmental sustainability.....	21
Appendix 2. Impeachment of Trump and Vance	22
Appendix 3. Breach of science within this political science in the Netherlands	24
Appendix 4. A guide for non-fellow-travelers	25
Appendix 5. A bit more about “not one inch east”	25

Introduction and summary

Regarding the Ukraine real war and the Trump trade war, it shouldn't be forgotten that climate change is the most important problem of the world, see Hueting and De Boer (2019).³ US treasurer Bessent (2025)⁴ holds that the IMF and World Bank had “mission creep” by including environmental sustainability in their agenda. He is mistaken. The definition of “income” is that capital is left intact; consuming one's capital is not income. Proper definitions of national income don't concern money only but also include environmental sustainability, see **Appendix 1**.

There are two often conflicting doctrines. First, there is the inevitable geopolitics of major powers, a form of “natural law”, with *Si vis pacem para bellum*. Secondly, there is international law, see Ernst Hirsch Ballin (2022).⁵ The second doctrine arose in an effort to contain the first, quite like Hart's “Concept of Law”.⁶ The world can only try to find working compromises. Discussions can be confusing when law and rules are discussed while hiding the underlying issues of power, or when geopolitics is discussed without including international arrangements.

³ Hueting and De Boer (2019), “National Accounts and environmentally Sustainable National Income”, <https://esni-hueting.info/EN/NA-eSNI/index.html>

⁴ Bessent (2025) <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sb0094> and video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NsyNHd5Ce3c>

⁵ Hirsch Ballin (2022), “Peace and Justice” <https://repository.tilburguniversity.edu/server/api/core/bitstreams/1f0931b2-a1e9-4b56-8d15-62aa4df42bb7/content>

⁶ H.L.A. Hart (1961), “The Concept of Law”, OUP

The following aims to provide a working balance.

We may point to the US Security Council resolution 2774 (2025-02-24) on the Ukraine war, that reiterates the UN's purpose of peace, and that calls for a swift end to the conflict and a lasting peace.^{7 8} It implies that the Russian Federation must acknowledge that this is more than a "special military operation", and that the other members of the Council can assist the parties towards a settlement within international law.

Where imperial historian Harrison sees a Ukraine war of attrition (see below), this policy seem more likely to result in Russia eventually deploying its tactical nuclear weapons. The meaning of nuclear deterrence and *mutually assured destruction* (MAD) is that when one party reports that another is getting too close, *that the other party withdraws*. Who **does not** withdraw, and tries a conventional approach, risks the nuclear option. The latter is what G.W. Bush did in 2008 by *expanding NATO* (see below). For Bush it was no problem that the bombs would fall on Europe.

Consider the question: What is more important strategically: the war in Ukraine or the trade war that Trump is unleashing or threatening to unleash if the world does not give him his way soon ? Trump's stated goals are the reindustrialisation of the USA and the 5% defence budgets within NATO, though the billionaire libertarians backing him not only want a minimal US government, but will also want access to Russia's resources. If the EU doesn't support Trump's policies then he could withdraw NATO support for EU countries. Should the EU accept that Trump gives Ukraine to Putin, after which it will become a dictatorship like Belarus, such that the Ukrainian army will then be directed towards Europe ?

Relevant insights for Russia and the EU are:

- It can be discussed with Putin that Trump is not a stable partner, even for Russia. When Trump gets a grudge he wants retaliation.
- The billionaire libertarians will do Russia's future no good.
- Russia may also recognise the benefits of a treaty with the EU and Zelenskyy's Ukraine, with both Russia and Ukraine joining EFTA / EEA, with temporary agreements on security under the UN, and later a broader Eurasian security treaty within the OSCE with the next US president, whose name will presumably not be Vance, see here.⁹

⁷ [https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2774\(2025\)](https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2774(2025))

⁸ <https://press.un.org/en/2025/sc16005.doc.htm>

⁹ <https://boycottholland.wordpress.com/2025/03/28/banks-hiring-a-belligerent-cia-for-a-heartland/>

- Putin may choose to steer Russia back to Glasnost and Perestroika for the next 25 years, towards freedom and welfare like in Scandinavia,¹⁰ instead of what it is now with a risk that Russia is reduced to a vassal state of China.

Putin gives three options: (1) Russia wins by conventional means, (2) Russia deploys tactical nuclear weapons,¹¹ (3) Ukraine surrenders on his terms, leaving room for details.

Trump accused Zelenskyy of playing with WW3. Did Trump deduce this himself or did he get such information from the DoD ? Steven Pifer 2024 downplays Putin's use of tactical nuclear arms.¹² The "reasoning" is that Putin has been referring to nukes in veiled terms for three years, but hasn't actually used them. This "reasoning" is crooked at the level of kindergarten. Pifer:

"Moscow wants the West to think so. But such nuclear use would be fraught with political and military peril for Russia. Putin has accepted his ostracism from the West. Russian nuclear use against a non-nuclear weapon state would play badly in Beijing and New Delhi and likely make Putin a global pariah. "

When a war of attrition increases the costs to Russia, also in the loss of soldiers, then Putin can point to the existential threat to Russia of NATO missiles at its border, compare the Cuban Missiles Crisis, and China and India might well comprehend this. Pifer's crooked analyses also appear in **Appendix 5**.

The framework for an advice to the EU remains the long-standing good relationship between the EU and the USA. Still, the billionaire libertarians and Trump as their political frontman are an anomaly in American history, even with such rich US history on money and politics. This situation of anomaly thus must be treated as such. The USA is in social, economic and political chaos, and better be contained. Priority should be given to the risk of the use of nuclear weapons on European soil. National income can stand a dent - with a policy of national unity to protect low incomes.

The above gives option (4): a role for the EU together with China and Russia, and temporising the role of the USA. Currently Putin is waging a brutal war,¹³ and there is an ICC arrest warrant that Trump is silent about. Nevertheless, it is not inconceivable that Putin sees room to return

¹⁰ Colignatus (2017), about Emmanuel Todd's culture map:

<https://boycottholland.wordpress.com/2015/05/17/colour-coding-conventions-on-europe/>

¹¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sergey_Karaganov

¹² <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/how-credible-is-russias-evolving-nuclear-doctrine/>

¹³ <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2025/apr/14/same-river-twice-sofi-oksanen-review-putin-war-on-women>

to his very old intentions, when he first took office as president of the Russian Federation, namely regarding peace and security and economic cooperation, even with his offer to Clinton that Russia would join NATO too. If the EU recognises that Ukraine cannot join NATO, and cannot join the EU with its own security provisions, then an arrangement with the UN Security Council can be considered. Ukraine and Russia could join EFTA / EEA. For Crimea, one could think of a UN protectorate and for the other areas a federalisation as in Belgium – though this would be hard to accept for Russia since it has already started to integrate those regions into Russia. A common base could be that Russia and the EU realise they were both maltreated by Bush jr.

In mid-February, Trump indicated that NATO membership for Ukraine and regaining lost territories were out of the question. The EU still insists on NATO membership for Ukraine. This is ill-advised of the EU. The Ukraine had already been drawn into a proxy war for the USA, and if the EU joins up while the USA drops out, this would eventually still lead to the Russian use of nuclear arms on European soil. In this case Trump has the correct position – but for the wrong reasons of his financial backers who want access to Russia's resources even if Ukraine would become like Belarus.

The fourth option is not for cowards. Obviously, it is not in the interest of the USA that the EU falls entirely under Russia's influence. The lesser role for the USA in the EU, and the EU's critical dialogue with voters in the USA will not cause that the USA leaves NATO, because then the USA would be completely alone against China and Russia. This gives the EU room to act in a way that the current US administration may find unpleasant, as the EU will not succumb to Trump's bullying language. It will require talks by EU foreign ministers with the Russians without the USA to get the proper parameters, end the Ukraine war, and reopen trade relations. The EU expects and relies upon protection under the NATO umbrella and best agrees with Russia what greater defence is possible in the EU without being seen as a threat to Russia. A key point is that the EU consistently opts for democracy and the rule of law, so that this is predictable for all countries.

The USA hasn't been able to deal with the challenge provided by the Trump anomaly, that already started before Trump's first term and continued during the Biden years. Biden had a proposal for immigration, that was rather close to the Republican wishes, but under request of Trump they reneged, so that the problem persisted and later was blamed on Biden.¹⁴ Some call this politics and others call it irresponsible and worse. Apparently many Americans are in "shock

¹⁴ <https://thehill.com/opinion/immigration/4458612-history-confirms-republicans-rejected-a-once-in-a-lifetime-immigration-opportunity/>

and awe” of the current barrage of “project 2025”. The US Congress has been ineffective on president Trump and now also Vance, but there are objective grounds for impeachment, see **Appendix 2**.

Let me refer for context to these texts by James Galbraith.^{15 16 17}

Last but not least, it is important for the EU to also meet with billionaire libertarians to discuss the difference between economic science versus libertarianism, homeopathy, astrology, scientology, and even political theology.¹⁸ An eye-opener might be this article on the failure of the Prospera enclave, see 2oceansvibe (2025).¹⁹

A quote on how John Maynard Keynes got eventually listened to

John Maynard Keynes in the UK, Jan Tinbergen in Holland, and Harlan McCracken²⁰ in the USA already proposed active fiscal policy in the 1930s. They were not listened to in quick enough fashion. It required a war before the academia, politicians and bureaucracies opened their minds. Rather, agents with closed minds were replaced by agents with open minds. See Skidelsky (1975).²¹

“In his biography of Keynes, Sir Roy Harrod reports a widely acclaimed speech delivered by his subject to the House of Lords in 1946, the year of his death. ‘But Keynes had been talking in this style ... for some twenty-seven years. Why had his words not been listened to ?’ (...) Unemployment as a problem in economic theory may have been sufficient to produce a revolution in the discipline; unemployment was not a sufficient problem to society to produce a revolution in political ideas. If it was not the prolonged experience of mass unemployment that finally broke the hold of nineteenth-century ideas, what was it ? A strong case can be made out for war. ‘Normal’ life could coexist with unemployment; it could not with modern war.”

¹⁵ James Galbraith (2024), <https://ideas.repec.org/a/elg/rokejn/v12y2024i3p408-422.html>

¹⁶ James Galbraith (2025a), <https://www.thenation.com/article/economy/political-economy-trumpism-europe/>

¹⁷ James Galbraith (2025b), <https://voxeurop.eu/en/europe-model-brics-multipolar-world/>

¹⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vfbndRTlsg4>

¹⁹ 2oceansvibe, “Libertarian Paradise Or Billionaire Playground Gone Bust ? The Spectacular Fall Of Próspera”, 2025, <https://www.2oceansvibe.com/2025/02/20/libertarian-paradise-or-billionaire-playground-gone-bust-the-spectacular-fall-of-prospera/>

²⁰ Colignatus (2014) with thanks to Steven Kates, <https://boycottholland.wordpress.com/2014/10/26/thomas-robert-malthus-visiting-maastricht/>

²¹ Robert Skidelsky, “The reception of the Keynesian revolution”, in Milo Keynes, “Essays on John Maynard Keynes”, CUP 1975:89 & 102-103

A context given by Mahbubani 2025

A context for considering these issues is Mahbubani (2025)²² *“It’s Time for Europe to Do the Unthinkable”*. The president of the UN Security Council between 2001 and 2002 suggests: (1) The EU should announce its willingness to quit NATO, even while perhaps actually not doing so. (2) Work out a new grand strategic bargain with Russia. (3) Work out a new strategic compact with China. He reminds the EU: *“The Europeans foolishly believed that a slavish loyalty to American geopolitical priorities would lead to rich geopolitical dividends for them. Instead, they have been kicked in the face.”* These are indeed points to consider. Of relevance is also Shidore (2025)’s²³ interview with Mahbubani, also again pointing to the future rise of Africa.

Trade war

Trump’s trade war is not an urgent problem. The EU can clench its teeth, follow a policy of *containment of the USA*, and control the damage from the US tariffs by using very selective tariffs of its own, even though this could cost 20% or more of production (growth) over the next few years.

Countries commonly do not interfere in other countries’ domestic affairs, but Americans can understand that the EU wants to be heard about what their administration is doing. The EU would do well to speak directly with the American public about what is wrong with Trump’s policies - compare the BBC programme *Question time*. EU citizens can send US friends links to EU websites where there is no *fake news*, with good English or subtitles.

Unemployment and poverty come from wrong policies, and not from technology or trade, that actually increase prosperity. Indeed, tariffs are conceivable when a country has unfair trade practices, and this can then be discussed within the WTO. For reindustrialisation, tariffs are counterproductive, because such new industries can remain addicted to the tariffs. The better tool are National Investment Banks, see Colignatus (2012)²⁴ and (2013).²⁵ For example, DARPA was at the cradle of Google, Facebook and SpaceX. Essential is an *Economic Supreme Court* with

²² 2025-02-18 at <https://mahbubani.net/its-time-for-europe-to-do-the-unthinkable/>

²³ Shidore (2025), Quincy institute, “Living the Asian Century: A Book Conversation with Kishore Mahbubani”, and this short excerpt: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ugln8SYr3c>

²⁴ Colignatus, “Common Sense: Boycott Holland”, MijBestseller.nl, 2012, <https://thomascool.eu/Papers/CSBH/Index.html>

²⁵ Colignatus, “Money as gold versus money as water”, RWER 2013, <https://www.paecon.net/PAEReview/issue64/Colignatus64.pdf>

a scientific and therefore independent position, instead of the marred *Council of Economic Advisors* (CEA) or in the Netherlands the CPB, see Colignatus (2011).²⁶

Architects behind Trump's policies

There is wide coverage of the architects behind Trump's policies, see ABC (2024)²⁷ and Dutch Nieuwsuur (2025).²⁸ Billionaire libertarians think their philosophy is grounded in economic science, and are happy to tear down the government, while they want access to Russia's resources, see Colignatus (2025a).²⁹ What Trump says about reindustrialisation is partly a pretext for this ideological libertarian insistence by his backers. There is the overt corruption via the crypto coin \$Trump. There is also the cult around Curtis Yarvin with a bizarre ideology. There is Patrick Deneen with his thesis that liberalism failed, but who apparently fails to observe that the USA still is a proto-democracy that closed its mind on social liberalism.³⁰ There are the tricks like emergency law, or counting a calendar year as a legal day, which is an abuse of law, see Savery and Hillburn (2025).³¹ Within an electoral system of equal or proportional representation, these currents would translate into political parties so that the discussion would be transparent. Now all such currents are behind the scenes, and often one can only guess what the final policy motive might be.

Trump and this Congress were legally elected. Many people therefore want to acquiesce to this policy. These consenters reason: even with these sadly mistaken architects behind Trump, their policy would have gained democratic legitimacy. Not necessarily. A president is a chairman who should also care for minorities, not just implement the winners' agenda. Congress should guard against an abuse of power. Overall it is a more democratic construction that the president has a more ceremonial role and is appointed by Congress, with equal or proportional representation, with the key role given to the prime minister and the cabinet.

The USA operates a district voting system. There is a flawed system for choosing the president,

²⁶ Colignatus, "Definition & Reality in the General Theory of Political Economy", 2011, Samuel van Houten Society, <https://thomascool.eu/Papers/Drgtpe/Index.html>

²⁷ ABC, "Trump has tapped an unprecedented 13 billionaires for his administration. Here's who they are", <https://abcnews.go.com/US/trump-tapped-unprecedented-13-billionaires-top-administration-roles/story?id=116872968>

²⁸ News Hour, "The architects of Trump's policies", 2025-04-05,

²⁹ Colignatus, "Billionaire libertarians want to buy up Russia", <https://boycottholland.wordpress.com/2025/03/22/billionaire-libertarians-want-to-buy-up-russia/>

³⁰ Dutch: <https://thomascool.eu/Thomas/Nederlands/Politiek/Artikelen/SociaalLiberalisme.html>

³¹ Hunter Savery and Daniel Hillburn, "", Roll Call 2025-03-18, <https://rollcall.com/2025/03/18/house-majority-rules-when-a-calendar-day-isnt-what-it-seems/>

see for example the choice in 2000 of Bush, Gore and Nader, with Nader taking votes from Gore without e.g. a second round. In 2024, Trump had just slightly less than 50% of all votes cast, and a second round would have allowed more voters to make themselves heard. The current election took place under the flawed system. Under a correct system, the result could have been different (and instant run-off has its problems too). Problems also exist in voter registration. Journalist Greg Palast (2025) points to manipulations that currently remain unexamined.³²

The UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 21 sub 1, gives the right to elect a representative. This right is respected only by equal or proportional representation, where voters give mandates to representatives of their own choice. In a system with districts, the law may stipulate that the winner of a district is also the “representative”, but this is an abuse of law. Slavery once was legal too. It is called “human rights” and not “district rights”. Many voters did not vote for the winner, and thus there is no representation in the actual political sense of giving a mandate by the voter to his or her representative. The USA, UK and France are in violation of this human right. The district voting system is a constant source of polarisation, lying and hate speech, lame public policies, mangled civil service, with inequality and worse social services and education. It should be emphasized that there is thus effectively a lack of democratic mandate for Trump and this Congress, see Colignatus (2025b).³³

The “political science on electoral systems” is not a science

For Brexit, I discussed that it had an underlying cause in confusion, see Colignatus³⁴ and Dutch (2018a).³⁵ The question in the referendum did not meet the minimum requirements for a statistical survey. Voters were forced to let their gut speak on issues that were better dealt with in the House of Commons. Unfortunately, the British have a district voting system, which polarised the country, so that frightened politicians passed the buck to the populist palliative of the referendum. The main problem appeared to be political science on electoral systems, with the choice between district representation (DR) or equal or proportional representation (EPR).

³² Palast, “Trump Lost. Vote Suppression Won,” 2025-01-24. <https://www.gregpalast.com/trump-lost-vote-suppression-won/>

³³ Colignatus, “Getting democracy in EU, USA, Russia and China”, <https://boycottholland.wordpress.com/2025/03/09/getting-democracy-in-eu-usa-russia-and-china/>

³⁴ Colignatus, more years, <https://boycottholland.wordpress.com/?s=Brexit>

³⁵ Colignatus (2018a), “Brexit heeft een onderliggende oorzaak in verwarring”, <https://www.mejudice.nl/artikelen/detail/brexit-heeft-een-onderliggende-oorzaak-in-verwarring>

I wrote:

“This “political science on electoral systems” is no science, like physics or econometrics, but is still in the preliminary stage of the humanities, where traditional thinking and terminology from the colloquial language are used instead of sharp definitions and hard data.”

The proof of the above is given by Colignatus (2018d).³⁶ An accessible discussion is in Colignatus (2018e).³⁷ I proposed the solution approach of a buddy system of “political scientists” and real scientists, see Colignatus (2020b).³⁸ It remains a tough problem. Such “political scientists” recently withheld information to Dutch parliament, and by this act they are causing a possible deterioration of Dutch democracy, see **Appendix 3**.

The real problems are Ukraine and this “political science”

The advice is to focus on the really relevant problems. The EU’s relevant strategic problems, besides the climate crisis, are, firstly, the war in Ukraine because of the risk of the use of nuclear weapons and, secondly, to persuade countries that have a district electoral system, such as the USA and the UK, to abandon the district system and move, like Sweden and the Netherlands in the early 1900s, to equal or proportional representation.

After WW1, the USA held off the League of Nations, depriving the world of a tool to counter rising fascism and WW2. The Weimar Republic had a constitution that had equal or proportional representation partly because of Max Weber. With a district system, Hitler would have come to power much sooner. With the *Preußenschlag* and especially the fire in the *Reichstag*, Hitler was able to concoct a lie to arrest communist MPs and thus gain a majority, see Boissoneault (2017).³⁹ In the 1930s-1940s, Huey Long could have replaced FDR with similar demagoguery like Hitler - but fortunately FDR stopped him, see Kennedy (1999).⁴⁰ France also had proportional

³⁶ Colignatus (2018d), “One woman, one vote. Though not in the USA, UK and France”, <https://mpra.ub.uni-muenchen.de/84482/>

³⁷ Colignatus (2018e), <https://boycottholland.wordpress.com/2018/11/24/comparing-with-a-different-democracy/>

³⁸ Colignatus (2020b), “A Buddy-system of Physicists and Political Scientists”, <https://engage.aps.org/fps/resources/newsletters/newsletter-archives/january-2020>

³⁹ Lorraine Boissoneault, “The True Story of the Reichstag Fire and the Nazi Rise to Power”, Smithsonian Magazine 2017-02-21, <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/true-story-reichstag-fire-and-nazis-rise-power-180962240/>

⁴⁰ David M. Kennedy, “Freedom from Fear. The American People in Depression and War, 1929-1945”, OUP 1999

representation in 1919, ⁴¹ this was replaced by a district system shortly after 1945 in favour of De Gaulle, see Alexander (2004). ⁴² Macron fortunately wants to restore some proportionality. It is to be hoped that France sets a good example here and that the UK also adopts this. Starmer is caught between Brexit and Trump, and better reforms the electoral system first.

The correct path is through science, e.g. the *International Science Council*. It is recommended that the EU promotes that scientists internationally study the malpractice regarding the “*political science on electoral systems*”, ⁴³ logically confirm my diagnosis, and inform the public so that the electoral system can be changed (which can be done without changing the US Constitution) and so that new elections are needed with equal or proportional representation. ⁴⁴ For US voters, that message will have to come from their own Academies and universities. These can be invited to do so by their EU counterparts. France and the UK could also lead by example, by adjusting their own systems as well. Germany should abolish the electoral threshold, which now keeps 10% of voters out of the Bundestag. Countries should of course decide for themselves what to do, but it is against the integrity of science to deprive them of the right information.

The role of mathematics education

Sergey Karaganov wants to crush the moral spine of Western elites. ⁴⁵ I can go along to this extent, in that I can observe that much research in the humanities, at least as far as I have been able to check, suffers from a sound base in logic, math, statistics, and scientific methodology. Students should first get a BSc in some proper science before proceeding in the humanities. A problem is that mathematicians are trained for abstraction, and when they meet real life pupils, then they experience cognitive dissonance, and stick to the crooked way how math developed historically. Instead, math should be clear from itself. Didactics or MathEd can be greatly improved, ⁴⁶ see also the review by Gill (2012). ⁴⁷ Pupils are burdened needless, and many proceed in life with impaired thinking. This calls for a reform of math education from early life. It appears though that there are math wars, again by “researchers”

⁴¹ <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1945731>

⁴² Alexander (2004), “France: Reform-mongering Between Majority Runoff and Proportionality”. In: Colomer, J.M. (eds) “The Handbook of Electoral System Choice”, Palgrave Macmillan, London.
https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230522749_10

⁴³ Colignatus (2018d), <https://mpira.ub.uni-muenchen.de/84482/>

⁴⁴ <https://boycottholland.wordpress.com/2024/10/07/confusion-in-the-usa-continued/>

⁴⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sergey_Karaganov

⁴⁶ Colignatus (2011, 2015) “Elegance with substance”, 2nd edition, <https://zenodo.org/records/291974>

⁴⁷ Richard Gill (2012), review of EwS and CotP, p66, <http://www.nieuwarchief.nl/serie5/pdf/naw5-2012-13-1-064.pdf>

without proper scientific training, see Colignatus (2018c).⁴⁸

Rise and fall of empires

Historian Harrison (2022)⁴⁹ discusses the rise and fall of empires, concluding (translated into Dutch p368 and this now into English):

“Something we can say with certainty is that all empires are ultimately based on military power and the will to use it to expand and consolidate an empire. This is true whether it is a large connected empire, like the Mongol Empire, or a fragmented conglomeration of realms, like the British one. Without military power, all superpowers collapse, even the culturally and economically successful ones. (...) So the most important imperial lesson of history is that the great powers must be able to adapt to the military conditions that are decisive in any given situation. Military power must keep pace with technology and with the collective bellicose potential of neighbouring countries. It matters little whether emperors and sultans wallow in excesses of decadence and squander taxpayers’ money on palaces and mausoleums if, at the same time, they have at their disposal a large and loyal army and an up-to-date arsenal of weapons. (...) The majority of all fallen empires only went down, as far as the sources allow us to judge, because the enemies were stronger.”

This does not bode well for the EU. The USA promised NATO partners after 1945 that the USA would provide the nuclear shield. On balance, the USA paid those partners not to develop nuclear weapons themselves, just as farmers can be paid not to grow maize, see Robben (2025).⁵⁰ Decolonisation gave US businesses ample access to raw materials, possibly bribing local elites. The USA built its empire and presented itself as the world’s policeman. Trump wants the world to begin paying for this police, while at the same time this police is giving Ukraine to Putin - which is a violation of the international rule of law because Ukrainian sovereignty and borders are no longer respected, see Minister Veldkamp (2025)⁵¹ and Patrick (2025).⁵²

⁴⁸ Colignatus (2018c) “The Math War between traditional and “realistic” mathematics education and its research”, <https://mpira.ub.uni-muenchen.de/88810/>

⁴⁹ Dick Harrison, translated title: “Fallen empires”, 2022, Omnibook 2024

⁵⁰ Robben (2025), “How the U.S. Kept Europe’s Armies Small — On Purpose”, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pYFpiwyTXcU>

⁵¹ Minister Veldkamp 2025-03-07: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cqSYOioT7QE>

⁵² Patrick, “The Death of the World America Made. Donald Trump’s war on multilateralism is misguided and dangerous,” 2025-02-19. <https://carnegieendowment.org/emissary/2025/02/trump-executive-order-treaties-organizations?lang=en>

After the deliberate humiliation of Zelenskyy at the White House on 2025-02-28, the world was shocked. The EU's EUR 800 bn package and Germany's EUR 500 bn budget increase came quickly. Trump's brief withholding of operational support to the Ukrainian military on 2025-03-05 was a second shock, and many considered it a betrayal.⁵³ Anyone who gives in to such a bully and traitor apparently wishes to become a doormat.

Trump's action is doubly irrational and undemocratic. Correcting the mistake with regard to the democratic mandate also offers a path to resolution, see Colignatus (2025b) op. cit.

Harrison on the new Russian empire under Putin

The weakness of Harrison's book is that he does not give a history of the international rule based system, as the current superpowers still sit on the UN Security Council. His book ends in 2022 just when things get exciting. We can find some of his views from Swedish, with then Google Translate into English.⁵⁴ Harrison expects skirmishes to continue until the end of Putin's life, with inexhaustible cannon fodder. In a few points:

- "But the United States lacked the economic and military potential to endure in the long term. The new American empire that began under George W. Bush was a short-term triumph."
- "As long as Putin leads Russia, the Russian Empire will continue to be a warring, dangerous empire."
- "No one in NATO - certainly not the United States - would dare to intervene with anything other than possibly arms deliveries in Ukraine. Putin saw this nakedness, a chance to recreate a Russian empire, and he took it. Putin acted in accordance with a long Russian tradition."
- "Dick Harrison, however, doubts that Putin would dare to carry out an attack on Northern Europe."
- "If Russia falls now, at least it won't fall for reasons like the last few times. But there is a small Achilles heel and that is Putin himself. "

⁵³ Iva Venneman, translated title, "US no longer sharing intelligence with Ukraine: 'Nothing but a blackmail tool', de Volkskrant 2025-03-05

⁵⁴ Jessica Morney 2024-05-22 <https://yle.fi/a/7-10057106>

Background to the war in Ukraine, and the mistake of Ukraine joining NATO

In 1989-1990, G.H.W. Bush and Baker, Kohl and Genscher, and Gorbachev and Shevardnadze negotiated about the German reunification. If the DDR joined the BRD, then NATO would expand eastward.⁵⁵ The best evaluation is by Pavel Palazhchenko (2019),⁵⁶ Gorbachev's interpreter. On page 457:

"Therefore, the two things – Gorbachev's defense of his foreign policy decisions during the final years of the Soviet Union and his evaluation of the subsequent NATO enlargement process and Russia's response to it – should be treated separately, instead of being conflated as is often done in by interviewers and commentators."

In steps:

1. Page 455 cites Baker to Gorbachev on 1990-02-09:

*"We understand that it is important not only for the Soviet Union but also for other European countries to have **guarantees** that if the United States continues to be present in Germany within the framework of NATO, there will be no expansion of NATO jurisdiction or military presence one inch in the Eastern direction."* [My emphasis / TC]

2. The context concerned German reunification, while the Warsaw pact still existed.
 - a. Baker's statement should be taken within this context.
 - b. Both the reunification and his words reflect a spirit of détente.
 - c. The *legal* result was the 2+4 agreement.⁵⁷
 - d. On *content* and legally, however, the USSR blocked nuclear arms and non-German troops from moving eastward onto the DDR territory, which was the **guarantee** that Baker spoke about.
 - i. Today, NATO can place nuclear arms and move non-German troops from the Rhine to the border of Belarus, except for the area of the former DDR. This is not because of vehement nazis in that area, requiring special treatment, but because of the historical **guarantee**.
 - ii. This blocking for Germany 1990 indicates that the USSR later wanted to block other movements even further eastward.
 - iii. This blocking for Germany also forms a legal **precedent**.

⁵⁵ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Controversy_regarding_the_legitimacy_of_eastward_NATO_expansion

⁵⁶ Pavel Palazhchenko (2019), "Mikhail Gorbachev and the NATO Enlargement Debate: Then and Now", chapter 19 in D.S. Hamilton & K. Spohr eds. "Exiting the Cold War, Entering a New World", Washington, DC: Foreign Policy Institute/Henry A. Kissinger Center for Global Affairs, Johns Hopkins University SAIS 2019, <https://transatlanticrelations.org/publications/exiting-the-cold-war-entering-a-new-world/> (download the full book there or chapter 19: <https://transatlanticrelations.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/19-Palazhchenko.pdf>)

⁵⁷ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treaty_on_the_Final_Settlement_with_Respect_to_Germany

3. Here is another clash of geopolitical thinking and international law.

Palazhchenko p458 quotes Gorbachev:

"Proposing then ... some kind of a "legally binding agreement" on NATO's non-extension to Eastern Europe, as my critics are now demanding in hindsight, would have been absurd and ludicrous. We would have been accused of ruining the Warsaw Treaty with our own hands."

4. After the German reunification, the notion of eastward expansions came up again.

Palazhchenko p458 quotes Gorbachev:

"Russia was fully entitled to demand observance not just of the letter but also of the spirit of those agreements. The decision, taken a few years later, to enlarge NATO was a step toward undermining trust that had emerged in the process of ending the Cold War. Russia had to draw appropriate conclusions from that."

5. See also Gorbachev in 2009: ⁵⁸

"Former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev has criticized NATO's eastward expansion and the failure by Western powers to keep their promise not to deploy military bases near Russia's borders. Gorbachev said in an interview with Germany's Bild newspaper published on Thursday that Western Germany, the United States and other powers had pledged after Germany's reunification in 1990 that "NATO would not move a centimeter to the east." Gorbachev said the Americans had failed to fulfill the promise and the Germans had also turned a blind eye."

The latter does not distinguish sharply enough between "Western Germany before" and "BRD after" the reunification. It validly refers to the **precedent** established in 1990.

Jack Matlock, Reagan's assistant in earlier negotiations with Gorbachev, confirms this reading of the situation, see Diesen (2025). ⁵⁹ There is S.E. Sarotte 2021 ⁶⁰ but she might miss out on what Palazhchenko highlights. Steven Pifer (2014) misrepresents the issue, see **Appendix 5**.

The very fact that the BRD cannot legally move nuclear arms and non-German troops onto the area of the former DDR, is a **precedent** that some form of assurance has been given. It need not be unreasonable to expect more. When Putin refers to a broken promise then this isn't without content.

Putin refers to the broken assurance as his *casus belli*. With the framework of Mutually Assured

⁵⁸ In 2009: https://www.gorby.ru/en/presscenter/publication/show_26613/

⁵⁹ Glenn Diesen "Interview with Ambassador Jack Matlock. Ending the Cold War & Instigating a New Cold War", 2025-03-27. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QPp-ZpyDXdk>

⁶⁰ S.E. Sarotte (2021), "Not one inch", Yale, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Not_One_Inch

Destruction (MAD) this suffices.

Putin complicates the issue by referring to the precedent and the spirit of the negotiations on the German Reunification. He uses the term “promise” and confuses “Germany before” and “Germany after” reunification. Whatever one may think about an underlying motive to do so, it is still wise to accept the **precedent** given by the 2+4 treaty, so that the truth cannot be used against you, even if it would only be used as a pretext.

A lot can be said about Russian propaganda, see Elvira Bary (2025a),⁶¹ but see also (2025b).⁶² Sadly, it must be observed that the West can do such stuff too. G.W. Bush invented weapons of mass destruction as an excuse to invade Iraq and get the oil. Bush jr in 2001 unilaterally ended the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABTM) with the “excuse” of terrorism. Bush jr pledged in Bucharest in 2008 that Ukraine could join NATO in due course, and thus broke the spirit of the détente and deal made by his father.

The 2008 NATO Secretary-General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer indicates that Putin warned him - but the SG did nothing about it. In 2018 he acknowledged that NATO’s commitment should not have been made, see Dutch Nieuwsuur (2018).⁶³ Remarkably, he holds that Putin became more “radical” thereafter, while a shopkeeper does not become more “radical” when he gives you a slap on the wrist when you take money from the till.

Bush jr’s mistake is underlined by geopolitical analyst John Mearsheimer (2014),^{64 65} and by economist Jeffrey Sachs.^{66 67} Mearsheimer’s analysis belongs to geopolitics 101 and is a criticism of US policy making by the US State Department and CIA. Mearsheimer is clear about his target: “my claims about the West’s role”.⁶⁸ However, some authors depict this as fellow-traveling with Russia. This is a category mistake. This is like turning a protest against police brutality into fellow-traveling with criminals, see **Appendix 4**. Mearsheimer does not hold that Russia would be justified under international law. Indeed, lawyer Putin uses the term “special military operation”

⁶¹ Elviray Bary, “Inside Russia’s propaganda machine”, 2025-02-24, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kyXfbM-kTP8>

⁶² Elvira Bary, “The secret history that explains modern Russia”, 2025-04-06, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qa67P4rNqBg>

⁶³ <https://nos.nl/nieuwsuur/artikel/2210939-de-hoop-scheffer-poetin-werd-radicaler-door-navo>

⁶⁴ Mearsheimer (2014), “Why the Ukraine Crisis Is the West’s Fault: The Liberal Delusions That Provoked Putin”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 93, No. 5 (sept/oct), pp. 77-84, 85-89 (13 pages) <https://www.mearsheimer.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Why-the-Ukraine-Crisis-Is.pdf>

⁶⁵ <https://www.youtube.com/shorts/iXMCgBpaKVg?feature=share>

⁶⁶ <https://www.jeffsachs.org/>

⁶⁷ Sachs, lecture to EU Parliament, 2025-03-01. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tgJfTU809qY>

⁶⁸ <https://www.mearsheimer.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Moscows-Choice.pdf>

– which is an abuse of law on the part of Russia.

McFaul (2014)⁶⁹ responded that there are more factors than only the “promise” on NATO. This is distractive, for all authors hold that there are more factors, while the point of discussion is precisely the **precedent** by NATO. McFaul argues that Russia did not adequately protest in 1999-2014 so that the USA would be left in the dark about its concerns. Russia did not use force in the Ukraine before 2014, and thus, according to McFaul, would not be sincere when it invaded the Crimea. He sees a change of heart and hidden intentions, likely within Russian politics. This criticism on Mearsheimer is factually incorrect about the protest. It is disingenuous that only a direct use of force in 2008 would be an adequate signal. McFaul’s failed reply to Mearsheimer confirms the diagnosis on the failure and irresponsibility of US policy making.

There is criticism on Sachs’s analysis, see Gorodnichenko et al. (2023),⁷⁰ but they do not properly handle the two dimensions of the international legal order versus geopolitics. Geopolitical analysis suffers from some professional characteristics: the number of victims might not matter, and, in order to be able to negotiate with dictators and war criminals, one does not insult them. Thus, geopolitical texts seem awkward for readers who are used to the rule of law. For these readers there is no alternative but to extend their horizon. When Russia did not protest when Sweden and Finland joined NATO, there the critics hold that Russia need not be believed about its argument on Ukraine joining NATO: however it is more likely that Russia simply did not take the effort of protesting again since it already had taken a stand. For a superpower it might also seem weak when it continuously protests without doing something.

In US rhetorics like by McFaul, this crucial American mistake disappears. Such US authors have always been contesting what Putin said about this, until Trump came to his policy change - but with the wrong reasons, and without acknowledging that Bush jr was the source of these problems. It is important for the EU to engage with the American people and to remind them of Bush jr’s mistaken promise that Ukraine could join NATO, which ultimately enticed Ukraine to wage a proxy war for the benefit of the Americans. It is treacherous to first entice a country to fight for you and then drop it, when you see the cost of support rising, and when you want to gain access to the minerals of Eurasia. (It is not a fair game of chess. A saying is: Americans play

⁶⁹ McFaul (2014), “Faulty Powers: Who Started the Ukraine Crisis? Moscow’s Choice”, *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 93, No. 6 (Nov/Dec), pp. 167-178 (12 pages), <https://www.jstor.org/stable/24483933>. Rather see both his text and the rejoinder by Mearsheimer: <https://www.mearsheimer.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Moscows-Choice.pdf>

⁷⁰ Gorodnichenko et al. (2023), “Open letter to Jeffrey Sachs on his position regarding Russian war on Ukraine”, <https://voxukraine.org/en/open-letter-to-jeffrey-sachs>

poker, Europeans chess, and Chinese go.)

Jeffrey Sachs points out that for decades the CIA was given far too little oversight, pursuing too many activities of its own for the benefit of an American empire.⁷¹ In this respect, the world is mostly a victim of poor oversight of the US State Department and the CIA. Surely some mechanism must be found such that also the EU can verify that the CIA is better controlled. At the same time, Putin has waged a very brutal war, which makes finding a solution very difficult.

China and the rule based world

This analysis originated before president Trump announced the stiff tariffs in the Rose Garden on 2025-04-03 and the subsequent “90-day pause” on 2025-04-09. The immediate uniform tariff of 10% and only high mutual tariffs with China requires a comment.

A context here is the Mahbubani (2015)⁷² interview with Lee Kuan Yew (LKY) on 2015-03-27, in particular minutes 30-40. LKY points to revanchist feelings in China following the opium war of 1856 and the slow recovery, giving rise to Sun Yat-sen. China had vehement internal problems with the civil war, the Great Leap Forward 1958-1962 and the Cultural Revolution 1966-1978 till the rise of Deng Xiaoping. The generation of Xi Jinping has a memory of these vehement internal sufferings and opted for a peaceful recovery, with the astounding results that we see now. LKY warns that grandchildren who grew up with much welfare may not listen to their grandparents, and may fall for revanchism. It suffices to respect China, but it is always useful to be reminded what the consequences of disrespect can be.

When the EU upholds the world of international law, and observes that Trump deviates from it, then it would be proper for the EU to be in solidarity with China, and to denounce the tariffs on China and take appropriate action, for example by cushioning the blows. If the EU allows Trump to “divide and conquer” then the bullying isn’t countered, and it becomes only the question who will be the next victim, like the EU itself. The EU cannot seriously say to China that the future lies in the rule based world, when the EU allows the USA to treat China like this. To allow the USA to treat China like this, will foster the revanchism; and to stand with China united against the bullying would be an act of hope against revanchism. Also Japan and ASEAN are advised to stand with China. Potentially Trump might retaliate resentfully by threatening to

⁷¹ Interview with Aaron Good. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jXvuOG33zLs>

⁷² Mahbubani (2015), “LKY School 5th anniversary Q&A session with Mr Lee Kuan Yew”, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dYBAHLSN_I

reduce the military support for say Japan, but it would be obvious that it would not be to the advantage of the USA that Japan would become a vassal of China. With the world united with China, the USA should be forced to accept that it is inadmissible that Trump breached the rule based order by not submitting his case to the WTO.

China's path towards democracy

China is ruled undemocratically by the CCP. Relevant is this interview by Robinson (2025) ⁷³ with Dikötter. Apparently, the gap between coastal and land-locked China can be seen as a form of apartheid. Dikötter's rule of thumb is that 25% of China might fear an uprising by 75% of China. His advised policy is a Kennan style of containment, with the hope that the CCP rule collapses due to internal forces like the USSR. This suggestion is less attractive, given what happened following the collapse of the USSR, and the threat of the use of nuclear arms nowadays. Colignatus (2025b) op.cit. thus developed the following suggestion. Obviously China would develop its own path in balancing Confucius (order) and Laozi (liberty) but after the fateful choice of Marxism it would be impetuous and un-Confucian to throw out all Western thought, and it would be advisable to look at Western nations that developed systems of rules based liberal democracy that worked out much better than the USA.

China has five administrative levels of local government: *"the provincial (province, autonomous region, municipality, and special administrative region), prefecture, county, township, and village"*. ⁷⁴ Let each level take 4 years to start practicing democracy. Thus the village (neighbourhood) starts for 1-4 years and continues henceforth. The township joins in for 5-8+, the county for 9-12+, the prefecture for 13-16+ and the province for 17-20+. Given the complexity of provinces, it could be advisable to have another term of four years before the step to the national level is made. Then from year 25 onwards there can be an elected parliament, that can draw upon parties and candidates that have gained experience in the workings of democracy for 24 years at the local levels.

While building up democracy from the bottom up, this is accompanied with the rule of law and freedom of the press relevant for those levels, while only for the national level from year 25 onwards. At the same time the local levels should have their Economic Courts, and from the start the Economic Supreme Court at the national level for the required integration.

⁷³ Robinson (2025), Interview with Frank Dikötter, "Empire of Illusion: Frank Dikötter on Why China Isn't a Superpower", <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=goEU7C1xmis>

⁷⁴ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Administrative_divisions_of_China

The power of this suggestion is that this path can be announced as an iron clad plan that the CCP will adhere to for the next 25 years, as a contract between the party and the population. When all can expect what is going to happen within this period, and when observed or supposed infringements can be discussed in the local press and submitted to the local courts, then uncertainties can be managed.

The downside of this proposal is that there will still be the dictatorship by the CCP at the national and some local levels for the next 25 years. However, the example of the collapse of the USSR (by Gorbachev in order to prevent a civil war) shows that a sudden change may not work out well. A suggestion is that the CCP could opt to split itself in a part that partakes in this process of democratisation and a part that does not partake in the local elections but that supervises the process and maintains national security. Public criticism about the “democratising communist part” (or parts) then would not affect the supervising part. Eventually, the supervising part would present a path to end the supervision and to relay the maintenance of national security to the elected government. This is more than 25 years in the future and details could be announced some years in advance too.

Tariffs and the price of carbon

Warnings about global warming have been unheeded for a long time. The price of carbon was too low to develop new technologies. Carbon taxes for a single country were economically suicidal. When Western governments could no longer avoid the issue, lobbyists caused systems of emission trading, with grandfather rights for the worst pollutants. Instead, many if not most economists advise to have a carbon tax, and compensate low incomes for their living cost of carbon. For countries rising from poverty the use of carbon seemed unavoidable. This was the case for China and Russia too for a long while. A tariff on Chinese products for their carbon content would make a good case in the WTO. Instead, technologies are being developed and the world can levy a carbon tax, as is urgently required against climate change. Also low income countries better switch to subsidies for non-carbon.

Conclusion

This paper concentrated on talks between the EU, China and Russia for a peace in Ukraine as a free nation, while containing Trump’s trade war. This would be feasible looking at the internal costs and benefits of these agents themselves. More conclusions are in the abstract and the Introduction.

Appendix 1. The mission of IMF and WB includes environmental sustainability

Here are Scott Bessent's remarks on the "policy creep" at IMF and World Bank, and the requirement by the Trump administration that climate change topics are removed from their agenda.⁷⁵

However, environmental sustainability is part and parcel of the missions of IMF and WB. Their work depends much upon the notion of national income of GDP.

Nobel Prize economist John Hicks gave the accounting definition that income leaves capital intact. Consuming one's capital does not count as earning income. Nobel Prize economist Jan Tinbergen and Roefie Hueting (1991) clarified that the calculation of GDP is based upon an assumption, namely working markets.⁷⁶ It is reasonable to also make another assumption, namely that some markets do not work properly, notably on environmental sustainability. With a model exercise that imposes conditions, a measure of environmental sustainable national income eSNI can be calculated. Calculating eSNI it is not too difficult, since the basic material already is collected, and many models have already been developed. This is developed by Hueting & De Boer (2019).⁷⁷ This is an excellent review of the book,⁷⁸ on the website of Herman Daly.

The difference $e\Delta = \text{GDP} - \text{eSNI}$ gives the distance towards environmental sustainability.

Financiers and investors can use this key information to check whether investments will be supporting or reducing environmental sustainability.

Thus, climate change properly belongs to economics and finance, and the missions of IMF and WB.

What is happening is that the Central Statistical Bureaux of the world are failing to incorporate eSNI in their reporting. They want to report on "facts" without accepting that the notion of GDP is no fact at all but a compound indicator based upon assumptions within economic theory.

There has been political opposition against information about the environment. Such policy makers have been listening selectively to traditionalist statisticians who lost track of economic theory, and have been financing only those.

⁷⁵ Scott Bessent (2025) <https://home.treasury.gov/news/press-releases/sb0094> and video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NsyNHd5Ce3c>

⁷⁶ Tinbergen & Hueting, <https://esni-hueting.info/EN/Publications/1991-Tinbergen-Hueting-GNP-and-market-prices.pdf>

⁷⁷ <https://esni-hueting.info/EN/NA-eSNI/index.html> (PDF online)

⁷⁸ <https://steadystate.org/book-review-national-accounts-and-environmentally-sustainable-national-income-by-roefie-hueting-and-bart-de-boer/>

Colignatus (2020c) ⁷⁹ discusses the relation to "ecological services".

Colignatus (2020d) ⁸⁰ discusses the advance and resistance w.r.t. the theory of Tinbergen and Hueting (draft).

CBS Statistics Netherlands had been governed in the past by a Statistical Council that allowed diverse input and control by a research community. In the ordeal of "Greek statistics" the EU was induced, basically only to protect the presumed immaculate head of ELstat, to decree that all authority in EU statistical bureaux be given to a single head in each bureau. Thus also the Dutch better governance structure was demolished, and it now allows more political control over the production of national statistics, see Colignatus (2020e). ⁸¹

PM. Bessent also remarks: "Related to this subject, I wish to send a strong message about procurement policies as regards Ukraine: No one who financed or supplied the Russian war machine will be eligible for funds earmarked for Ukraine's reconstruction." This may seem like taking a stand, but the USA should do much more, e.g. reform its electoral system.

Appendix 2. Impeachment of Trump and Vance

Trump's 2nd impeachment was on the 2021-01-06 uprising. The trial likely was deficient. When the Senate voted on 2021-02-13, Trump already had been replaced by Biden, and senators might have differed in views on the relevance of the case. This deficiency could be remedied by reopening the case.

Reopening differs from *ne bis idem*. The latter is a notion in common law, but the Congressional handling of impeachment on "treason, bribery or other high crimes and misdemeanors" concerns the management of the state.

"Whereas judicial precedent drives the prevailing understanding of many provisions of the Constitution, impeachment is essentially a political process that is largely unreviewable by the Judicial Branch. As such, the historical practice of impeachment proceedings, rather than judicial decisions, informs our understanding of the Constitution's meaning in this area." ⁸²

New evidence about 2021-01-06 was recovered in the later hearings in the House. ⁸³

New evidence has been provided by the pardoning by Trump of the insurrectionists. Trump has the right to pardon, which means that recipients cannot be touched, but there still is

⁷⁹ <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S221204162030036X>

⁸⁰ <https://thomascool.eu/Papers/THAENAES/Index.html>

⁸¹ <https://thomascool.eu/Papers/FT&NASL/Index.html>

⁸² https://constitution.congress.gov/browse/essay/artII-S4-4-1/ALDE_00000690/

⁸³ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Public_hearings_of_the_United_States_House_Select_Committee_on_the_January_6_Attack

Trump's given reason for the pardons, namely "ends a grave national injustice".⁸⁴ Congress can have a view and verdict about this reason too. Pardoning an insurrectionist is also supporting the insurrection. Since the US already has a system for the rule of law w.r.t. justice and injustice, the presidential second-guessing of "injustice" for nearly 1600 cases amounts to undermining the workings of the independent judicial branch, and should not be seen as the execution of clemency but can only be seen as part of the insurrection.

Similarly for impeaching Vance now too, who supported many such pardons.

The \$Trump crypto currency is a form of bribery. There are other questions about the finances.⁸⁵

Congress can also consider that Trump and Vance declared an emergency where there was none, and perhaps also subsumed decisions on tariffs, that would not fall under such emergency law. Apparently Congress allowed the administration to proceed, but it may well be that legislators were afraid of blocking Trump on tariffs because he might want to take revenge. When Trump and Vance can be removed by impeachment, then legislators may feel safe that the threat of personal repercussions can be mitigated.

PM. The governor of California has started a lawsuit against abusing the emergency law.⁸⁶ This will most likely fail since the supervision of such execution is up to Congress.

It must also be mentioned that Trump in 2025 wanted an advice on using the 1807 insurrection act for security on the southern border.⁸⁷ Trump already considered this law in his first term also w.r.t. 2021-01-06, so that there have been suggestions for making the law more robust against abuse.⁸⁸ Congress can also ponder that the president considered this law while there was no ground to do so – except for creating an uprising himself.

PM 1. The immunity by the Supreme Court applies to criminal law while executing the office.⁸⁹ This does not apply to treason or the civil abuse of emergency law when there is no emergency.

⁸⁴ <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/granting-pardons-and-commutation-of-sentences-for-certain-offenses-relating-to-the-events-at-or-near-the-united-states-capitol-on-january-6-2021/>

⁸⁵ <https://apnews.com/article/donald-trump-business-ethics-white-paper-foreign-deals-golf-hotels-260a4343d52bb21614f04cfdd7fd19a>

⁸⁶ <https://www.gov.ca.gov/2025/04/16/governor-newsom-files-lawsuit-to-end-president-trumps-tariffs/>

⁸⁷ <https://edition.cnn.com/2025/04/18/politics/pentagon-dhs-wont-recommend-insurrection-act/index.html>

⁸⁸ <https://www.brennancenter.org/our-work/analysis-opinion/how-fix-insurrection-act>

⁸⁹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trump_v._United_States

PM 2. Foreign observers in 2025 have pointed to Trump's treason ⁹⁰ and economic and political terrorism. ⁹¹ Foreign critique on Trump and Vance might be counterproductive. However, the USA is much in chaos now and could be served by clarity from stable friends from abroad.

Appendix 3. Breach of science within this political science in the Netherlands

In MeJudice 2018 about referenda like Brexit, ⁹² I also pointed to the interim report of the Dutch State Committee on the Parliamentary System, also known as the Remkes Committee. I wrote:

"In the political science literature, there is the following confusion about this (see Colignatus, 2018b). [⁹³] The Ostrogorski Paradox holds that a parliamentary majority can differ from a majority in the electorate (see Groenewegen, 2009). One suggestion among political scientists is that this can be solved with referendums (see State Commission on the Parliamentary System, 2018). However, this forgets Arrow's Paradox, which holds that more than three options can lead to cycles. The correct diagnosis is that neglected majorities can be expressed through competition in the entry of new parties. For that, EPR is better than DR. Democracy always comes with paradoxes, but a paradox is only a seeming contradiction. "

Their final report came out in December 2018. ⁹⁴ Using the search function, one can check that the Ostrogorski paradox (in favour of the referendum) is often mentioned but Arrow's theorem (in favour of proportional representation) is not mentioned at all. Parliament is then misinformed. Political scientists Ruud Koole and Tom van der Meer have infringed on science and advice to parliament. I reiterated the warning regarding the Ostrogorski paradox and Arrow's theorem here in Dutch, see Colignatus (2020a). ⁹⁵ The Lower House passed a bill for a corrective referendum, and this is now before the Senate. What is geopolitically relevant here, with regard to the failure of this component in political science and the manipulation by political scientists, is now also directly related to a possible deterioration of Dutch democracy.

⁹⁰ Dick Berlijn 2025-03-07 <https://x.com/DickBerlijn/status/1898089987138003154>

⁹¹ Nout Wellink 2025-04-27 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GxI73dHNdVM>

⁹² <https://www.mejudice.nl/artikelen/detail/brexit-heeft-een-onderliggende-oorzaak-in-verwarring>

⁹³ Colignatus, "Democratie met en door Wetenschap ", 2018b.

<https://thomascool.eu/Papers/DMDW/Index.html>

⁹⁴ State Commission on the Parliamentary System, December 2018, "Low thresholds, high dykes",

<https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/blg-867564.pdf>

⁹⁵ Colignatus (2020a), "The Ostrogorski paradox and the fallacy of the referendum", 2020-01-04.

<https://boycottholland.wordpress.com/2020/01/04/de-ostrogorski-paradox-en-de-dwaling-van-het-referendum/>

Appendix 4. A guide for non-fellow-travelers

Let us compare Mearsheimer's criticism of US policy making with the category mistake of interpreting this as fellow-traveling with Russia. There is the wider criticism of too little Congressional oversight of the US State Department, like on the Iran-Contra affair.

When a critic isn't a scientist, then this critic can indeed be a fellow-traveler. Use of correct criticism by a fellow-traveler does not imply that the criticism is invalid. The condition of being a scientist binds the criticism.

<i>Criticism by critic C</i>	<i>Category mistake on criticism</i>	<i>Correct for a scientist</i>
<i>Bush jr broke the spirit of the deal by Bush sr</i>	C is a fellow-traveler of Putin	C evaluates the facts impartially
<i>US State Dept and CIA have too little oversight</i>	C is a fellow-traveler of the enemies of the USA	C evaluates the facts impartially
<i>There is police brutality against X</i>	C is a fellow traveler of X, which is bad of C, if X is a criminal, and probably good of C, if X is innocent	C evaluates the facts impartially. This is good of C for all who are at risk of police brutality (you ?)

Appendix 5. A bit more about “not one inch east”

In a München speech, Putin (2007) ⁹⁶ quotes NATO chief Wörner (1990). ⁹⁷ The Wörner text was in the public domain compared to Baker's statement during the negotiations. A year later, in Bucharest 2008, Bush jr replied by promising Georgia and Ukraine that they could join NATO. Bush wanted that the Ukraine joined immediately, but Merkel and others opposed this, and all settled for some promise for some undetermined future. Putin was invited to the NATO gathering and he could express his opposition.

Putin's focus was on the security guarantee – and this point was valid, compare the Cuban Missile Crisis. Putin could have quoted Wörner on providing Russia with security guarantees, without mentioning details. If he had done so, we would not have needed this appendix on what Putin actually said.

⁹⁶ Putin (2007), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2007/02/12/AR2007021200555.html>

⁹⁷ Wörner (1990), https://www.nato.int/docu/speech/1990/s900517a_e.htm

Instead, Putin chose for a fuller quote, but did not delve into the distinction of the “BRD before” and the “BRD after” reunification. This makes his statement vulnerable for criticism. Putin namely stated:

*“And we have the right to ask: against whom is this [NATO] expansion intended? And what happened to the assurances our Western partners made after the dissolution of the Warsaw Pact? ... I would like to quote the speech of NATO General Secretary Mr. Woerner in Brussels on 17 May 1990. He said at the time that: ‘the fact that we are ready not to place a NATO army outside of **German territory** gives the Soviet Union a firm security guarantee.’ Where are these guarantees?”*

Putin can be criticised for a wrong citation, and Pifer (2014)⁹⁸ does so indeed (focusing on legalities instead of security). Namely:

- Wörner referred in **May** 1990 to the BRD, while the 2+4 treaty was signed only in **September** 1990 and came into effect in March 1991:
*“This will also be true of a united Germany in NATO. The very fact that we are ready not to deploy NATO troops beyond the territory of the **Federal Republic [likely BRD without DDR / TC]** gives the Soviet Union firm security guarantees.”*
- Putin 2007 has Woerner say: *“the fact that we are ready not to place a NATO army outside of **German** territory gives the Soviet Union a firm security guarantee”.*

When Putin took the Crimea in 2014, Steven Pifer (2014) rejected Putin’s justification as “anti-NATO spin”. By doing so, Pifer took a legal position, and threw Putin’s security concerns away as the baby with the bathwater. This is an unbalanced approach to international relations.

Pifer had some involvement in the preparation of policy making:

“What the Germans, Americans, British and French did agree to in 1990 was that there would be no deployment of non-German NATO forces on the territory of the former GDR. I was a deputy director on the State Department’s Soviet desk at the time, and that was certainly the point of Secretary James Baker’s discussions with Gorbachev and his foreign minister, Eduard Shevardnadze. In 1990, few gave the possibility of a broader NATO enlargement to the east any serious thought.”

Pifer (2014) argues that Gorbachev’s 2014 interview⁹⁹ disproves Putin’s argument. Pifer takes the *legal* position, and quotes Gorbachev out of context. Gorbachev’s interview in 2014 has his statement:

⁹⁸ <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/did-nato-promise-not-to-enlarge-gorbachev-says-no/>

⁹⁹ Korshunov 2014 for RBTH: “Mikhail Gorbachev: I am against all walls.”

https://www.rbth.com/international/2014/10/16/mikhail_gorbachev_i_am_against_all_walls_40673.html

“The topic of “NATO expansion” was not discussed at all, and it wasn’t brought up in those years.”

This statement refers to the **heading** of the topic. Presumably, the text of the interview was checked before, and the quotation marks must have been inserted deliberately. Palazhchenko provides the precision to understand this (see the body of the text above). The negotiations on German reunification logically implied an eastward expansion by NATO onto DDR land, and Baker’s phrase did bring it up, but not under the **heading** of the *later* expansion.

Pifer (2014) downplays Gorbachev’s view *on content* that the assurance provided by the 2+4 agreement on Germany is a **precedent**, and could be seen as indicative that, in the same spirit, similar assurances should have been provided against later expansions.

“To be sure, the former Soviet president criticized NATO enlargement and called it a violation of the spirit of the assurances given Moscow in 1990, but he made clear there was no promise regarding broader enlargement.”

After thus implying that a promise is only a promise when it is also a legal treaty, Pifer (2014) denounces Putin’s reference to assurances as propaganda. Thereby:

- Pifer downplays the legal notion that the 2+4 treaty in fact provides a **precedent** and an assurance, albeit not explicit for later expansions, but still as a precedent for the latter.
- He focuses not on Putin’s intention w.r.t. the assurances, but he focuses on Putin’s wrong substitution of “BRD before” by “BRD after”.
- He seems to imply that the US State Department’s Soviet Desk only runs a legal show and has no real interest in providing security assurances for peaceful co-existence. That is, while they had an interest in peaceful co-existence in 1990, they stopped doing this some time afterwards.