

The proxy war

The USA's aggression policy against Iran is to affect China and Russia in particular.
by Reinhart Brot

The Empire has not been defeated, but it is wavering and flapping. Now that the USA has long lost all moral legitimacy and has fallen behind in global strategy as a result of the rise of China and Russia, the last solution is brutal violence. This is to impose the will of the US establishment on still reluctant states. In addition to a massive weakening of the competing nations, Iran's control would have the invaluable advantage for Trump's America that it would have access to enormous oil reserves and a key region at the intersection between the hemispheres. The media, on the other hand, is helping to disguise the true intentions of the West's disastrous Iran policy.

China's economic and military rise and its alliance with Russia are a growing threat to the global dominance of the United States. Since Chinese growth depends to a large extent on the raw materials of the Middle East and can in future only be secured by increasingly linking international markets to China with the help of the New Silk Road, Iran is becoming increasingly strategically important for the major powers thanks to its special geographical location.

An occupation of Iran by US troops or a permanent destabilization of the Gulf region, for example through a war between Iran and Saudi Arabia, would considerably disrupt Chinese expansion and could serve the Americans as an approach to knock out their worst competitors for world domination for the time being. For these reasons, it seems likely that they will continue to fuel the conflict in the Middle East and in one way or another trigger a war in the foreseeable future.

Geopolitical principles: war and Iran

For 15 years now, Iran's nuclear programme has regularly dominated international headlines. However, acts of sabotage, attacks against scientists, support for protest movements and terrorists and, last but not least, numerous statements by politicians and members of the U.S. military prove beyond a doubt that a fall of the Iranian government is right at the top of the agenda of the United States and its allies (1). The strategy applied follows the typical pattern of American enforcement policy to impose on other nations, and is openly explained in the relevant publications. For example, the website of the geopolitical think tank "Strategic Forecasting" (Stratfor) says so:

"The White House's strategy for Iran is quite straightforward: discredit the Iranian nuclear treaty, extend and enforce sanctions to paralyze the Iranian economy, lay the foundations for general unrest, and build economic and military pressure to force the Iranian government to the negotiating table. If the regime is overthrown by internal pressure, it is seen as a "bonus price" (2). As can be seen, there is no mention of war in these remarks, while a coup d'état is at best a secondary goal; this is because war and overthrow itself are not the actual goals of the U.S. government, but merely potential measures to achieve these goals. They are only taken up and vigorously pursued when those whose cost/benefit factor is higher do not take effect. In this context, it is necessary to recall a quote from Clausewitz, which reads as follows:

"War is an act of violence to force the enemy to fulfill our will."

It should always be borne in mind that the fundamental aim of all politics is to maintain the security and stability of one's own state by protecting it externally against its enemies and internally against turmoil. Among other things, it ensures this by securing its external borders, enclosing and, if necessary, destroying its opponents, ensuring an adequate supply of raw materials and opening up sales markets.

Since these goals can often only be achieved against the will of other states, the application of political, economic or military pressure is often necessary. It is only when these measures do not produce the desired result and the implementation of the objective has sufficient national significance that the hour of war strikes. To quote Clausewitz again:

"War is the continuation of politics by other means."

War is therefore always only a means to an end, even if it sometimes appears to be an end in itself and the actual intention behind it may not be immediately apparent. No state wages war for the sake of war, since it devours enormous quantities of resources, capital, labour and energy. It remains the last resort in the event that all other measures fail and the goal is worth the risks - the proxy war is expressly excluded from these considerations.

After the unilateral termination of the nuclear agreement with Iran by the Americans, which in any case served primarily the purpose of wasting time in anticipation of a regime change in the near future (3) and of persuading the world that the USA was interested in a diplomatic solution to the conflict, the increasing tensions between the two states are once again clearly evident.

Although it is obvious that other countries such as Israel and Saudi Arabia also play a leading role in this drama, it is all too often portrayed in the media as the result of the misguided policies of some irresponsible gamblers. The conflict cannot be viewed in isolation from the major power and economic developments in the world, and certainly not reduced to a single person, solely because of Iran's geostrategically significant position.

This separation of the conflict from its historical and geopolitical context and its narrow portrayal as a problem essentially attributable to Donald Trump and Ayatollah Khamenei regularly fail the media to explain its causes and the actions of the individual actors conclusively. If, however, one exposes its deeper roots, it becomes apparent that the dispute over the supremacy in the Persian Gulf is closely linked to the desperate efforts of the USA to assert its hegemonic position in a world in which the balance of power is rapidly shifting to its disadvantage.

By concealing this fact, journalists and politicians of all stripes are able to conceal from their own people the objectives of the Americans, which extend far beyond Iran, and to fool them into believing that the conflict is not a systemic one, but the result of two hostile governments, and can therefore be settled by peaceful compromise. However, the objectives of the individual parties to the conflict are practically incompatible, and even worse, threatening the existence of the other; the danger of war is accordingly enormous.

Looking at a world map, it is easy to see that Iran occupies a key position within the Eurasian landmass. Tucked between the Persian Gulf, the Gulf of Oman and the Caspian Sea, it acts as a link between the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent and Central Asia, thus attaining a considerable degree of supra-regional importance both economically and militarily. Thanks to its special geographical location, the country aroused the increased interest of the European empires as early as the 19th century and became one of the most important fields of activity for diplomats, agents and the military during the conflict between

Russia and the British Empire over supremacy in Central Asia known as the "Great Game".

Once caught between the fronts, Iran quickly became the pawn of foreign powers, losing its sovereignty and paying for the subsequent internal destabilization, economic exploitation and continued outside interference with a significant loss of human lives. The discovery of large fossil fuel deposits in the Gulf region and its strategically important location on the Strait of Hormus, the bottleneck of global oil supplies, further reinforced the geopolitical importance of the country.

In view of these circumstances, it is not surprising that the East-West conflict ignited for the first time shortly after the Second World War because of the Iran question, and furthermore it quickly becomes clear why America's desire for a domination of Persia also after the Islamic revolution never expired. In fact, all three world powers today, for different reasons, have a considerable interest in integrating Iran into their hegemonic realm, or at least not to let it fall under the influence of an enemy nation, while the Iranians, burned by the terrible experiences of the past, are undoubtedly determined to preserve their sovereignty and defend themselves against any form of foreign rule.

The geopolitical importance of Iran for China

With its One Belt One Road Initiative project, China is currently attempting to create a closed Eurasian economic area that would powerfully place the East Asian state at the centre of world affairs and economically bind all the countries between Lisbon and Tokyo to it. As the only viable link between Central Asia and the Middle East and through it to Europe, Iran will inevitably play a decisive role in these plans, as the southern land route of the New Silk Road to Istanbul will inevitably have to cross its territory (4).

In order to achieve its economic and geopolitical goals, Beijing therefore depends on a stable government in Tehran that is inclined towards it (5). It is to the advantage of the Chinese that Iran should have a considerable interest in becoming an integral part of this project, as it could on the one hand offer a way out of its decades of international isolation imposed by the West and on the other hand significantly enhance its position in the region (6).

The large-scale Chinese infrastructure initiative, however, is blatantly undermining the power position of the United States on the Eurasian continent and threatens in the long term to undermine its economic dominance in the world until collapse. The Americans' former greatest strategic advantage was their geographical remoteness, which almost completely shielded them from the consequences of their global power politics, which they had consistently pursued for 130 years.

This advantage would suddenly be reversed by the establishment of a unified, China-dominated trade area covering a large part of Halford Mackinder's defined and geostrategically crucial "world island", since the USA would be largely excluded from this huge market.

It is not to be expected that China - despite the trade war with the USA already envisaged by Barack Obama (7) and now increasingly escalating under Donald Trump - will voluntarily abandon its course, since an end to its economic development or even a deterioration of the social conditions in the country would entail the not inconsiderable risk of internal unrest, and no one, neither the Chinese leadership nor the population, wants to see a repetition of the century of humiliation and confusion of the Mao era, which meant death by war and hunger for more than 100 million Chinese.

With the economic opening of China and the subsequent emergence of a broad middle class, the Communist Party has condemned itself to success. On the one hand, it is forced to constantly open up new markets for its domestic industry in order to provide a livelihood for the host of Chinese workers, while on the other it is even more urgently required to secure the resources that the country needs to maintain its economy and satisfy the growing demands of its population. However, the raw material requirements of a fully industrialized China would be so enormous that sooner or later it could only continue its growth at the expense of the First World. It is therefore practically inevitable that China will eventually collision with the US and other industrialised countries (8).

This can be impressively illustrated by pointing out the enormous demand that the People's Republic alone could develop for oil. If, for example, the oil consumption of an average Chinese would correspond to that of an average German, China would consume about 40 million barrels of oil per day. This would be just under half the world's crude oil production and about the total global net export volume. Since China itself currently does not even produce 4 million barrels a day and production there tends to be declining, it would have to import most of this crude oil as a matter of urgency (9).

It is hard to imagine at this stage that global oil production could be increased in the coming decades to such an extent that it could guarantee supplies to both Western industrial nations and China, not to mention India and Africa. A continuation of the current development will therefore most probably lead to a sensitive supply gap for a system-critical raw material in the long term. The Chinese government's promotion of electromobility thus takes on a strategic dimension that goes far beyond the environmental protection aspects that would otherwise be propagated.

Securing access to the Gulf region and its oil reserves and maintaining political stability there is therefore vital for the emerging industrial power, which is already the world's largest oil importer, ahead of the USA.

The fact that China purchases a significant proportion of its oil imports from the countries around the Persian Gulf (10) and ships them by sea also means that the Beijing government has no alternative but to build a powerful navy to protect China's transport routes against a blockade, for example by the US Navy. As long as it is unable to do so, China can still be blackmailed by other naval powers.

Consequently, over the past ten years China has increasingly invested in the modernization and expansion of its navy (11) with the obvious goal of breaking the unrestricted rule of the United States over the world's oceans. The plans announced, which include a rapid expansion of the Chinese fleet and, in particular, the establishment of six aircraft carrier combat groups by 2035 (12), will lead to a situation in which China is likely to have twice as many warships and submarines under its command as the United States in twelve years' time.

In addition, the Chinese leadership is determined to establish the logistical infrastructure by buying and building ports around the globe to assert its claim to global power with this navy. This blatant challenge of the US Navy, which forms the backbone of its military supremacy and thus for the assertion of its interests, sets alarm bells ringing in Washington, fearing a progressive loss of control that could force the USA to withdraw from Asia by 2030 (13).

The imminent loss of global power and the associated loss of prosperity is forcing the White House to act and to find ways of putting competition from the Far East in its place (14).

For the reasons mentioned above, Iran is increasingly coming into the crosshairs of the Americans in these efforts. The establishment of an American-inspired government in Tehran, the large-scale destruction of its infrastructure or even the occupation of the country by US troops would probably not impede the Silk Road Project, but would nonetheless significantly impede it.

To achieve this goal, an invasion of Iran would not even be necessary, as it would be perfectly sufficient and even beneficial simply to turn it into a failed state in the long run. This would be all the easier since Ayatollah Khamenei is an old man, the mullah regime is not very popular among the population and the country is plagued by ethnic-religious conflicts (15). The riots that would probably break out if the country were devastated by military action and the head of state died could easily be fueled even further by the United States letting the Islamic state, which has settled in Afghanistan for several years and spread further and further with American support (16), loose its grip on Iran.

A collapse of the Iranian state would, in turn, lead to China's increased dependence on Russia in two senses: on the one hand, it would remain the last direct land link to Europe for Chinese industry and, on the other hand, it would gain considerable importance as an energy supplier to its neighbour. Bearing in mind the conflict-laden past of the two great powers and the latently existing antagonism between them due to the efforts of both sides for a supremacy in Central and East Asia, it is reasonable to assume that Beijing would like to avoid such a scenario as far as possible and will therefore try to prevent a US intervention in Iran.

Nevertheless, despite all the subliminal fermenting problems of the Sino-Russian alliance, its mere existence poses a permanent threat to the American economic and ruling system, offering other countries a serious alternative to submission to the dollar regime (17). Thus, in the long run, only Moscow's turning away from Beijing and turning to Washington could ensure that China must finally bury its imperialist ambitions and that the United States can maintain its global dominance.

The inevitable conclusion to be drawn from these thoughts is that it is almost indispensable for the United States to somehow break the Moscow-Peking axis, contain China in East Asia and then ruin it with the tried and tested methods if it does not want to risk sinking at some point into a largely insignificant state.

At the present time, Russia's more or less voluntary submission to the United States and the abandonment of its relations with China is not to be expected, nor is it to be expected that a similar constellation will arise today as it did at the time of the Second World War, when the USA's fiercest rivals for the position of world hegemon thankfully tore each other apart - a situation in which US diplomacy and the US economy, it should be noted, played a significant role.

All that remains for the Americans is to explore ways of forcing the installation of a puppet government in the Kremlin, for example by attempting to bleed Russia economically and thus prepare the ground for a coup d'état (18). But Russia's wealth of resources, its increased economic cooperation with China, the temporary stability of its government, and its catastrophic experience with past revolutions make this difficult. It is therefore doubtful that gentler methods will deliver the desired results. However, the option of bringing about the overthrow by war carries with it the enormous risk of nuclear escalation, and the triple failure of European powers to wring Russia down by military means is warning enough to tackle such a project at all. However, inaction is an even less acceptable alternative for the USA in the face of the feared consequences. Faced with an almost hopeless dilemma, an occupation of Iran would open up approaches that could possibly prove to be the key to American victory.

Iran in the area of tension between Russia and the USA

Because of its position on the southern shore of Lake Caspiere, Iran's fate cannot be indifferent to Russia, as it would give an enemy nation access to those parts of the Federation where it is most vulnerable - the already fragile Caucasus region, the Volga delta and, via it, the Moscow hinterland. It is no coincidence that Russia, despite Iran's double declaration of neutrality, occupied the region together with Great Britain during both the First and Second World Wars - a circumstance that the Allied historians like to repress, not least because several million people lost their lives as a result of the occupation and the ruthless requisition policy of the occupiers (19, 20).

Apart from the power-political objectives and security policy issues that may be discussed in the Kremlin, the region around the Hyrkan Sea is also of direct and indirect economic importance for Russia thanks to its considerable reserves of raw materials, since it is able to keep its competition on the market for hydrocarbons at least partially off its back by controlling it. In return, the Western world naturally has an interest in safeguarding these natural resources for its own economy, in having them exploited by its own companies and, if possible by circumventing Russia, in feeding them into the world market.

It is true that in an agreement of August 2018, all the countries bordering the Caspian Sea reached an agreement on the division of the Caspian Sea, which stipulates in particular that no third country may be allowed to use it for its armed forces. It is doubtful, however, whether an Iran that would de facto be subject to an American regime would also comply with this agreement. A takeover of power in Iran would in any case open up additional options for the United States to destabilise Russia, for example by making it easier for them to support separatists in the Caucasus region, infiltrate terrorists, carry out covert operations or increase economic and military pressure to overstretch the Russian state budget. With such methods, the Americans could actively try to bring about the disintegration of the Russian Federation already predicted by Stratfor (21). Especially in the event of war, Iran would be of enormous strategic value for the USA, as it would allow them to bring together the military infrastructure established under the guise of counter-terrorism from Syria to Afghanistan and use it in a bundled manner against Russia.

Furthermore, the entire Russian southwest would be exposed to an attack via Iran, thus giving the United States and its vassals the opportunity to separate the Caucasus from the rest of the country by a rapid advance via Ukraine and the Caspian Sea, or giving them the opportunity to penetrate north via the Volga, to cut Russia into two parts and attack Moscow from east and west simultaneously.

In view of the growing tensions between the USA and Russia over the years and the constant advance of NATO to the Russian border, a military confrontation with the Western military alliance must increasingly appear to the Moscow government as a serious threat. Iran's political fate is therefore increasingly affecting the vital security interests of the Russian Federation, which could hardly allow it to fall into the hands of the United States.

Its aim must therefore be to prevent war in the region, to stabilise the Iranian Government and to keep it within its own sphere of influence. An overthrow in Tehran or even a large-scale military operation by a US-led coalition would almost inevitably result in a Russian counter-reaction, which in the worst case could lead to an open exchange of blows between the two nuclear powers.

Trapped in this maelstrom of world political events, Iran finds itself in an extraordinary dilemma, because for historical reasons it can only face Russia with great suspicion - too serious is the suffering inflicted on it in the past not only by the Anglo-Americans, but also by the Kremlin masters. Like the cooperation between China and Russia, the cooperation between Russia and the Islamic Republic is therefore due solely to the joint enmity of the United States and is by no means the result of a natural historical development.

Since the current friendly relations between the three states were born out of necessity, it is to be expected that there will be a serious disagreement between them as soon as the unifying element has disappeared, Iran would have to fear degenerating again to a Russian vermiform appendix, while Russia threatens to degenerate in the long run to its forecourt and raw materials store if China continues to increase its power.

Key points of American world politics

To understand the situation in the world today, one must understand that the post-war order designed by the United States, consisting of the UN, World Bank, IMF, and the dollar as the reserve currency, was created to save its capitalist system and cement its global supremacy. In the years before the Second World War, the 1929 stock market crash put the American economy in an extremely precarious position with little prospect of recovery, as the colonial powers increasingly sealed off their markets from each other and the USA no longer found buyers for its overproduction.

For states like Germany and Japan, the so-called have-nots, who did not own colonies and whose people's food and prosperity therefore depended on unconditional participation in world trade, this situation grew into a serious threat to their internal stability. At the latest when they began to secure the necessary markets by force and divide Eurasia among themselves, the subjugation of the Axis powers became the political doctrine of the Roosevelt government.

In the course of the War and Peace Studies, the Council on Foreign Relations worked out which parts of the world America would have to dominate in order not to need to change its economic system. This structure, called the "Grand Area", which was further defined in a report dated 24 July 1941, comprised no less than "the Western Hemisphere, the United Kingdom, the rest of the British Commonwealth and Empires, Dutch India, China, and Japan" (22), but was expandable at will. Such an expansion of its sphere of influence was only possible for the USA if all other great powers were completely ruined in a huge world fire, so that their connection to the only industrial state, which had been largely spared thanks to its geographical location, remained their last salvation.

The Americans finally brought about this state of affairs as planned through skilful diplomacy, economic and financial pressure and targeted military support, and then maintained it until they themselves were ready to enter the war. For more than 70 years, the United States was subsequently able to maintain and defend its hegemonic system and ultimately prevail against the only remaining alternative, Soviet-style communism.

Rather than the military and ideological challenge posed by the Soviet Union, the rise of China is increasingly becoming an existential threat to the American empire. The increasing penetration of large Chinese corporations in areas formerly dominated by US corporations and the development of parallel financial structures are hitting it directly in its economic heart. The insatiable hunger for resources of the billion people and the resulting cut-throat competition on the international raw materials market threatens to close off their air in the long run, and it is only a matter of time before the People's Republic outstrips the United States not only economically but also militarily.

The USA, whose economy is kept alive in principle only by the excessive indebtedness of its population (23), is thus facing a relapse into the conditions during the Great Depression, when mass unemployment and impoverishment kept the country in its stranglehold. After the United States has already proved that it does not shy away from even a world war to fight for its position as a world hegemon and defend its capitalist system, it seems almost inconceivable that Washington will leave the field without a fight and simply accept such a loss of importance.

As George Friedman notes, both the imminent unification of a high-tech China with the so-called heartland, the resource-rich and predominantly Russian-controlled regions of North and Central Asia, and the questioning of its sovereignty over the oceans is a primary cause of war for the United States:

"The United States is pursuing a strategy that has existed for a hundred years with absolute relentlessness. It has two elements.

First, North America is an island and the United States must at least control the waters that lead to that island. Secondly, the United States cannot tolerate any power, be it Germany, Russia, Montenegro or whoever, that controls both the European peninsula and the Russian mainland. Why? Because this combination of technology and natural resources could create fleets that would threaten our interests. The United States intervenes as soon as it appears that this could happen. (...) This is a constant and specific aspect that is now being extended to China. We control the waters leading to the United States and will not give in under any circumstances, and we will prevent any hegemony in Eurasia' (24).

China is now increasingly openly challenging the United States on both points, and it is hardly surprising that former US Army Commander-in-Chief Ben Hodges expressed his view at the 2018 Warsaw Security Forum that there is a strong likelihood that war will break out between the two countries within the next 15 years. In a later interview, he further explained that the US was unable to stop both Russia and China, and that he wanted to draw the attention of his own allies to this fact (25). The US government's call for an increase in the European military budget, the ongoing remilitarisation of Japan and its attempt to unite the navies of the US, Japan, India and Australia into a single alliance now fit seamlessly into these considerations.

The (almost) inevitable war

We have seen that the United States is under no circumstances willing to give up its current position of power or accept the current development in Eurasia and will therefore intervene in any case. We have also given reasons as to why the Americans can hardly force China, Russia and Iran to give in, using gentle methods. This does not mean that they will not try, it simply means that they are very likely to fail.

For the United States, this means that after the failure of politics, its fundamental interests can only be safeguarded by war.

Since there are no recognizable alternatives to war and they do not have the strength to fight against two great powers simultaneously (26), the USA will have to find ways and means to eliminate Russia and China as successively as possible, with the weakest link probably making the start, and that is Russia.

So the road to Beijing is via Moscow, and the road to Moscow is via Tehran. It is therefore to be expected that the situation in the Middle East will escalate further and a war with Iran will come, no matter how the regime there behaves in the future. If the Iranian leadership is unwilling to provide the Americans with a reason for war out of insecurity, stupidity, overestimation of its own capabilities or pure fatalism, then, as is all too often the case in American history, it will simply and poignantly invent one, for the United States has never allowed itself to be deterred from invading a foreign country by the absence of a legitimate reason.

The conflicts over the Iranian nuclear program, the expansion of Iranian influence in the region, and the supposed threat to Israel merely provide the pretext for creating a mood that is intended to mentally prepare one's own people for war and make them receptive to propaganda about its legitimacy and necessity.

The negative external impact of such an undertaking is only of secondary importance for the USA, because even if the Americans were to start a war of aggression against Iran and justify it with a completely outrageous history, the governments of the West would hardly give up their allegiance to them and many people would continue to worship the USA as a democratic model and beacon of justice. A brilliant achievement of American propaganda has always been its ability to present successes as the merit of the entire country, but failures and crimes as the misconduct of a few people. So all they have to do to cleanse themselves of all guilt is to choose a new, better, fairer or even more charismatic president.

In this way, the U.S. was able to maintain its reputation as a defender of freedom and democracy in the world and spread the fairy tale of its moral superiority, although since the fall of Hawaiian Queen Lili'uokalani in 1893, at the latest, it has systematically pursued an imperialist policy in which the interests of other peoples are at best marginalized, but are generally grossly trampled underfoot. In this system, the president acts as a straw man who can be publicly castigated and, if necessary, executed by the media in order to protect the reputation of the country itself, while in the background his sphere of power is gradually expanded. To paraphrase George Friedman again:

"Don't confuse the crazy stuff Donald Trump gives you with America's relentless, realistic, unscrupulous foreign policy" (27).

Trump's Iran policy, as undiplomatic and rude as it may seem, therefore integrates smoothly into the power-political considerations of the United States, does not differ significantly in its rhetoric from what Hillary Clinton had announced for the case of her election as president (28), and from this perspective is quite purposeful. With its crude nature, its unpredictability and its blatant lack of sensitivity, it serves as a kind of political wrecking ball, in order, as Franklin D. had done at the time, to make a significant contribution to the political process. Roosevelt, to create insecurity on the international stage and to remove those obstacles that hinder the American striving for power. As he has long since been called upon to be an uncouth, bellicistic hothead, he can smash all sorts of porcelain and, if necessary, even start a great war, without it radiating too much back to the core of American self-understanding.

American values have always been more illusion than being, but as long as the Americans and their allies believe in this illusion, they can cover the world in war with a clear conscience, destroy other countries, exploit entire peoples and murder millions of people, and in so doing proclaim with the chest tone of their conviction that they are doing it not for their own benefit, but out of pure charity.

The time window in which the USA can now wage such a war with some prospect of success is very small, because firstly it must be started while China's military is still inferior to the American military, and secondly it must be completed while the USA is still able to cushion its inevitable shock effect on the world economy, which will follow solely from the sudden collapse of oil exports from the Gulf region.

Thanks to the expansion of domestic oil production through the fracking process, the United States has succeeded in drastically reducing its dependence on oil imports within a few years and, in conjunction with Canada, has almost completely guaranteed its own supply. It is a subsidy business in which companies incur losses year after year (29), which makes sense only from a strategic point of view but not from an economic one. It is also only a matter of time before the fracking boom reaches its geological limits, comes to an abrupt end and the peak of production capacity is exceeded. For these two reasons alone, it emerges that the rise of China within the next ten to twenty years must be stalled, i.e. the country must be destroyed, from the point of view of the Americans.

Of course, a war with all three of these countries poses a considerable risk, since its global effects cannot really be assessed for anyone. But there is too much at stake for the Americans to shy away from leading it, because if they want to maintain their global leadership or even their prosperity in the long run, there is no way around it sooner or later: China must be brought to its knees one way or another. If the United States fails to do so, it will lose the foundations of its economic system created in the Second World War in the long term, with unforeseeable consequences for the continued existence of the American Union.

An end to the global dominance of the United States would most probably lead to a revolution in its internal social conditions, for the promise of the state from which it derives its *raison d'être* - namely that of prosperity for all and everyone who works hard enough - would finally become a farce under the permanent impoverishment of broad sections of the population.

Its containment of the American mainland would also mean that the USA would no longer be able to divert its internal tensions to the outside world at will, so that the latently existing ethnic and social conflicts that have been suppressed by its success to date would increasingly come to the fore. The division of the nation and a new civil war would be the potential consequences. A world crisis lasting several years would therefore probably still be easier for the Americans to overcome than a lasting economic and military decline.

Alternative scenario: global economic crisis

As indicated at the beginning of the article, for strategic reasons the same restrictions do not apply to a proxy war as to a war one intends to wage oneself. Ideally, clever manoeuvring on the diplomatic scene and playing off the individual parties can eliminate several disagreeable states at once, not only without having to bear great dangers and losses oneself, but on the contrary also without being able to profit from them. This approach now offers the United States an alternative to a war in which it would have to participate directly, an alternative which, given the size of its opponents, would not pass unscathed.

As the strongest economic and financial power, the United States always has the power to deliberately drive the world economy against the wall, triggering a global crisis similar to that of 1929.

The resulting chaos would have a much greater impact on the rest of the world than on the United States itself, thanks to the extensive guarantee of its supply of primary energy sources from American sources and its reduced dependence on world markets due to the greater importance of the internal market for the domestic economy.

Especially China, which is heavily dependent on consumer goods exports, but also Russia, which largely covers its national budget with the sale of raw materials abroad, would be massively affected by such a global economic crisis, so that it could succeed in destabilizing the societies there to such an extent that their governments would be overthrown, there would be a civil war or even a war between them.

Should this fail, the devastating effect of the crisis on the Central Powers, especially on export nations such as Japan, South Korea and Germany, which depend on functioning world trade to feed their populations, to allow old conflicts to break out again, to massively exacerbate existing ones and to create numerous new ones, would be disastrous. In a desperate effort to secure the shrinking markets, raw materials, or simply food to avert the collapse of their states, the industrial nations of Eurasia would be forced to resort to military means so that they would most likely at some point become involved in a military conflict with Russia and China - a situation that would astoundingly resemble that on the eve of the Second World War and which the United States could then exploit for its own purposes as well.

Iran could also play a central role in this scenario, and it seems as if the US has found a useful idiot in Saudi Arabia, as it did in Poland, who is willing to trigger the great world crisis for them out of his own striving for power. Yemen serves as a training ground to provide the Saudi army under realistic conditions with the skills it would need in a campaign against Iran. A war between Saudi Arabia and Iran that would drag on for years would have catastrophic consequences for both states, and probably neither the mullahs nor the Saudi royal family would survive.

But it would have an even more devastating effect on the rest of the world, because the resulting chaos that could lead to the Iraqisation of the entire Middle East and deprive oil production in the region of the world market in the long term, similar to Libya, would result in an unprecedented economic crisis that would plunge large parts of the world into hunger, hardship and misery.

Countries such as Germany and Japan would suddenly be confronted with the same problems as in the first half of the twentieth century and would inevitably pursue similar approaches to solving them. The question of resources and living space, which is still unsolved in Germany today, but which has increasingly disappeared from the collective consciousness due to the prosperity of the post-war decades, which was only made possible by unrestricted access to all the necessary raw materials, and which there is only haunted by the insanity of bygone epochs, would once again become the focus of national politics by force.

A war between Saudi Arabia and Iran and the economic cataclysm triggered by it would force China out of its cover and force it to act as a force for order in the region - a role it would like to avoid, at least for the time being, which it is not used to and of which it above all does not know whether its own population would support it. China would thus be condemned to waste much of its energy, capital and resources in suppressing endless conflicts that it could not resolve.

It can be seen that China is already preparing to slip into this role - the expansion of transport routes to Central Asia and beyond, for example, will enable China to move its troops across borders and thus break through the fencing in East Asia caused by deserts and high mountains, and the construction of military bases abroad and a powerful navy will of course ultimately serve the purpose of military action at global level - but the country is still years away from being able to project its power worldwide.

Such an approach would now benefit Trump's America First policy, as it has set the goal of strengthening domestic industry and production, reducing dependence on foreign raw materials and goods, and thus increasing the resilience of the American state to a global economic shock. The advantage of such an approach would also be that it has already been tried and tested, has already led to success, and in the end the Americans could wash their hands of it.

Final thoughts

After all this debauchery, it may be necessary to make it clear that politics is usually not determined by personal animosities, but dictated by the logical striving for power and prosperity of all states. The confrontation between the USA and China, into which countless other states are involuntarily drawn, is the consequence of the natural and inevitable selfishness of all peoples.

Even if slogans such as human rights, democracy and freedom are often used to justify wars, this serves only to reassure one's conscience, because no state will ever fight the battle for another completely unselfishly; no people will ever send its sons and daughters to their deaths for the benefit of another people.

We like to talk about international cooperation and rave about a better world in which violence is a thing of the past, but we overlook the fact that this is opposed both by man's nature, which is primarily designed for self-preservation and the preservation of his own relatives, and by the limitations of natural resources. Johann Fichte already wrote in 1800:

"Naturally, each wants to win as much as possible from the other and let the other win as little as possible; each wants to let the other work as much as possible for himself and work as little as possible for him. (...) There is an endless war of all in the acting public against all, as a war between buyers and sellers; and this war becomes fiercer, more unjust and in its consequences more dangerous, the more the world is populated, the commercial state is enlarged by additional acquisitions, production and the arts increase, and thereby the goods in circulation in quantity and with it the needs of all increase and become manifold. What was done in the simple way of life of nations without great injustice and oppression is transformed, according to increased needs, into the most crying injustice, and into a source of great misery" (30).

There are more than 7.5 billion people in the world today, a world that cannot provide enough raw materials to provide each of these 7.5 billion people with a standard of living that is grotesquely considered normal in the Western world, even though it is an orgiastic waste of resources that is unequalled in the history of the planet. Given the global problems we face, be it climate change, rampant pollution or species extinction, all of which are a direct result of the excesses of these masses, we must soberly state that even a billion people could not live permanently as we do without creating a terrible catastrophe.

So we are faced with the choice of preserving our prosperity at the expense of others, or impoverishing it for the benefit of others. We cannot trust in the compassion of strangers, because in the community of nations everyone is always the next to himself, and only the stupid, the naïve, or the weak pursue goals that are not in their own interest, but in the interest of others. All talk of humanity is ultimately nothing more than hollow phrase thrashing, for hardly anyone will find himself voluntarily renouncing certain amenities and a standard of living once achieved in favor of another.

It is therefore time to become aware of the following circumstances: That the prosperity of some would not be possible without the misery of others, that there are too many people in this world and that the main sufferer of our success is not us, but the animal and plant world.

Now the entirety of mankind is hardly wiser in its behaviour than a chunk of yeast, so knowledge will not save us, and no matter which nation will emerge victorious from this struggle of the great powers, it is only of secondary importance for our species, because in the end self-destruction stands in one way or another. And until then it remains as it has been for millions of years - the fittest survive, and we can only ensure that we also belong to them.

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