

# The West has crumbled in the face of a belligerent Russia and China



The increasing shambles in post-Trump great power relations is best illustrated by the Russian threat against Ukraine and the Chinese threat against Taiwan. A profound reappraisal of the western alliance system will soon be required. The United States is in a continuous meltdown of sane government, which will only be resolved when the present administration and its allies in Congress have been decisively evicted. Western Europe is in a deepening torpor, most accurately represented by the addled condition of Germany, which is still trying to assemble a government almost two months after the last election. Apart from some of the countries recently emancipated from the joys of Russian Cold War domination, in Europe, Britain and France are the only countries acting like

serious powers. In this state of confusion, one might have hoped for some exemplary leadership from Canada, which, if it acted like a serious country, could exercise some influence, as it did in the times of Mackenzie King, Louis St. Laurent, Pierre Trudeau, Brian Mulroney and Stephen Harper. But it is obvious that despite Chrystia Freeland's admirable support for Ukraine in the past, there is no disposition from the Trudeau government to do anything except continue to inflict upon the councils of the world its vacuous views of world brotherhood in arms against the climate.

The only serious problem that Russia could pose to the West is precisely the one that U.S. Democrats have created: instead of outbidding China for Russia's goodwill (without giving in to Russian President Vladimir Putin's expansionist ambitions), the constant demonization of Russia by the American left, and even some Republicans, is pushing it into the arms of China. This will enable China to make up for its poverty of resources and reposition some of its surplus population by permitting it to exploit some of the resources of Siberia, which, apart from oil, the Russians have generally failed to do. This would put most of the Eurasian landmass in the hands of a hostile anti-western alliance and would enable China to add a giant geopolitical cubit to its stature. The American Democrats, who confected the complete fraud of collusion between President Donald Trump and Russia in the 2016 election, have almost managed the astonishing feat of bringing the two natural rivals and ancient foes, China and Russia, together.

For good measure, the American military hierarchy, which was given hundreds of billions of dollars by the Trump administration and its congressional supporters to modernize the U.S. armed forces, missed the potential for hypersonic missiles and were preceded in this capability by both China and Russia, and the over-decorated chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Mark Milley, has decreed the revelation of the Russian and Chinese capability in this field to be "a

Sputnik moment.” Milley has a thin combat record but wears more ribbons than victorious Second World War generals and statesmen George C. Marshall, Dwight D. Eisenhower and Douglas MacArthur combined. All of these three exercised the highest functions in the greatest war in history, but apart from their five-star insignia, they rarely sported any military decorations at all. Milley looks like the senior field marshal of Ruritania as he attempts to explain what he has been doing imposing the nonsense of critical race theory upon the U.S. armed forces. Milley dodged all responsibility for the Afghan abandonment – the most humiliating military fiasco in American history since Gen. William Hull surrendered Detroit to Gen. Isaac Brock in 1812. Milley is now the flabby personification of the American high command – he called his Chinese analogue in January promising that he would warn him in advance if the supposedly “crazy” commander-in-chief at whose pleasure he served decided to order a nuclear attack upon China.

There has been no clear statement from NATO or the United States or any serious source over what response there might be to direct Russian aggression against Ukraine, or Chinese aggression against Taiwan. In the Shanghai Communiqué at the time of U.S. President Richard Nixon’s visit to China in 1972, China undertook not to attack Taiwan as long as the United States accepted the concept of the ultimate and non-coercive reunification of China. The results of the violation of that agreement have never been specified. With the present feckless and irresolute U.S. administration, the Beijing government, which did not hesitate to tear up a formal treaty with the United Kingdom over Hong Kong, cannot be trusted to abide by the Shanghai Communiqué, as its present belligerent conduct demonstrates. The Kremlin has never formally accepted the right of the former Soviet republics to secede from the U.S.S.R. Belarus is still a Russian satellite state and there are substantial Russian minorities in most of the former republics that the Kremlin delights in agitating. Ukraine was the largest of these republics and Russia has already snatched

back Crimea, but it was only part of Ukraine after 1954. Ukraine has not very successfully mastered self-government in the last 30 years, but it is a country of over 41 million people and although it is not in NATO, if Russia were to invade it, the West would have to take serious measures or concede that NATO has become an empty husk and it is now every man for himself. With a little assistance, both Ukraine and Taiwan could give an invader a very nasty welcome.

Most of the European NATO countries have allowed their armed forces to atrophy, as Canada has, implicitly relying on the deterrent power of the United States. Russia is no longer remotely comparable in strength to the U.S. and its GDP is smaller than Canada's, but its leader, Vladimir Putin, is committed to the at least partial restoration of Greater Russia; Putin openly disputes Ukrainian independence and he claims that "Russia was robbed." Putin has resurrected Catherine the Great's claims that control of Ukraine is essential to Russian national security. Yet at this point, there is little reason to believe that either the United States or the European NATO countries have the will to respond vigorously to any outrage short of a direct assault on themselves. The painful fact is that if America had a serious foreign policy apparatus, it could easily conclude that Russia was a more useful ally than Germany. Russia at least has a will to national assertion and is, with India, South Korea and Japan, the greatest single key to the containment of China. German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who could have put Germany at the head of the European powers, is leaving after 16 ineffectual years, having subordinated her country to the Kremlin in energy and military terms.

Normally, with such paralysis and enfeeblement in the Western alliance, Canada could play a vital role. But we have been perhaps the greatest slacker in all of NATO, have no foreign policy except jolly post-national naivete and a preposterous infatuation with the grossly misrepresented issue of climate

change. When the Cold War was ending, the West was led by Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, Helmut Kohl, François Mitterrand and Brian Mulroney (and St. John Paul II). British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and French President Emmanuel Macron have their moments but they need American reinforcement. The Trudeau government, especially after the inelegant disembarkation of Marc Garneau, is more like a sophomoric club of Greenpeace enthusiasts than the government of a G7 country. We are awash in mediocrity and almost nobody, government or opposition, is saying anything sensible. The world is paying no attention to us, with good reason. It is surely time we did better.

First published in the [National Post](#).