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SCENARIOS

# The anti-Russian “Holy War” is providing the West with justification for greater authoritarian tendencies

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If one dispassionately observes the present state of debate in the Western World

regarding the Russia-Ukraine War, one will be left with the impression of a paradoxical situation, from which a complete disconnect between actual reality and the dominant rhetoric emerges.

**The facts presented unquestionably state that the continuation of conflict,** or its spreading and intensification, are not in the interest of Western countries. The United States and their European allies have already spent enormous sums in order to arm, equip and train the Ukraine, exacerbating their deficits and hence the existent fiscal strain. By sustaining the Ukrainian war effort, as well as applying the severe (and inefficacious) policy of sanctions against Moscow, not only have these Western countries created enormous and unnecessary security risks; they have also created a boomerang effect, provoking an ulterior rise in prices of raw materials, forcing a rise in inflation, with the promise of a new recession immediately following that recession artificially created by the pandemic.

**By constructing an immovable wall of hostility between themselves and Russia,** they may have definitively pushed Russia into the political and economic orbit of China, whilst also distancing strategic, developing countries such as India, Brazil, Turkey and Saudi Arabia, with whom relations have been positive, pushing them towards Peking as well. The concern for this tendency is gradually emerging, as demonstrated by the declarations of certain European leaders such as Macron, Scholtz and now Mario Draghi, who seem in favour of promoting peace initiatives. In recent days, this has produced the first, timid attempts towards dialogue between the US and Russia, as demonstrated by the telephone call of the American Defense Minister Lloyd Austin with his Russian counterpart, Sergey Shoigu.

**Certainly, one might observe that the US and the UK have gained some strategic advantages** from the worsening of this crisis: for the US, the realignment of their European allies behind them, and a strike at the heart of Germany's continental, hegemonic ambitions; and for the UK, the early stages of the construction of its own sphere of influence on the Baltic and in Scandinavia, to the detriment of both Berlin and Moscow. These strategic objectives could contribute to explaining the particularly aggressive and provocative tones utilised by both the Biden administration and Johnson's government up to this point against Putin. But the reaching of such objectives could reveal itself to be a Pyrrhic victory, fruit of a myopic vision, in consideration of the enormous negative consequences listed above.

**To the undeniable costs to the Atlantic axis** caused by the prolonging of hostilities,

one must add the complete absence of popular consensus for such bellicose policies. Every poll commissioned since the beginning of the conflict clearly indicates that the public opinion of all Western countries, even those of the US and UK, are in vast majority clearly against both the direct involvement of their countries in the war, and the sending of arms and weaponry to the Ukrainians, preferring the establishment of treaties in order to reach a negotiated solution.

**Even so, the tone prevalent in most forms of communication** from one side of the Atlantic to the other with regards to the conflict - be it establishment media, politics or the expressed opinions of mainstream intellectuals – does not at all seem to reflect the profoundly problematic aspects which the conflict entails for the great, industrialised democracies. On the contrary, the information, as well as the positions, of major Western institutions, both national and trans-national, have been characterised for months by an almost uninterrupted, bellicose, stentorian rhetoric, from the oversimplified reduction of an age-old dispute between opposing nationalisms, the creation of such abstract categorisations as “aggressor/victim”, the call to a sort of “Holy War” in defence of the Ukraine (described in an oversimplified fashion as absolute victim, taken for granted by the liberal/democrat West), to the criminalisation without appeal of Putin, described as a bloodthirsty, genocidal totalitarian dictator.

**A rigid and dogmatic narrative exalting the use of force**, which contrasts stridently - -especially in Europe – with decades of pacifist rhetoric with regards to international crises. And in the din of the shrill screeching, even those authoritative voices disposed towards dialogue are drowned out by intransigent posturing of the likes of Ursula von der Leyen, the NATO general secretary Jens Stoltenberg, the German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock.

**As long as this rhetoric continues to represent** the official approach of the Western front, every potential attempt towards negotiation, even if it were to manage to gain a foothold, would be destined to result only in temporary agreements, and a condition of latent war would remain stable in the central-oriental area of the Old Continent, making it a chronic condition, and worsening its economic crisis.

**The dominion of this aggressive war-mongering** – of which we have not seen the likes since the epoch of the Great War – is so self-mutilating from a political and economic perspective that it cannot be explained exclusively by the short-term foreign policies championed by Biden and Johnson.
Also, because European governments – with some exceptions - are submitting passively to their threatening tones, regardless of the fact that historically, the selfsame

institutions, presented with a crisis of equal gravity, vocally opposed George W. Bush's war on terror, not hesitating to distance themselves decisively from Washington.

**The only manner to give adequate account to the enormous impact** of the Atlantic camp's present offensive mobilisation, is to place it in a line of continuity with the other two rhetorical hegemonies which have asserted themselves in the Western World over the course of previous years: that of the "Greticist", apocalyptic, environmental hegemony, and that other of the "emergency/catastrophist" health "pandemic".

**The three ideological propagandas dominant in the Western world over previous years,** regardless of their differences, share a common push towards a coercive redisciplining of liberal democratic societies around 'emergency' powers, rendering the questioning of their use unacceptable- even treacherous, and the prefiguration of a stagnation or 'piloted' decline in population of those societies, dictated by such mobilisations as being for a superior good. All three reflect- in different manners – the powerful push of the economic establishment (including Big Tech) and the financial establishment (gargantuan investment funds), seconded in large part by the elite of the political establishment, in favour of a rescaling of the market and of consumption, from the physical dimension to the "immaterial" dimension, and of a governable impoverishment by means of digital surveillance regimes, analogous to those in use in China, the Great Antagonist.

**In final analysis,** it is above all in this direction that the mobilisation in favour of a "Holy War" against Putin seems to be leading us.