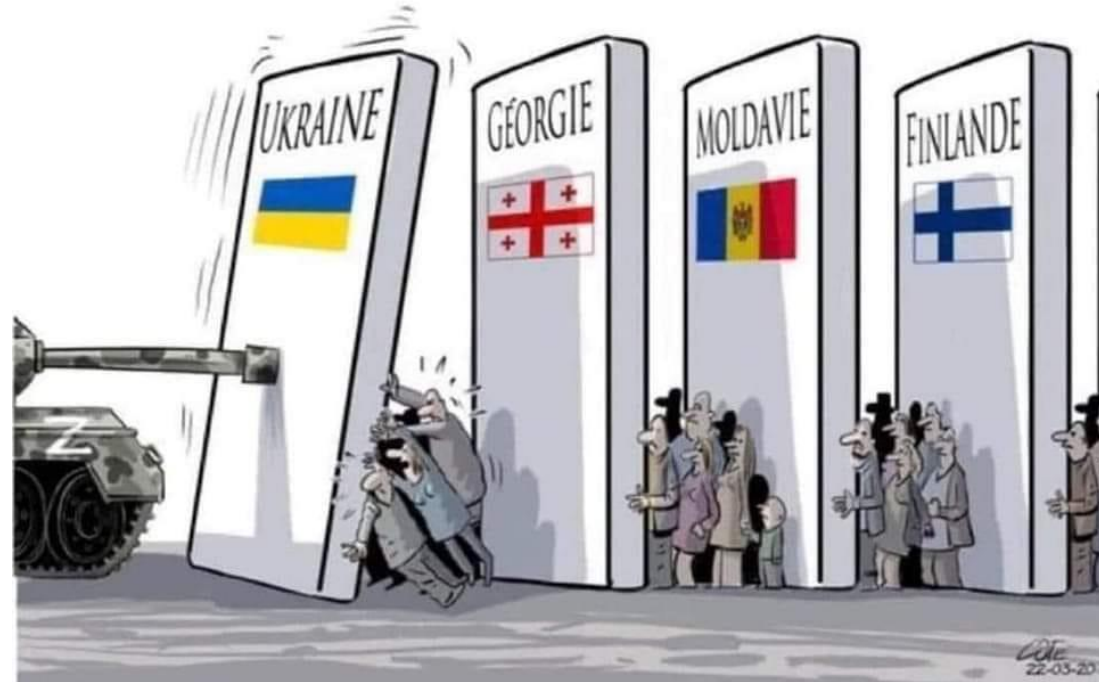


Russia's War of Aggression: "Zeitenwende" for European security order?



Prof. Dr. Ulrich Schneckener

Center for the Study of Conflict and Peace (CeCoP),
Osnabrück University

- „We are living through a **watershed era (“Zeitenwende”)**. And that means that the **world afterwards will no longer be the same as the world before.**” (*Federal Chancellor Olaf Scholz, 27.2.2022, German Bundestag, Berlin*)
- “I used the **word “Zeitenwende”** following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine in February. Putin’s Russia wants to redraw boundaries with violence – something that we in Europe never wanted to experience again. The brutal attack on Ukraine is therefore also **an attack on Europe’s security order.**” (*Federal Chancellor Olaf Scholz, 29.9.2022, Karls-University, Prague*)

Linking Germany’s to EU’s Zeitenwende?

- „Russia’s war of aggression constitutes a **tectonic shift in European history.** (...) **European security is indivisible** and any challenge to the European security order affects the security of the EU and its Member States. The **return to power politics** leads some countries to act in terms of historical rights and zones of influence, rather than adhering to internationally agreed rules and principles and uniting to promote international peace and security.”

EU Strategic Compass, March 2022

- Russia's War of Aggression and revision of territorial borders as attack on post-1990 European Security Order

Putin's Model of Order:

- Europe: Restitution of an **Imperial Order** in post-Soviet space => War as late product of the dissolution of the USSR => neo-imperial, irredentist war for „Greater Russia“
- Global: **Multipolar Order**, controlled by great powers, ending US/Western hegemony => war about „zones of privileged interests“

„Liberal International Order“:

- Defending a **rule-based multilateral European (and global) order** => War understood as struggle of (liberal) democracies and (neo-imperial) autocracies

=> Emerging European security order shaped by (a) the nature, dynamics & outcome of the War, (b) counter-reactions of US, NATO, EU („Anti-Putin coalition“) and (c) domestic development in Russia

- Ordering as a response to the **problem of anarchy** in the system of states => states as (main) authors as well subjects of order
- International order understood as „patterned or structured relationship among units“ (Lake/Martin/Risse 2021) => guiding political actions and (normative) orientation of state/non-state actors, based on „governing arrangements“, including „fundamental rules, principles and institutions“ (Ikenberry 2021)
- Historically: Simultaneity or overlap of partial orders or different „spaces of orders“ (Osterhammel 2010) => coexistence or competition of different models of order as a rule than rather the exception
- Establishing of Europe's Security (or Peace) Orders often intertwined with the end of major wars and/or the dissolution of empires: post-1648, post-1815, post-1918, post-1945 or post-1990
- „New orders“ => empirically often shaped by a combination of (partial) return to a status quo ante and (institutional) innovations

- ***CSCE Charter of Paris (1990, signed by 34 states, incl. USA and USSR):***

“With the ending of the division of Europe, we will strive for a **new quality in our security relations** while fully respecting each other's freedom of choice in that respect. **Security is indivisible and the security of every participating State is inseparably linked to that of all the others.** We therefore pledge to co-operate in strengthening confidence and security among us and in promoting arms control and disarmament.”

- ***OSCE Charter for European Security (1999)***

“Each participating State has an equal right to security. We reaffirm the inherent right of each and every participating **State to be free to choose or change its security arrangements, including treaties of alliance**, as they evolve. Each State also has the right to neutrality. Each participating State will respect the rights of all others in these regards. **They will not strengthen their security at the expense of the security of other States.** Within the OSCE no State, group of States or organization can have any pre-eminent responsibility for maintaining peace and stability in the OSCE area or can consider any part of the OSCE area as its sphere of influence.”

- ⇒ Post-1990: No pan-European Order of collective security, but de facto overlapping of partial orders provided by OSCE, NATO+ and EU+ => cooperative forms of security
- ⇒ (Failed) attempts to integrate Russia institutionally: MS in Council of Europe (1996-2022), G7 => G8 (1998-2014), EU-RUS-PCA (1997), EU-RUS-Summits (until 2014, 32x), Budapest Memorandum (1994), NATO PfP (1994), Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (1997), NATO-RUS-Council (2002, 1997 PJC)
- ⇒ Since mid-2000s: Increasing security-related conflicts and crises between US/EU and Putin's Russia => successive dissociation of Russia from institutional arrangements and „integration competition“ re Eastern Europe / post-Soviet space
- ⇒ Since 2014: Elements of „confrontational“ security order (NATO/EU vs. RUS), combined with formats for negotiation and dialogue

- ⇒ **OSCE paralyzed**, role as pan-European forum for cooperative security most likely further marginalized
- ⇒ **Role of US:** remains major guarantor for European security, biggest military supporter for UKR
- ⇒ **Revival of NATO:** FIN + SWE joining NATO, European NATO members increase defence capacities (2% goal), deployment of troops at the Eastern flank
- ⇒ **Role of the EU:** sanction policy against Russia, fin./mil./hum. support for (Rebuild) UKR => strengthening of EU-NATO cooperation, reviving EU enlargement (WB 6), candidate status for UKR/MOL, new EU approach for EaP needed
- ⇒ **Role of Germany:** End of Merkel-Steinmeier approach to Russia, increased defence budget + 2nd biggest supporter of UKR, however: implementing „Zeitenwende“ for Defence/Security/Energy/Trade policies? Prepared for leadership in Europe?

- European security not with or without Russia, but against Putin's Russia => **„confrontational“ dimension of the emerging security order**
 - (1) Security guarantees for post-war Ukraine and rebuilding post-war Ukraine
 - (2) Strengthening Euro-Atlantic defence & deterrence capabilities
 - (3) Sustained economic, fiscal and political sanction regime against Russia & Putin's regime
 - (4) Decoupling from Russia's resources & economy (=> EU energy & trade policy)
 - (5) Improving cybersecurity, protection of critical infrastructure & fight against digital disinformation
 - (6) Building alliances & partnerships outside Europe, isolating Russia internationally
 - (7) Integration of East/South-East European regions into Euro-Atlantic security structures

- Enhancing and deepening security cooperation between EU and non-EU states => speed-up of accession process for candidate states (WB 6, UKR/MOL), different models of gradual/staged integration => need for interim solutions
 - Need for a „Wider Europe“ forum instead of „traditional“ EU neighbourhood policy (EaP)
 - **European Political Community**, based on Macron’s initiative (9.5.2022), EPC summits in Czech Rep (6.10.2022), Moldova (1.6.2023) and Spain (5.10.2023) => So far: Bi-annual informal meetings and platform for political dialogue with no decisions and actions
- => What could be a way forward?

From EPC to Greater European Council?

Establishing a „**Greater European Council**“ for strengthening cooperative security between EU and non-EU states => transition into an EUplus-Format (=> institutional analogy to the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council at NATO)

- Multilateral body for EU-27 plus non-EU-members (candidate and non-candidate states), main forum for a new Wider Europe policy (no neighbourhood policy)
- Directly connected to the European Council & EU Foreign Affairs Council, successive use of other thematic Council configurations, co-chaired by President of the European Council and a rotating non-EU-member
- Not designed as a consultative forum, but as a decision-making body, aiming at common positions and joint actions on global, pan-European and trans-regional security issues, incl. socio-economic, mobility, energy, technology and environmental questions
- Mobilizing of resources and funds for joint actions, involving EU COM and other European and member-states financial institutions
- Functioning as enabler for gradual transition to EU membership for applicant states, open up flexible formats for other non-EU states
- For implementing the Greater European Council: No formal EU treaty reform necessary, but political consensus among EU-27 needed and consent of non-EU states

- „Zeitenwende“ will translate into a gradual transformation of European Security Order
- European Security Order: shaped by a dualism of „confrontational“ politics (vis-à-vis Russia/Belarus) and enhanced cooperation (EU and non-EU)
- Emerging Security Order need to end limbo situations for countries between NATO/EU and Russia (no more „divided security“)
- European Security Order remains multi-layered (no super structure) => strategic interplay of NATO, EU and a „Greater European Council“ (as institutional innovation) needed
- Short-term tasks: continuing supporting Ukraine, launching pan-European/sub-regional initiatives (incl. addressing level of societies), managing bilateral conflicts within EU-27 and among non-EU states
- Mid-term: Enlargement to EU 36 (WB 6plus UKR, MOL + GEO), addressing key „sticking points“ for enlargement (EU budget and institutional reform)
- Wild Card: Quo vadis (post-)Putin Russia?