

Those Who Do Not Know the Past are Condemned to Repeat it¹

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*René Magritte 1962: Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it
(Smithsonian American Art Museum, Washington DC)*

*Motto: In the movie Raiders of the Lost Ark, who was Indiana Jones fighting?
... Besides the snakes!³*

¹ George Santayana: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." (The Life of Reason, 1905). The study is a **discussion paper** and was originally published in Hungarian in the Hungarian Economic Geography and Urban Marketing Workshop ISSN 2939-516X: 20 (2025) 20.013. Download https://geo.nje.hu/storage/content/4966/files/K13_TOZSA.pdf

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³ In one of his videos, the Hungarian-born American comedian *Jerry Seinfeld* plays a history teacher at an American high school who cannot get his pupils to work out who the Americans and the British were fighting against in World War II. So, referring to an Indiana Jones film – which every young person had seen at the time – he tries to guide the pupils towards the answer. When he asks the question, every student eagerly raises their hand, but when he adds 'besides the snakes' – no one does. Download: https://youtu.be/Bdf_XdDwc-o?si=pMRAtk9OrKPTfIMK

Abstract

Current observations suggest that in contemporary Western-Atlantic culture, the literary, geographical, and historical literacy of younger generations falls significantly short when measured against the standards of generations socialized during the second half of the 20th century.⁴ In analysing the geopolitical drivers of contemporary conflicts – most notably the war in Ukraine – it is evident that several leading Euro-Atlantic politicians, mainstream media outlets, and members of European institutions (with the exception of certain Hungarian representatives) operate with a level of historical and geographical awareness comparable to the high school students satirized by *Jerry Seinfeld* in the video accompanying the motto. This deficiency is particularly concerning regarding Europe's potential drift toward a third world war. This paper, presented as a 13-point discussion piece, reflects the author's independent perspective and seeks to provide a comprehensive explanation for the current geopolitical situation.

The Russo - Ukrainian War as a Tool for Consolidating the U.S. Economic Power

The prevailing narrative within the EU, across Hungarian party politics, and throughout the mainstream media, suggests that the conflict which erupted in 2022 was triggered solely by the Russian President's profound hostility toward democracy. According to this view, the Russian military's ultimate objective was to storm and occupy the European Union, from Poland to Portugal. Ukraine – having embarked on a path of democratic development in 2014 – was seen as the first obstacle to be overcome; however, the resistance of the Ukrainian army, bolstered by U.S. and EU assistance, purportedly thwarted this plan. This interpretation has become the standard knowledge for the educated European public: the belief that Ukraine is defending not only its own sovereignty but the collective freedom of the European Union. Consequently, it is argued that the EU must support the Ukrainian struggle at any cost, even when it directly contradicts its own economic interests.⁵ Any actor not aligned with this consensus, such as the Hungarian government up to 2026, has been summarily labelled pro-Russian, authoritarian, and an accomplice to the aggressor.

1. Cui prodest?⁶

Setting aside the primary causes of the First and Second World Wars, as well as the immense economic benefits that consolidated American global hegemony⁷ let us review the major

⁴ Tózsai I. 2020. *Recrudescunt diutina inclytae gentis Hungarae vulnera*, or the decline of Hungarian identity (In: Festschrift in honour of Miklós Imre on his 65th birthday), which includes the results of a survey – conducted outside the curriculum – carried out between 2013 and 2015 amongst students at Corvinus University of Budapest and the National University of Public Service.

⁵ Alternatively, some arrive at the same conclusion based on ethical and ideological grounds, focusing on opposition to Russian aggression and the necessity of supporting the victim. In both instances, there is a distinct lack of multifaceted, critical analysis – one free from partisan bias and the limitations of a singular perspective.

⁶ A Roman legal maxim by *Lucius Annaeus Seneca* from his play *Medea*, originally: '**cui prodest scelus, is fecit**' (meaning: '*whoever profits by the crime, committed it*').

⁷ However, this is not an exclusively American interest. At the dawn of the 20th century, the centre of globalist power resided in Great Britain; after 1913, it partially relocated to the United States, which achieved global economic hegemony by expanding its private capital interests and establishing the Federal Reserve (FED) to coordinate the dollar as a global currency. From there, it expanded globally, though the power centre maintained a strategic base in the City of London. Under President *Biden's* administration – and prior to his election – the globalist

geopolitical milestones of the 21st century as the driving forces behind the current situation. In doing so, we must consistently apply the Roman legal maxim *Cui prodest?* (Who stands to gain?), as any favourable or unfavourable geopolitical shift inevitably serves specific economic powers or interests – often at the expense of others, or indeed, the global community.

2. A New Adversary: 21st-Century Radical Islam

Following the end of the Cold War (1990–1993) and the political dissolution of the Soviet Union, the primary driver of U.S. technological and economic power – the military-industrial complex – sought a new strategic adversary. This was found in the form of Islamic terrorism, a world divided by sectarian conflict, particularly following the attacks on the Twin Towers of the World Trade Center on **September 11, 2001**.⁸ In the post-Soviet era, this new, "invisible," and terrifying enemy served to justify the rapid expansion of not only the traditional military sector but also the burgeoning security and surveillance technology industries.

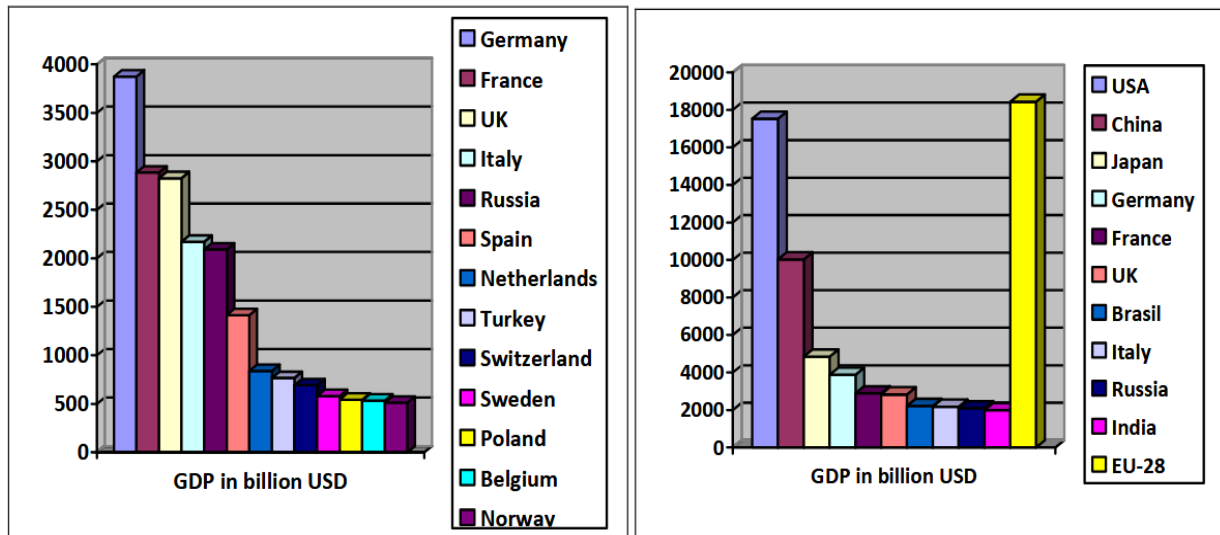
3. The Ascendance of the European Union

In the meantime, the European Union's economy – leveraging Euro-Atlantic technical expertise alongside affordable Russian energy and raw materials – expanded to such a degree that the euro was introduced to the global market on **January 1, 2002**, as a direct rival to the previously dominant U.S. dollar. Consequently, the EU emerged as a quasi-competitor and a significant challenger to U.S. economic hegemony. By this period, Germany, reunified in 1990, had established itself as the primary economic engine of the Union. The EU subsequently underwent a substantial eastward expansion, with ten nations joining on **May 1, 2004**, followed by two on **January 1, 2007**, and one on **July 1, 2013**. By **2014**, the EU's development reached a pivotal threshold: according to the 2015 GDP forecasts published by the World Bank, the CIA, and the IMF, 2015 was projected to be the first year in which the combined GDP of the 28 Member States would surpass that of the United States by \$909 billion.⁹ This projection represented a profound economic challenge, suggesting that strategic intervention would be necessary to alter this trajectory before 2015.

capital network promoted 'woke' ideology within the US to incite rebellion against traditional Republican structures (labelling *Trump* a 'racist'). In Europe, neoliberalism served as a 'juristocratic club,' while in Ukraine, nationalism was intensified to facilitate a proxy war – utilizing whichever ideology best served the strategic interests at hand (for more details, see Müller A. 2024).

⁸ The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and the White House were preceded by efforts from the U.S. and several Western European nations to "export democracy" to North Africa and the Middle East, often in alignment with the interests of oil multinationals. This interventionism remains a significant catalyst for Islamic radicalization to this day. While radicalization serves as a rationale for military-industrial development, specialized technical advancements designed to counter asymmetric warfare have seen limited success, as evidenced by the Israeli military's challenges in Gaza since 2023. Note: A purely cynical or sarcastic interpretation of the timing of the September 11 attacks remains speculative; such a view may overlook the genuine resurgence of militant Muslim forces, their religious motivations, and their capacity for resistance, reducing complex events to a mere "American conspiracy." While the attacks were undoubtedly religious in nature and targeted symbolic structures according to an Arab-Muslim temporal logic, they undeniably triggered a massive expansion of Western surveillance systems (impacting human rights regulations) and bolstered the arms industry. These consequences, however, should be viewed as a Western reaction rather than the original intent of the terrorists.

⁹ Tózsá I. 2014. *Regional and Economic Geography of the European Countries*. Textbook, Corvinus University of Budapest



The ascendance of the European Union

The chart on the left presents the top 13 European nations by GDP in 2014, clearly illustrating Germany's economic dominance (Source: www.knoema.com).

The chart on the right, however, displays the 2015 projections on the mean average of IMF, World Bank and CIA forecasts published in 2014. This comparison covers the world's top ten economies (led by the U.S.) alongside the aggregate GDP forecast for the EU-28 member states – driven primarily by the German economy. According to these projections, the EU-28's combined GDP was expected to reach \$18,437 billion, surpassing the United States' \$17,528 billion.

Source: Author's own compilation based on the average of IMF, World Bank, and CIA forecasts.

4. The Strain on the European Union's Social Safety Net

In 2010 – amidst a period of dynamic economic growth within the EU – the "Arab Spring" emerged as part of a democratization process in North Africa and the Middle East. This movement led to the destabilization of two significant regional powers: the fall of Muammar Gaddafi in Libya (**October 20, 2011**) and the onset of the protracted conflict against the Assad regime in Syria (**March 15, 2011**). These events effectively opened a "gateway" from Africa and Asia, facilitating the movement of populations fleeing civil wars and dire economic conditions toward the prosperous European Union. This trend culminated in 2015, driven by the *Willkommenskultur* (**August 31, 2015**) proclaimed by the German Chancellor. While German society, facing a demographic decline, initially hoped these influxes would provide a source of affordable labour, the reality proved more complex. Ultimately, the significant increase in social expenditures and the failure of multicultural integration to deliver its anticipated benefits have placed a substantial structural burden on Germany and the EU.

5. The Potential Emergence of the Eurasian Supercontinent

Simultaneously, initiated by a rapidly developing China, the "One Belt One Road" (OBOR) initiative – a geo-economic integration program representing the "New Silk Road" – was announced in 2013 (**September 17, 2013**). This project aimed to establish a strategic economic link between China, Russia, and the European Union. Had the OBOR initiative been fully realized according to China's strategic vision, it would have fundamentally undermined the foundations of Euro-Atlantic economic hegemony. The synergy of Chinese labour and capital,

European (primarily German) technological expertise, and Russian raw materials and energy resources would have posed a critical threat to North American global economic dominance.

6. The Further Weakening of the European Union: Brexit

In line with specific strategic interests, it became an unavoidable necessity to weaken the European Union – and primarily the German economy – simultaneously with the demographic shifts caused by the influx of African and Asian populations. Coincidentally, it was precisely during this period that Brexit was initiated; the United Kingdom's withdrawal from the EU (**June 23, 2016**) steered the collective economic strength of the EU-27 toward a significantly more moderate growth trajectory. The prospect of massive continental economic integration via the New Silk Road – where Chinese economic power openly challenged U.S. competitiveness, bolstered by the EU's industrial strength and inexhaustible Russian energy and raw material resources – represented a concentration of power that threatened the very survival of American global economic hegemony, including the U.S. dollar's status as the primary global reserve currency. Consequently, it served certain strategic interests to ensure that this Chinese – Russian – European economic integration would never be realized.

7. Strategic Preparations for the Decoupling of the European Union and Russia

The overarching objective was to permanently sever ties between the EU and Russia. This process had to be executed in a manner that ensured the support of the Euro-Atlantic citizenry, the Western intelligentsia, and civil society, even if such a rupture directly contradicted the EU's economic interests. Consequently, the "Maidan Revolution" erupted in Ukraine – a pivotal buffer state between the EU and Russia – on **November 21, 2013**. During these events, the pro-Russian leadership was replaced by a government with a clear Euro-Atlantic orientation, fuelled by the prospect of rapid EU accession and the promise of a significantly higher standard of living for the Ukrainian populace. However, this democratization process was accompanied by a surge in Ukrainian nationalism, evidenced by restrictive language laws and nationalist demonstrations. These sentiments were directed not only at larger groups but also at small indigenous minorities, such as the Hungarians, as manifested in slogans like "*This is Ukraine*" and "*Death to the Hungarians*")¹⁰ In the case of the ethnic Russian minority – numbering nearly 20 million and concentrated in Eastern Ukraine – these tensions escalated into conditions akin to a civil war **from 2014** onward. The Russian leadership reacted swiftly to the political shift in Kyiv, annexing the militarily strategic Crimean Peninsula following a referendum (**March 16, 2014**). This move further intensified the Ukrainian - Russian conflict, leading to atrocities such as the "*Odessa massacre*" (**May 2, 2014**). While the UN remained largely ineffective in addressing the escalating civil strife, Russia – invoking Article 51 of the UN Charter – asserted its authority to conduct "special military operations" under the guise of protecting the ethnic Russian minority in Ukraine.¹¹

¹⁰ It is well-documented that Transcarpathia, the northwestern region of Ukraine, was an integral part of the Hungarian state for over a millennium. Prior to 2022 (including Crimea), this region accounted for only 2.1% of Ukraine's total land area, and the indigenous Hungarian minority constituted approximately 0.3% (roughly 150,000 people) of the national population.

¹¹ Article 51 of the UN Charter pertains to the inherent right of self-defence. However, the majority of international legal analysts and the UN General Assembly rejected the application of this article as a justification for protecting ethnic minorities through external military intervention (see Schmitt, 2022).

8. The Finalisation of Russia's Secession and the Erosion of EU Competitiveness

The conflict between Ukraine and Russia continued to escalate until **February 24, 2022**, when Russia launched a full-scale military invasion of Ukraine. This operation, conducted in violation of international law, naturally galvanised the entire Euro - Atlantic community in support of the Ukrainian cause. The ensuing war has resulted in such a profound loss of life among both combatants and civilians that it has rendered the normalisation of Russo - Ukrainian relations impossible for generations to come. Consequently, a deep geopolitical wedge has been driven between the EU and Russia, effectively dividing Europe with a new "*Iron Curtain*" and postponing Eurasian economic integration for decades. The sole geopolitical beneficiary of this shift is a non-Eurasian superpower. While the Euro-Atlantic world has imposed extensive economic sanctions against Russia, the primary economic casualty of this policy has been the European Union itself, most notably Germany. The sabotage of the "*Nord Stream*" gas pipelines (**September 26, 2022**) – crucial energy arteries for Western Europe and the German industrial base – marked the definitive cessation of the EU's reliance on Russian energy and raw materials. The drastic decline in the Union's competitiveness was subsequently documented in the so-called *Draghi Report* (**September 24, 2024**).

And once again: *Cui prodest?*

When examining whose interests these events serve – and exclusively whose – it becomes evident that they certainly do not serve Ukraine's. Even if the country is granted EU membership as "compensation," while a devastated nation can be rebuilt, lost lives are irreplaceable. Similarly, it is clearly not in Russia's interest to have lost access to the EU market and, more importantly, the opportunity for deep economic integration with Europe. Consequently, Russia – a nation European in its cultural roots – is forced to pivot economically toward Asia, specifically China, Iran, and India. Ultimately, this situation is profoundly detrimental to the European Union; indeed, alongside the partially destroyed Ukraine, the EU is the primary victim of this shift. Landlocked Member States, in particular, must now procure the energy and raw materials essential for their economies from the Middle East and the U.S., albeit at a significantly higher cost. China, too, faces setbacks, as the "*New Silk Road*" initiative remains unfulfilled, forcing Beijing to settle for an economic integration limited primarily to Russia.

It must be concluded that the geopolitical crisis in Ukraine serves solely and exclusively to maintain the revenues of the United States – or more precisely, those of the predominantly U.S.-based multinational corporations – securing the U.S. position as a global hegemon and preserving the U.S. dollar's role as the primary global currency¹² Regrettably, the majority of the European Parliament, the European Commission, and – with a few notable exceptions – the European Council itself appear to serve these external objectives, often in direct opposition to the EU's own sovereign interests.¹³

¹² At least in the short term. This situation has accelerated the convergence between Russia and various Asian powers, further reinforcing the existing shift of global economic gravity toward the Pacific Rim and South Asia. This offers Russia the prospect of a more dynamic network of relationships, particularly if the EU becomes over-extended by the immense task of "absorbing" Ukraine.

¹³ It should be noted that international private capital does not represent an exclusively U.S. interest, although U.S. capital shares are predominant. These processes are orchestrated by globalist investment funds and asset managers, who effectively delegate their representatives – such as Chancellor *Merz*, President *von der Leyen*, or President *Macron* – to key leadership positions. In this framework, the U.S. military serves as the executive arm. While the previous administration utilised legal frameworks as a tool through the EU, the overarching goal of globalist asset managers remains the establishment of a global economic government. The public ideological

9. America or Britain?

This remains the case even though the U.S. President is now (as of **January 20, 2025**) urging an end to the Russo - Ukrainian war. Leading EU politicians, however, find themselves unable to withdraw their support for Ukraine without a catastrophic "loss of face," as such a retreat would call into question the sacrifice of thousands of patriots on both sides.¹⁴ Furthermore, Ukraine's accession to the EU would pose a significant challenge, primarily to the agricultural and food industries of Central Europe, unless strict derogations are applied – similar to those imposed by older Member States on the nations that joined in 2004. Simultaneously, the task of reconstruction – which would undoubtedly boost GDP – along with access to local resources and a vast new market, could trigger an economic boom for the EU; this is likely what leading EU politicians are anticipating. Despite the stated intention of the *Donald Trump* administration to conclude the war, the primary beneficiaries of the arms race remain the U.S.-based global corporations and their financial power centres, which have since partially relocated to London. Thus, Brexit not only served to weaken the EU but also established a strategic base to represent American interests in Europe in the event of a Republican administration replacing the Democratic one – a shift that indeed occurred in 2025.

10. Israel – Gaza – Iran

The brutal attack by Hamas against Israel (**October 7, 2023**) once again disrupted Middle Eastern stability, followed by the actions of Yemeni Houthi insurgents in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden (**October 3, 2023**). Regional political and military instability has further intensified due to Israeli – Iranian missile exchanges and subsequent military operations (**June 13, 2025**). From a global geopolitical perspective, one must ask whose interests are served by the fact that in Israel (20,770 km²) – an area considerably smaller than the Transdanubia region of Hungary (36,612 km²) – terrorists were allegedly permitted to wreak havoc for two and a half hours, despite an army capable of reaching any point within ten minutes.¹⁵ This delay provided a *casus belli* for the offensive in the Gaza Strip and the gradual escalation toward a potential conflict with Iran. Furthermore, from a strategic standpoint, whose interests are served if, during a Judeo - Islamic regional war, Iran were to close the Strait of Hormuz – the transit point for approximately one-fifth of the world's crude oil exports? In such a scenario, the European Union – and

foundations of this movement are represented by figures such as *Benjamin Constant* and *Karl Popper*, while its practical implementation is associated with *Klaus Schwab* and *George Soros*. Under this strategy, sovereign European nations are being transformed into dependencies, with the goal of dominating the entire EU through a centralised authority. From this perspective, every nation – including the U.S. itself – is treated as a "hostage" within a sphere of influence, susceptible to blackmail and being "forced to its knees," primarily through the influence of the independent and democratic media. The energy issue is equally complex; globalist managers defend existing investments, which explains the aggressive promotion of U.S. LNG within the EU. In contrast, President Trump's emphasis on oil exports stems from a need to manage the national debt – a task that remains daunting despite partial successes (for further details, see Müller, 2024).

¹⁴ It is worth noting that a substantial portion of the Russian forces consists of ethnic Russians from Ukraine, who have been defending their homeland since 2014 – not against Russia, but against their own compatriots, the Ukrainians.

¹⁵ Specifically, from 6:30 am to 9:00 am. This incident bears an eerie resemblance to historical anomalies, such as when the U.S. Navy purportedly failed to detect the Japanese fleet's advance on Pearl Harbor in 1941, or when the U.S. Air Force was unable to locate the fourth hijacked aircraft in 2001.

Germany in particular – deprived of both Russian and Middle Eastern energy, would be forced to rely almost exclusively on oil supplied by the United States.¹⁶

11. From a Geostrategic Perspective

The aforementioned developments suggest that the economic interests of the United States, as a global hegemon, are transforming the territory of the European Union into an American strategic base: a consumer society homogenised by mass migration from Africa and Asia, stripped of sovereign nation-state policies, deprived of independent energy supply chains, and lacking autonomous military capabilities. Since ideological shifts – such as those driven by the "rule of law" narratives, neoliberalism, the promotion of *LGBTQ+* rights, the uncritical adoption of American "*cancel culture*," and "*woke*" sensitivity – take effect relatively slowly, strategic military and economic pressure is utilised to accelerate the transformation of the European Union, and Germany in particular, into an American "province." To prevent isolation in its inevitable economic, and potentially military, confrontation with the Sino – Russian – Indian alliance, it is in Washington's fundamental geostrophic interest to maintain a European base that is entirely subservient to its goals.

To achieve this, the energy-rich nations of Great Britain and Norway are insufficient; the territory of the European Union as a whole – encompassing nearly half of the continent – is required. This endeavour is supported by a majority within the EU's legislative, judicial, and executive branches. Their rhetoric, however, often lacks substantive argumentation reflecting European economic interests, appearing instead to serve American geostrategy exclusively. Furthermore, it is suggested that it is in the strategic interest of the U.S. that a potential third global conflict be fought on European soil – as was the case with the first two world wars – to ensure that any clash with Chinese or Russian forces does not spill over into the Arctic, Canada, or Greenland, directly on the U.S. "doorstep."

Currently, Western, Southern, Northern, Central, and Eastern Europe serve as this intended buffer zone. Unlike the Cold War era, Central Europe is no longer under Russian military occupation and following the accession of Sweden and Finland to NATO, Northern Europe has abandoned its neutrality. Consequently, from this perspective, conditions are favourable for a new conflict to be fought here by pitting European factions against one another at a safe distance from North America. This trajectory is facilitated by the European Commission and the European Parliament, while digital media – serving as the primary information source for younger generations – convinces parts of the European public to voluntarily surrender economic competitiveness, national sovereignty, and collective security.

The table below provides a comprehensive summary of the aforementioned developments, illustrating the sequence of geopolitical events that occurred – ostensibly by coincidence – during the first quarter of the 21st century. These events collectively served the strategic objective of halting the economic expansion of the European Union, specifically targeting the industrial and financial dominance of Germany.

¹⁶ Moreover, significant religious motivations underpin the Middle Eastern conflict. Radical Islam is currently undergoing a period comparable to the 16th century in Christian history – the era spanning the Inquisition and the Reformation. The cyclical nature of historical patterns is convincingly analysed in Hungarian geopolitical literature by György Matolcsy (2022), with particular focus on the 1940s and 1970s.

“PRO” USA geopolitical impacts		“PRO” EU geopolitical impacts
28 February: U.S. bombing of Iran, closure of the Strait of Hormuz	2026	
28 July: U.S. - EU Trade Agreement 13 June: Outbreak of the Israel - Iran War	2025	20 January: Inaugural address of President <i>Trump</i>
	2024	24 September: Publication of the <i>Draghi Report</i> on EU competitiveness
3 December: Maritime hazards in the Red Sea 7 October: Outbreak of the Israel - Gaza War	2023	
26 September: Sabotage of the <i>Nord Stream</i> pipelines 24 February: Outbreak of the Russo - Ukrainian War	2022	
	2021	
	2020	
	2019	
	2018	
	2017	
23 June: BREXIT	2016	
31 August: Proliferation of the <i>Willkommenskultur</i>	2015	
May: Onset of civil strife in Eastern Ukraine 2 May: The <i>Odessa Massacre</i> 16 March: Annexation of the Crimean Peninsula	2014	April: IMF, WB, CIA: GDP Projections for 2015
21 November: The <i>Maidan Revolution</i> (Euromaidan)	2013	7 September: Announcement of the OBOR Eurasian Integration Initiative 1 July: EU enlargement: accession of Croatia (EU-28)
	2012	
20 October: Arab Spring, collapse of the Libyan regime 15 March: Arab Spring, outbreak of the Syrian conflict	2011	
	2010	
	2009	
	2008	
	2007	1 January: EU enlargement: accession of Bulgaria and Romania (EU-27)
	2006	
	2005	
	2004	1 May: The Great enlargement: accession of 10 member states (EU-25)
	2003	
	2002	1 January: Global market introduction of the Euro
11 September: The “9/11” Terrorist attacks (WTC)	2001	

Strategic geopolitical drivers in the first quarter of the 21st century, aimed at maintaining U.S. global economic primacy and eroding EU competitiveness

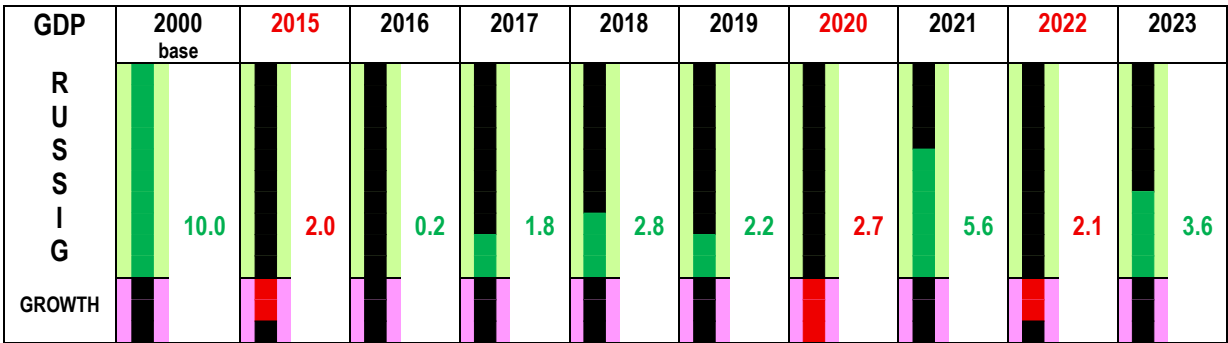
(Source: Author's own compilation)

The following charts illustrate this perspective from a financial standpoint: namely, that the Russo - Ukrainian war serves as a modern theatre for a long-standing American – German geopolitical rivalry, mirroring the underlying dynamics of the First and Second World Wars.

Due to a contemporary deficiency in historical literacy, Europe is failing to learn from the past and is once again being forced to relive a cycle reminiscent of the era when the Austro - Hungarian invasion of Serbia triggered a global conflict. In reality that conflagration was designed to halt German eastward expansion. Similarly, when Germany invaded Poland, it represented another fundamental clash of American – German geostrategic interests. Now, as Russia invades Ukraine, American and German aspirations for continental and global influence are clashing once more. Regrettably, this trajectory appears to be leading toward a third global conflict, confirming the adage that those who are ignorant of history are condemned to repeat it.

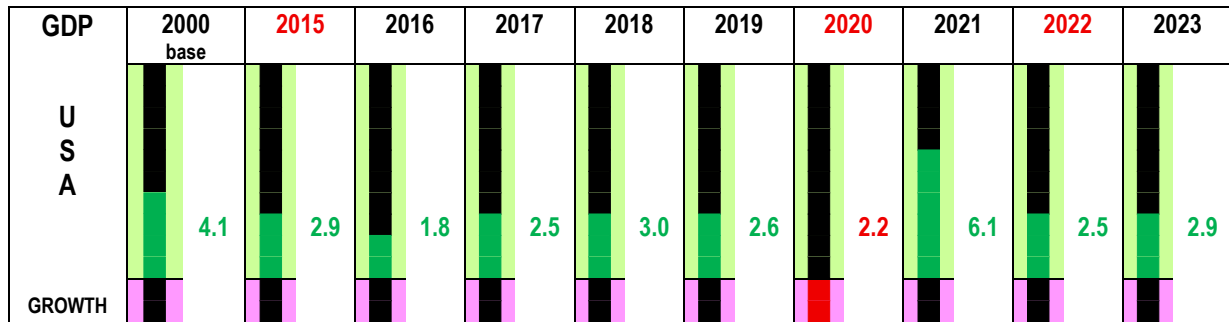
As Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* famously said, you should "*be innocent of the knowledge, till thou applaud the deed*" i.e. until it is revealed by the results. GDP data for the period 2000–2023 for key actors – Russia, the United States, China, the European Union, Germany, and Ukraine (including, notably, Hungary) – offer a comprehensive reflection of the prevailing economic climate. These indicators clearly delineate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, the subsequent recovery, and the ensuing Russo - Ukrainian war.

The data reveals that the primary casualty is Ukraine – a nation deserving of a better fate yet exploited by external strategic interests. This is followed by the significant economic decline of the European Union and Germany. Conversely, the two primary "winners" are the United States and China, although the latter’s interests would have been more effectively served by Eurasian economic integration via the New Silk Road. Indeed, the prevention of this integration can be identified as the fundamental root cause of the current conflict.



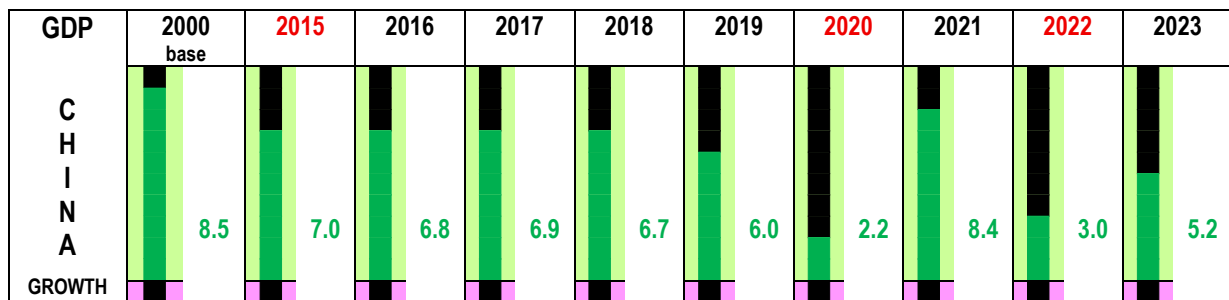
Trends in Russian GDP (2000–2023), indexed to the year 2000.

Alongside the 2.7% contraction in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the adverse effects of geopolitical tensions following the 2014 annexation of Crimea and the 2022 invasion of Ukraine are evident in the 2.0% and 2.1% declines, respectively. However, the anticipated negative impact of EU sanctions appears to have been offset by a 3.6% growth rate in 2023.



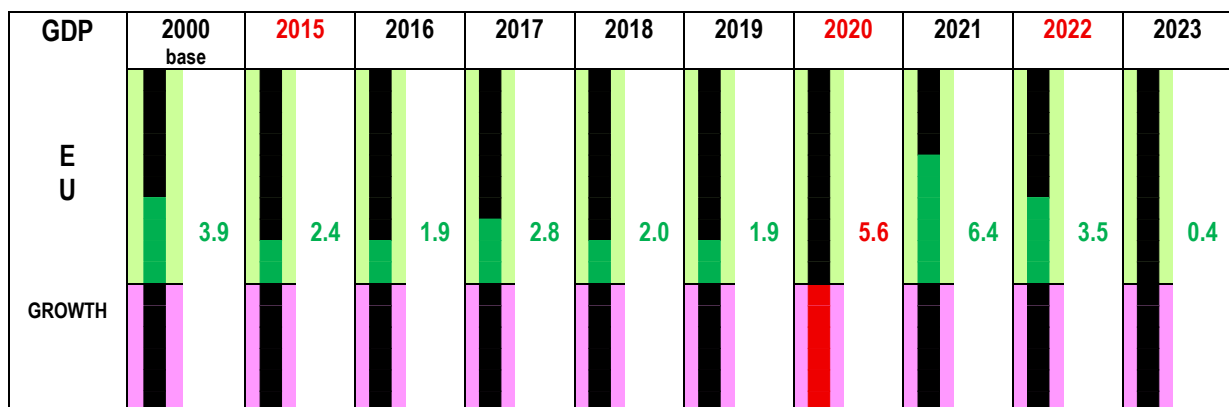
U.S. GDP growth (2015–2023) indexed to the base year 2000.

The economy experienced a significant contraction of 2.2% due to the COVID-19 pandemic. However, during the subsequent period characterized by heightened military expenditure related to the conflict in Ukraine, a return to "normalised," moderately robust growth rates of between 2% and 3% is observed.



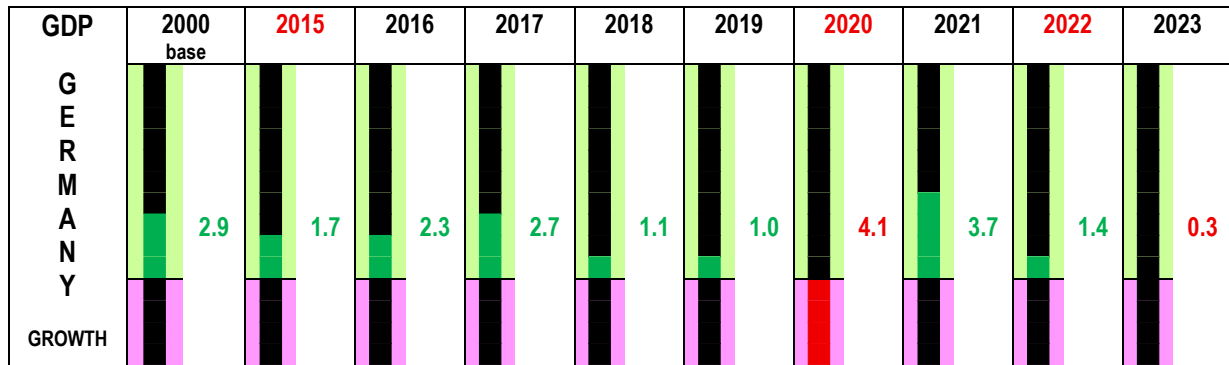
China's GDP growth (2015–2023) indexed to the base year 2000.

Even the COVID-19 pandemic only resulted in a temporary deceleration of China's "standard" 6–8% annual growth rate, reducing it to 2.2%. Following this period, the robust upward trajectory appears to be resuming.



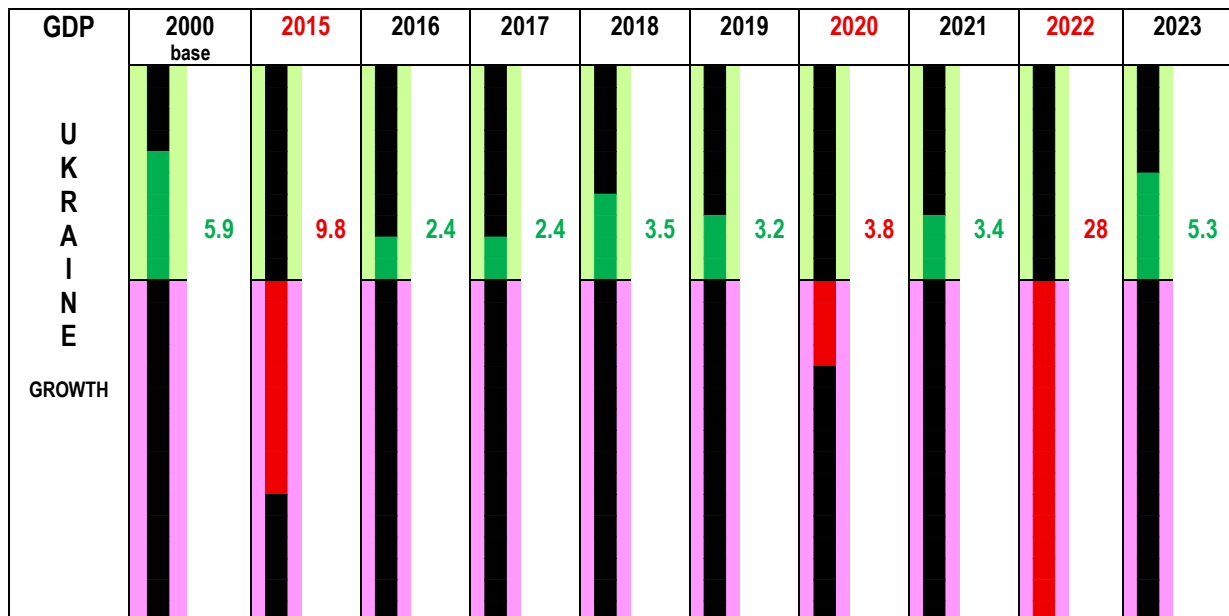
EU GDP development (2015–2023) indexed to the base year 2000.

Following the pandemic-induced trough (a contraction of 5.6%) and the subsequent recovery (+6.4%), a precipitous decline is observed in 2022–2023, with growth plummeting from 3.5% to 0.4%. This stagnation is primarily attributable to the multifaceted impact of the sanctions imposed following the conflict in Ukraine.



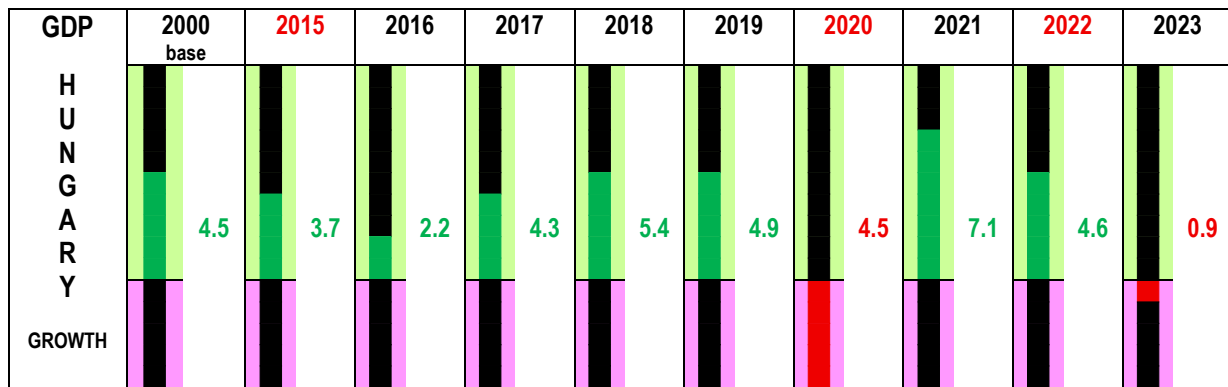
German GDP trends (2015–2023) indexed to the base year 2000.

The significant contraction during the COVID-19 pandemic (–4.1%) was followed by a recovery of 3.7%. Subsequently, a consistent downturn is observed in 2022–2023, with growth rates falling from 1.4% to –0.3%, indicating a transition into recessionary territory.



Ukraine's GDP development (2015–2023) indexed to the base year 2000.

The downturn triggered by the 2014–2015 political crisis (–9.8%) was followed by a period of steady, moderate growth (ranging from 2.4% to 3.2%). Following a 3.8% contraction during the COVID-19 pandemic and a subsequent 3.4% recovery, the 2022 military invasion resulted in an unprecedented 28% collapse in GDP. More recently, as a consequence of substantial international aid and ongoing reconstruction efforts, a significant rebound of 5.3% has been observed.



Hungarian GDP growth (2015–2023) indexed to the base year 2000.

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly disrupted economic expansion, resulting in a 4.5% contraction. Subsequently, the conflict in Ukraine exerted a notable negative impact; despite a robust post-pandemic surge of 7.1% in 2021 and 4.6% in 2022, the economy experienced a 0.9% decline in 2023.

Compiled by the author. Source: www.databank.worldbank.org (2025)

12. Attila, Genghis, Napoleon, and Hitler

Any notion within Euro-Atlantic public opinion that Russia can be "brought to its knees" – particularly through military means – suggests that otherwise educated citizens and politicians possess a profound ignorance of both geography and history, as the title of this paper indicates. It would be a catastrophe to relive the horrors of the First and Second World Wars in the form of a third European global conflict – a trajectory toward which Europe appears to be drifting, ostensibly for the sake of preserving American economic hegemony. None of the conquerors mentioned above – despite occupying various Eastern European territories – were able to permanently subdue the local populations or retain those lands. Furthermore, it must be noted that Eastern Europe, representing more than half of the continent, accounts for less than a quarter of Russia's total landmass.¹⁷ The vast expanse of North Asia constitutes the bulk of Russia, containing the Earth's most inexhaustible mineral wealth and resources – only a fraction of which has been exploited, even during seven decades of Soviet rule. Russia is not only the largest nation by area but also arguably the richest in terms of resources.

The conquerors cited in the subtitle could provide cautionary tales regarding the occupation of these territories and the futility of attempting to "subdue" their peoples, even when employing the most formidable armies of their respective eras – the Huns, Mongols, the French *Grande Armée*,¹⁸ and the German *Wehrmacht*¹⁹ – which, in contemporary terms, find their parallel in NATO.²⁰ It is a profound failure that Euro-Atlantic leaders appear oblivious to these historical and geographical realities, thereby forfeiting the opportunity to learn from them. It is my fervent hope that today's Hungarian youth – as members of the NATO alliance – will not be compelled to march into Ukraine to confront Russian forces. Such an advance might lead them once again

¹⁷ Russia's territory encompasses 17.1 million km², of which "only" approximately 4 million km² is situated within Europe.

¹⁸ *La Grande Armée* – the pre-eminent military force of its era.

¹⁹ The *Wehrmacht* – the most formidable military force of its time.

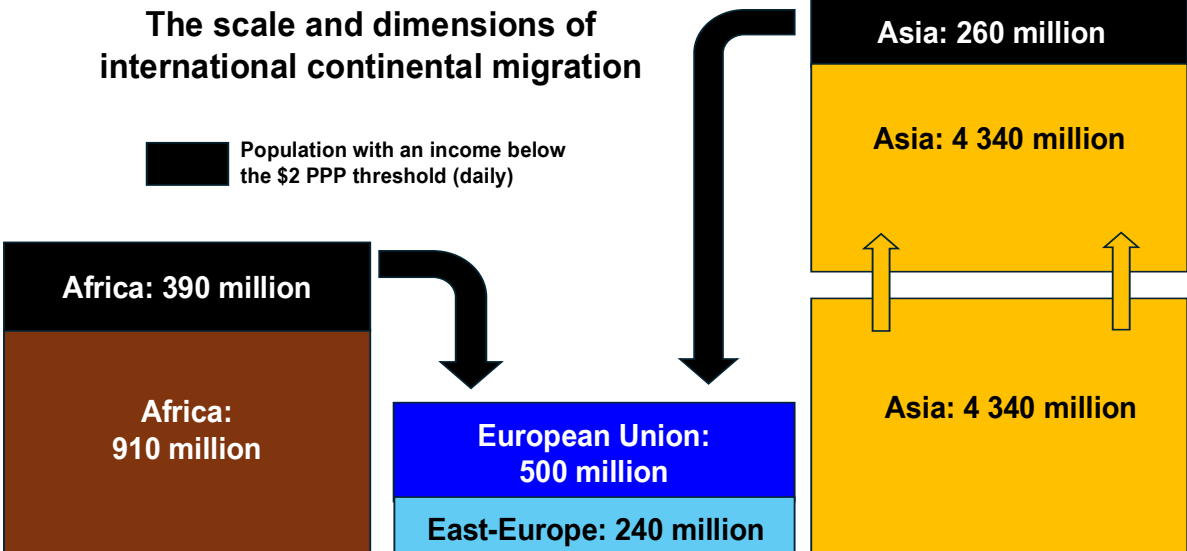
²⁰ Many place their confidence in NATO's advanced military capabilities, arguing that satellite-guided technology effectively "shrinks" the global arena. However, this is a double-edged sword. The Russo - Ukrainian war, the conflict between Iran and Israel, and various asymmetric guerrilla actions demonstrate that traditional forms of warfare, territorial dimensions, and logistical resilience remain decisive factors. Furthermore, as seen in Gaza, humanitarian considerations frequently take a back seat to tactical and strategic imperatives.

to the Don Bend;²¹ if that historical reference holds any weight, it serves as a grim reminder: those who are ignorant of history are condemned to repeat it.

13. Israel versus Iran: The Strategic Vulnerability of the European Union

The brutal provocation by radical Islamic forces against Israel on **October 7, 2024**, and the subsequent military operations in Gaza – which some characterize as reaching the threshold of genocide – have significantly increased the probability of a direct conflict between Iran and Israel. In such a scenario, Iran’s likely closure of the Strait of Hormuz would leave the European Union almost entirely dependent on American hydrocarbons, thereby placing it in a position of extreme economic and military vulnerability. Consequently, the Union (encompassing Western, Northern, Southern, and Central Europe)²² effectively becomes a "European base" for the United States – a region of vital geostrategy in the broader struggle against China and Russia.

To achieve this strategic subordination, the erosion of sovereign nation-states and their unique national identities appear to be a prerequisite. The most effective instrument for this transformation is the acceleration of economic migration from Africa and Asia. On the eve of the 2014 migration "explosion," the number of individuals living in absolute poverty – surviving on less than \$2 a day – already exceeded the total population of the EU.²³



African - Asian migration to the EU in 2014 – on the eve of mass European migration crisis
 Compiled by the author based on data from <http://worldbank.org>

²¹ In 1941, the Romanian, Italian, and Hungarian armies, allied with Germany, advanced into Soviet territory as far as the River Don. During the subsequent Soviet counter-offensive, these forces were decimated; the estimated casualties of the Hungarian Second Army alone were 100,000–130,000 men (50–65%).

²² Geographically, it is erroneous to equate the European Union with the whole of Europe. Eastern Europe (comprising primarily Russia, alongside Belarus, Ukraine, Moldova, Georgia, Azerbaijan, and Armenia) is significantly larger in landmass than the European Union. One must not forget that Eastern Europe remains an integral part of the continent, both geographically and culturally. Europe covers approximately 10 million km², of which Eastern Europe alone accounts for roughly 5.5 million km² (Russia’s European territory comprising about 4 million km²). For comparison, Hungary’s area of 93,000 km² is 43 times smaller than Russia’s European landmass.

²³ In 2014, the population of the European Union was approximately 500 million. At that time, the aforementioned African population – those with "nothing to lose but their lives," living below the absolute poverty threshold of \$2.15 per day (purchasing power parity) – numbered 390 million. When combined with the corresponding Asian population of 260 million, the total number of individuals in this vulnerable demographic exceeded the entire population of the EU by approximately 150 million (source: <https://www.who.int/data/gho/indicator-metadata-registry/imr-details/6128>, <https://worldbank.org>).

Driven by the prospect of a better life, these masses have inevitably embarked toward Europe. National political powers within the EU that pursued a sovereigntist, patriotic policy opposing this "dilution" of European societies – most notably the Hungarian government under *Viktor Orbán* between 2010 and 2026 – have been increasingly framed as the primary internal adversaries by the EU's political and legislative leadership, which has appeared to align with American economic interests. On **April 12, 2026**, the Hungarian national governing party – which had been mandated by consecutive two-thirds parliamentary majorities since 2010 – suffered a catastrophic electoral defeat. This was driven by a record-high turnout among younger generations who, entranced by American and Euro-Atlantic cultural "soft power," celebrated the fall of the patriotic *Orbán* regime with unbridled enthusiasm. History is repeating itself, much as it did in the First World War. As *Endre Ady*, the pre-eminent Hungarian poet, wrote at the time (1917) in his poem entitled "*Fabled John*" (*Mesebeli János*):

*Trouble haunts the distant city,
With Death one must now entwine:
Strive, John, and rush, John.*

*With a fairy-tale princess
If you wish to meet:
Do battle with the Dragon.*

English translation by Google Gemini AI

Conclusion

The Cycle of Strategic Amnesia

The historical trajectory of the United States – its rise following the First World War, its ascent to global hegemony after the Second, and the current efforts to preserve that power through a potential (and hopefully non-nuclear) third global conflict – appears to be nearing its culmination. In the first two instances, the majority of the populations swept into these wars supported the conflagration, often perceiving the violence as a noble struggle for freedom. In 1914, Hungarian soldiers marched to their deaths in a foreign conflict with patriotic fervour, singing: "*Halt, halt, dog Serbia, Bosnia shall never be yours!*" This tragedy was reprised in 1942, when the Hungarian Second Army advanced toward the Don Bend – again to their deaths, and again in a war serving external interests.²⁴ Among them were the author's own grandfather, uncle, and father.

Today, as the X, Y, Z, and Alpha generations have largely succumbed to historical amnesia – lacking the first-hand accounts of the horrors of war from their ancestors and knowing conflict only through the lens of digital simulations – they appear condemned to relive the past. Once again, the youth are being steered toward the Ukrainian front, and once again, toward potential sacrifice in a conflict serving foreign – decisively **American** – strategic interests. Just as soldiers in 1914 were convinced they were defeating "terrorist Serbia" as part of the Austro-Hungarian alliance, and in 1942 were driven to conquer "*Lebensraum*"²⁵ within the German alliance, today's generations are being mobilised²⁶, under the banner of the European Union to defeat an "aggressor Russia" in the name of defending Ukraine.²⁷ All these efforts, ultimately, serve the maintenance and consolidation of American global primacy. Forward!

²⁴ For further reading see Tózsá I. 2022. A világháborúk sakktáblái (Chessboards of the World Wars)

²⁵ "*We entered this war not merely voluntarily, but with outright enthusiasm, and above all without any tangible Hungarian reason*" (quoted from Endre Bajcsy-Zsilinszky in Pál Pritz: History, December 2019, p. 47. See: Pritz P. 2021)

²⁶ For further reading see Tózsá I. 2023. Geography of the 'Death Zone' in Hungary

²⁷ For further reading see Tózsá I. 2024. Apocalypse Now – The Path of European Union Geopolitics

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