



## The History of What's Next

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### Executive Summary

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In 1581, the German Heinrich Bünting published his masterpiece *Travel Through Holy Scripture*. The world that matters – the Eastern Hemisphere – is comprised of three distinct continents – Europe, Asia and Africa – each depicted as a cloverleaf. The three cloverleaves converge in Jerusalem – the Center of the Universe. The rest of the world is irrelevant.

Modern history, particularly that of the Eastern Hemisphere as defined by Bünting in geo-political terms and by Mackinder in terms of geo-historical dynamics, is reaching a crisis point as the dominant powers of human history are catching up with the follies of contemporary humans.

Modern history can be divided into four distinct phases where diverse, and at time contradictory, dynamics took place simultaneously in various parts of the world. Moreover, with the passage of times, each phase lasted about half the time of its predecessor – the result of advancement in transportation and communication technologies. This means that the current and forthcoming phases will present immense challenges to the world's decision-makers – thus making errors and miscalculations more likely.

The world, and particularly the history-conscientious Eastern Hemisphere, is returning to riding the waves of history no longer encumbered by the shackles of the Cold War and the dread of the US-led NATO desperate attempts at preventing by force the emergence of a heritage-based new world order. This is a revolutionary world where the grassroots are striving to revive communal comfort and security in legacy-based modalities of self-determination through the reliance on the unprecedented access to knowledge and interaction made possible by the new era of electronic communication. This is a revolutionary world where the new and chaotic urbanization and populace dislocation from conservative rural areas provides the geo-economic and geo-political gravitas required for making the new-old non-state heritage-based entities viable.

Presently, the entire Eastern Hemisphere is not only bedeviled by the failure of the Westphalian State, but also by the inability of the supra-state Utopian entities to deliver remedies to the perceived ills of statehood and nationalism. Hence, the ensuing quest for self-determination at sub-state and cross-border frameworks is unstoppable. The horrific fratricidal bloodshed all over South Asia, the greater Middle East, the entire Africa and beyond testifies to the suffering and agony nations and nationalities are willing to endure in order to realize their self-determination manifest destinies. Europe is so far free of comparable bloodshed solely because the grassroots still give the political process a chance to deliver. Should the grassroots be failed, fratricidal bloodletting will resume – sending Europe anew into the prolonged era of continental wars that, after all, characterizes most of the history of Europe.

By the sword of popular leaders and by the pen of erudite statesmen – the Eastern Hemisphere will ultimately adjust to the return of history. Bünting's "World in a Cloverleaf" is here to stay.



## About ISPSW

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ISPSW offers a range of services, including strategic analyses, security consultancy, executive coaching and intercultural competency. ISPSW publications examine a wide range of topics relating to politics, economy, international relations, and security/defence. ISPSW network experts have operated in executive positions, in some cases for decades, and command wide-ranging experience in their respective areas of specialization.

## About the Author of this Issue

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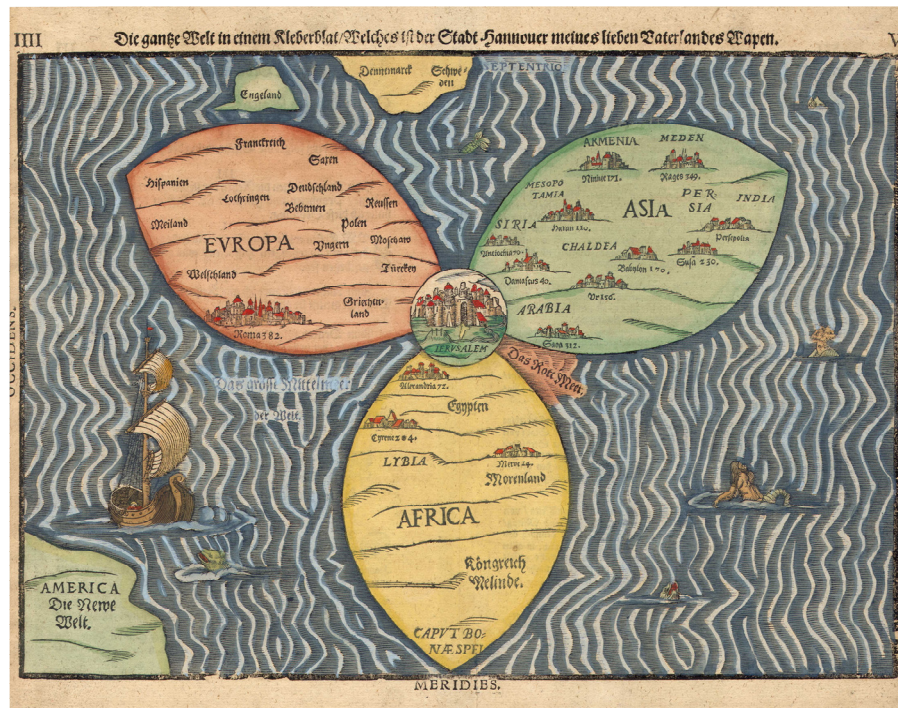
Yossef Bodansky

## Analysis

In 1581, the German Protestant pastor, theologian, and cartographer Heinrich Bünting published his masterpiece *Itinerarium Sacrae Scripturae* (Travel Through Holy Scripture). In the book, he included a special illustration-map titled “Die ganze Welt in einem Kleberblatt/Welches ist der Stadt Hannover meines lieben Vaterlandes Wapen” (The World in a Cloverleaf).

The world that matters – the Eastern Hemisphere – is comprised of three distinct continents – Europe, Asia and Africa – each depicted as a cloverleaf. The three cloverleaves converge in Jerusalem – the Center of the Universe. The rest of the world is irrelevant. England and Greenland are small islands to the north, America is a faraway rock, and Australia is still unknown.

Bünting’s is the best depiction of the global geo-political posture in the 21st Century.



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The contemporary political-economic global system derives its principles from the Peace of Westphalia – a series of peace treaties signed between May and October 1648. The Peace of Westphalia established a new system of political order based upon the co-existence of sovereign states functioning within a continental, and later global, balance of power. The ensuing principle of “Westphalian sovereignty” stipulates that each and every nation-state has sovereignty over its territory and domestic affairs; that all external powers are beholden to the principle of non-interference in the domestic affairs of another state; and that each nation-state is equal in international law irrespective of its size or wealth.



However, the key to the enduring success of the Westphalian System lies in the macro-economic implementation, particularly in France. It was the rebuilding of post-war and post-Treaty France by Cardinal Jules Mazarin (1602-1661) and his protégé Jean-Baptiste Colbert (1619-83) that formulated an economic policy of protectionism and directed the public credit in order to create a viable sovereign nation-state. Colbert believed that the key to stability and the common good was the development of infrastructure projects as driving engines for overall economic development benefitting the entire populace. He organized the recovery of French economy and society on the basis of a strong centralized government furthering the common good through great public works. He also introduced an industrial protectionist system based on four major reforms that can be considered the beginnings of the modern industrial nation-state. For Colbert, the idea of “the Advantage of the other” focused on benefitting future generations. Effectively, Colbert advocated the primacy of the inward-looking continental state – with France being the preeminent power – over the maritime free trade of the sea-faring powers of the day – Britain and Holland.

Meanwhile, the Chinese also addressed the growing challenges and complexities of the modern world through the refinement, in their own way, of the primacy of the internally strong state over the external expansion. The Chinese perception was best articulated by Wei Yuan (1794-1857) in his 1842 book *A Record of Sacred Military Campaigns (Sheng wu ji)* that analyzed the rise of the Qing Dynasty. He stressed two key points: (1) China must give priority to having an internally strong China before outward expansion; and (2) for China, continental expansion westward is more important than maritime expansion. Wei Yuan stressed the inherent strength of the state and its internal management as the key to survival. (The translation is from William Theodore De Bary's *Sources of Chinese Tradition*.)

“When the state is rich and powerful, it will be effective – it deals with the traitors and they will not persist in their ways; it administers revenue and [the revenue] will not be wasted; it acquires weapons and they will not be flawed; it organizes armed forces and the troops will not be understrength. What then is there to fear about barbarians anywhere – what is there to worry about as to defense against aggression?”

In *Sheng wu ji*, Wei Yuan made the then radical proposition that “fighting war is superior to worshipping at ancestral temples” – that is, that the protection and sustenance of secure borders should take precedence over spreading one’s culture and influence overseas. Moreover, to ensure its own internal security – the Chinese state must focus on the populace and only later on material factors:

“If material resources are insufficient, the state will not be poor, but if human talent is not dynamic, then it will be poor. If commands do not extend beyond the seas, the state is not weak; but if commands do not extend up to the interior borders, the state is weak. So the former Kings did not worry about material resources but only about talent. They did not worry that they could not exert their will over the four barbarians, but worried about exerting their will within the four borders. If all officials have ability, the state will be orderly and rich; if all within the borders obey commands, the state will be powerful.”

Indeed, the Chinese Empire would expand its influence and hegemony through a system of tributary treaties affected by the Chinese economic preeminence rather than the establishment of colonies based on military power alone. That ability to project presence was not lost on the rising Western powers in East Asia.



Europe, however, remained the origin of the definition and formulation of the prevailing world order and global dynamics. Indeed, the historical world order as elucidated by Sir Halford Mackinder (1861-1947) back in 1904 is returning to dominate – albeit with modifications. Mackinder argued that the drive for global power is an inevitable process propelled by geography and history. He defined the crucial significance of the Pivot Area and the surrounding Heartland to the control of the world. He identified Russia as the Pivot area: “Russia replaces the Mongol Empire.” The projection of Russian influence over her neighbors, both large and small, “replaces the centrifugal raids of the steppemen” that created the original Silk Road linking East and West. “In the world at large [Russia] occupies the central strategical position held by Germany in Europe.” Mackinder anticipated a Russian-dominated drive along continental internal lines of communications for the control of the World-Island, that is, the Eastern Hemisphere. “Is not the pivot region of the world’s politics that vast area of Euro-Asia, which is inaccessible to ships, but in antiquity lay open to the horse-riding nomads, and is today about to be covered by a network of railways?” he asked rhetorically. The preconditions for the control of the World-Island and the ultimate establishment of a world empire are “an inner land mobility, for a margin densely populated, and for external sea forces.”

Mackinder recognized the existence of a competing naval power that derives its power from the Lands of Outer or Insular Crescent. This polarity constitutes the roots of a global crisis. He anticipated that eventually, when the power of the heartland would have reached the littoral edges and evolved into a rival maritime power by controlling the “oceanic frontage” of the heartland, such a crisis would erupt. That point, Mackinder suggested, is the threshold of the global victory through the dominance of the heartland. “What if the Great Continent, the whole World-Island or a large part of it, were at some future time to become a single and united base of sea-power? Would not the other insular bases be outbuilt as regards ships and outmanned as regards seamen?”

By then, the US evolved into that contending power whose might is derived from the control of the sea. At the turn of the 20th Century, Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840-1914) paid special attention to the global economic interests of the US as a rising world power and identified the growing importance of access to foreign ports and markets. In his later writings, Mahan became more preoccupied with practical issues of consolidating and retaining sea power. He stressed the issue of “communications” or SLOC in current terminology. Communications, emphasized Mahan, “are the most important single element in strategy, political or military.” The “eminence of sea power,” explained Mahan, lies “in its control over them.” Therefore, the quintessence of building sea power for a nation is the acquisition of credible capabilities to operate along global SLOC. “The power, therefore, to insure the communications to one’s self, and to interrupt them for an adversary, affects the very root of a nation’s vigor,” concluded Mahan. For Mahan, the crux of the global power and posture of the United States was in maritime dominance and the avoidance of entanglement in continental disputes.

The great difference between the proponents of the inward-looking World-Island as a source of global power and the proponents of the inevitable confrontation and struggle for power between the continental and the maritime powers. For Mackinder, the main threat to the preeminence of the Eurocentric world order was a possible China-led bloc wresting the control over the World-Island. “Were the Chinese, for instance, organized by the Japanese, to overthrow the Russian Empire, and conquer its territory, they might constitute the yellow peril to the world’s freedom,” warned Mackinder in 1904. While the present-day China is not planning to occupy Russia, its growing web of alliances brings it very close to the position of a global Hegemon.





Mackinder's contemporary Field Marshal Sir Garnet Wolseley (1833-1913) expected the major clash to be between China as the representative of the legacy continental powers and the United States as the emerging maritime global power. "[The Chinese] are the most remarkable race on earth, and I have always thought, and still believe them to be, the coming rulers of the world. They only want a Chinese Peter the Great or Napoleon to make them so ... and in my idle speculation upon this world's future I have long selected them as combatants on one side of the great Battle of Armageddon, the people of the United States of America being their opponents. The latter nation is fast becoming the greatest power of the world. Thank Heaven, they speak English, are governed by an English system of laws, and profess the same regard that we have for what both understand by fair play in all national as well as in private business," he wrote in 1903.

Modern history, particularly that of the Eastern Hemisphere as defined by Bunting in geo-political terms and by Mackinder in terms of geo-historical dynamics, is reaching a crisis point as the dominant powers of human history are catching up with the follies of contemporary humans.

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Modern history can be divided into distinct phases where diverse, and at time contradictory, dynamics took place simultaneously in various parts of the world. Moreover, with the passage of times, each phase lasted about half the time of its predecessor – the result of advancement in transportation and communication technologies. This means that the current and forthcoming phases will present immense challenges to the world's decision-makers - thus making errors and miscalculations more likely.

The phases are:

- \* The First Phase – mid-19th Century to 1946 – the defining of the modern world
- \* The Second Phase – 1946 to 1991 – the Cold War
- \* The Third Phase – 1991 to 2016 – the post-Cold War era of confusion
- \* The Fourth Phase – 2016 to 20?? – the defining of the post-modern world

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### The First Phase

In Europe, the first phase spanned between 1848 and 1946. It was Europe's second one-hundred-year war that led to the rise of the national-patriotic modern states and the settling of their boundaries. The ascent of modern Europe was achieved through the combination of bloody revolts and wars, as well as great power statecraft. Ultimately, national identity won. On the one hand, there was the consolidation of national states from ethnically similar mini-entities – Germany, Italy, or Yugoslavia. On the other hand, there was the break-up of multi-national empires – the Habsburg's and the European parts of the Ottoman Empire – into ethno-centric entities where the multi-national entities could not hold together. Ultimately, these trends could not overcome the inherent bitter contradictions between both old and new great powers and Europe erupted into a series of continent-wide conflagrations that quickly became global wars.

Russia's first phase – spanning between 1853 and 1946 – saw the consolidation of a unique nationalist-yet-multi-ethnic civilization bridging Europe and Asia. To attain the status of a great power as merited by its huge geographic size, Russia embarked on a reform and modernizing process. Russia was jolted into this process in



the aftermath of the Crimean War defeat by the West. Initially, the Tsarist Empire sought to achieve its ascent through a relentless expansion into the Heart of Asia while sustaining in the European parts a quest for modernity and reforms with Russian character. When the Tsarist reforms disappointed by their timidity and did not deliver for the populace – Russia went to the other extreme and experimented with self-devouring revolution and communism. Ultimately, however, Russia rose to global prominence in the wake of a major victory defined in terms of Russia's nationalist heritage.

In contrast, China's first phase – spanning between 1839 and 1946 – was an era of national humiliation. China's century was dominated by foreign intrusions and invasions – starting with the Opium War and ending with the unsatisfactory victory over Japan (where the war ended by the US atomic bombing and the Soviet swift occupation of Manchuria and Korea rather than Chinese battlefield achievements). China had to submit to a series of concessions and treaties limiting its sovereignty and even its ability to suppress domestic rebellions and insurrections. Throughout this first phase, China's attempts at self-determination, revolution, state-building and modernizing have all failed to deliver the reversal of the foreign intrusion and humiliation.

During the first phase, the developing world underwent a forced transformation wrought by Western colonialism that suppressed ethnic and nationalist sentiments as territories were divided into colonies. At the same time, local elites and nascent bureaucracies and militaries received Western education and training, as well as exposure to Western ways of governance and military technologies. These dichotomies set the foundations for the ensuing modernization drives within unsustainable frameworks and artificial pseudo-national identities.

The Arab-Muslim World paid a uniquely heavy price for the world progress during the first phase. In the middle of the 19th Century, the Arabs' primary source of foreign income and Western imported goods was managing Africa's slave trade. As the British led the West in abolishing slavery, the Arab World failed to come up with a substitute for slavery's role in its economy and politics. Absent the inputs from Africa, the Arab World was left subjugated to a vindictive Ottoman Empire that compensated its losses in Europe by suppressing the Arab World – its last major possession. Hence, the roots of the Arab wrath toward the West and the civilizational values represented by Westernization.

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## **The Second Phase**

On 5 March 1946, Winston Churchill announced at Westminster College, in Fulton, Missouri, the dawning of a new era in world history. "From Stettin in the Baltic to Trieste in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the continent." The Cold War has begun and would last till the collapse of the Soviet Union on 25 December 1991. The Cold War was a necessary evil given the predatory policies of the Soviet bloc. "We will bury you!" Nikita Khrushchev told Western ambassadors in Moscow on 18 November 1956. Soviet and allied military and intelligence operations in Europe and throughout the Developing World reaffirmed the Kremlin's intents.

Europe that historically had been divided in three – west, middle and east – in accordance with ethno-religious traditions, was now divided in two – West and East – and dominated by external global powers – the US and the USSR respectively. They dictated the situation in Europe in pursuit of their global policies and doctrines. While Europe enjoyed a unique era of peace and rebuilding under the umbrellas of the two superpowers



during the Cold War – Europe also experienced the loss of great power status, indigenous policy formulation, and economic self-determinism. Europe was torn by the Euro-Atlantic and the Eastern Bloc economic-civilizational polarization under Cold War pressure and the disregard of historic trends.

In contrast, China spent the Cold War era in self-imposed isolation. China's was a desperate effort to pull back from greater global dynamics in order to rebuild and redefine itself. The new phase started with the great revolution and evolved into social and economic experimentation that both inflicted immense pain and set the ground for the ensuing political and economic surge. Throughout this phase, China resisted both pressure and temptations by both sides of the Cold War to actively ally itself with any bloc. Thus, China participated or supported the regional wars against the US while, soon afterwards, benefitted from relations with the US in order to expedite its technological and economic upsurge. Hence, China emerged from the Cold War era with a more coherent world view than the active participants in the Cold War.

Europe's loss of global posture was also manifested in the loss of the colonial empires in a swift process largely imposed by the US and assisted by the USSR. Regions and continents completely dependent on the colonial powers for governance and economic well-being were abandoned to their fate in the name of granting freedom. Regions and peoples artificially and arbitrarily dissected during the colonial era were now expected to transform into viable states although their nations and people had been broken. This opened the door for ruthless and corrupt dictatorial regimes to emerge as the only entities capable of suppressing the grassroots after the colonial masters had left. The Soviet Union and its allies attempted to exploit the process by supporting the armed factions waging freedom struggles and then use their leaders' acquired military power to sustain them in political power – making them their Cold War pawns.

In response, the US-led West rushed to sustain in power at all cost their own leaders – thus securing their own Cold War pawns. The competition for pawns, their countries and resources, led to a long series of bloody wars and fratricidal carnage fueled by the US and the USSR in pursuit of their respective global interests. The overconfidence of the US and the West in their ability to sustain their respective leaders-pawns in power led to their ignoring of the brewing grassroots rejection of, and rebellion against, the existing socio-political order represented by the modern state. The USSR that did comprehend the backlash was by then too weak to benefit from the historic mega-trend. In the strategically and economically crucial Arab-Muslim World, where the concept of state does not exist, the quest for empowering dictators led to both bitter wars between states and horrific suppression of the local populace.

Throughout, the Developing World was increasingly exposed to modern technologies – both civilian and military – provided by the would-be sponsors. Growing numbers of members of the elites had the opportunity to gain advance studies that could help their countries and regions. They also experienced freedoms and high standard of living inconceivable in their own regions. With time, the local elites comprehended just how better prepared for independence their countries could have been, and there developed profound challenges to the prevailing master-pawn relationships. And as their own states continued to deteriorate and crumble, ever wider segments of the local elites increasingly focused on sub-state heritage identities – tribes, nationalities, ethnic groups – as the sole viable substitute for the failing states and statehood.

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### The Third Phase

And then it was suddenly over. The Cold War ended not in the nuclear exchange both dreaded and predicted by many – but in a largely bloodless whimper.

To sustain the military might of the Eastern bloc despite economic decay and ideological oppression – the Kremlin gradually resurrected and used anew Russia's heritage. And so, the religiously-loaded Mother Russia faced the godless Communism in struggle over the unique soul of Russia – and Communism not only blinked but committed suicide. It was the Soviet Union that lost to Russia's heritage.

The US self-anointed claim to victory in the Cold War was unwarranted and therein the roots of the ensuing global crisis that characterizes the third phase spanning between 1991 and 2015.

At the end of the Cold War, both Russia and China expected the reemergence as a viable geo-strategic/geo-political entity of the V-to-V bloc – the Vancouver-to-Vladivostok bloc that briefly emerged at the end of the Second World War but succumbed to the Cold War. The amalgamation of this bloc was supposed to be driven by a Europe no longer restrained by Cold War division – thus both gravitating eastward by a revived heritage while retaining the immensely successful Euro-Atlantic socio-economic identity. In 1991, Yeltsin's Kremlin offered the US-led West a Eurasian-Atlantic alliance – EATO – as a replacement for NATO but was rebuffed by an arrogant Washington.

By the early-1990s, the US – the self-anointed sole hyperpower and leader of the world – proved unready for a global role not defined by nuclear terror. The US was, and remains, ignorant of, and indifferent to, the historic processes disrupted by the Cold War's brief artificial interlude. When these began to surface, the US panicked at the thought of losing Europe to an eastward gravitation. There begun a series of provocations and wars aimed solely at forcing a wedge of terror between Europe and Russia – from the Yugoslav/Balkan wars to the support-by-proxy of wars in the north Caucasus, from the Color Revolutions to the provoking of hot wars on Russia's border, first in Georgia and now in Ukraine. As well, the US led NATO in the intentional ignoring of formal promises made by successive US presidents and other NATO leaders starting in 1991 that NATO would not exploit the vacuum created by the collapse of the Warsaw Pact and advance eastward beyond East Germany (as part of a unified Germany).

In 2016, NATO includes not only all of the former Warsaw Pact but also three former Soviet States, and is in flagrant and acknowledged violation of the 1997 agreement on deploying NATO forces on Russia's borders. Beset by economic crises and eager to rejoin the post-Communist world – Russia initially resigned passively to the eastward surge of NATO and the US relentless determination to widen the gap of hostility between Europe and Russia. Starting Fall 2013, Washington provoked the coup and insurrection in Ukraine in order to undermine the Merkel-Putin doctrine of a "common Eurasian home" or a Lisbon-to-Vladivostok (L-to-V) bloc. This was a major political undertaking for since 2013, the US has been pushing in great secret the negotiations over the TTIP (The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership) that amounts to the extension of NATO to trade and economic practices irrespective of economic viabilities, and the concurrent sanctions on Russia (on account of the interventions in Ukraine and Syria, of course) in order to undermine the EU's commercial-economic tilt eastward. By 2015, the Kremlin resolved to end the quarter of a century of passivity.

In contrast with the US, the end of the Cold War found China ready and confident to assume a leading global role. China interpreted the collapse of the Soviet Union – the world's other major communist power – as a proof of the validity of China's different development model balancing export-focused market economy with



tight internal political control. China's ascent was helped by the US-sanctioned deal with the World Trade Organization that effectively left China's Great Walls of Protectionism largely intact. In the early-1990s, Beijing felt comfortable dealing as a great power in a world no longer dominated by the Cold War's nuclear face-off and where the developing world was emerging from decades of being the Cold Warriors' pawns. China looked at a new, multi-polar world where national attributes other than nuclear weapons would have impact. As an economic power house and the world's factory, China was ready to translate these capabilities into global political influence and great power posture.

Beijing was cognizant that China was not part of the V-to-V initiative and not of the L-to-V bloc that replaced it. The key to China's future role was the fact that China experienced during the first phase the trials and tribulation of the colonies even if it remained nominally independent. China could legitimately boast a developing world identity stemming from the Chinese activism in the Non-Aligned Movement during the Cold War. Consequently, in the post-Cold War era, China saw itself in the unique role of the bridge between the L-to-V bloc and the developing world – consolidating a new tapestry of power and influence based on the Eastern Hemisphere and driven by economic development and world-wide communications. This conviction would lead Beijing to, and culminate in, the One Belt One Road initiative of Autumn 2013.

Even though US and Chinese economies have become closely intertwined during the third phase, the US continued to view China as a potential foe. The US continued leading an international campaign to contain the ascent of China and deprive it of any global posture, particularly economically-based, because of the US fear of losing prominence in a world order based solely on raw military power as originally crafted by the US.

The Muslim World also endured a major earthquake that still reverberates except that it was not caused by the end of the Cold War – but rather the 1990/91 Gulf War. The gross mishandling of the inner-Sunni Arab schism by the US-led Western allies during the Gulf crisis resulted in the emergence of profound hostility toward the West and a theological-ideological vacuum that Hassan al-Turabi (1932-2016) exploited in order to integrate Iranian Shiite revolutionary and terrorist doctrines into Sunni Ikhwanī militancy and radicalism. The ascent of Islamism-Jihadism – including Al-Qaida and the Islamic State/Caliphate – is the direct outcome of this process. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the establishment of six ex-Soviet Muslim States only emboldened the Islamist-Jihadist trend that they were on the historic right track.

However, the great hopes for a quick and decisive ascent of a new assertive Muslim World were quickly dashed by the grim realities of an evolving West-dominated world. Western modernity – from the information technology gadgetry used by individuals to the urbanization of society – invaded the Muslim World and had major impact on society at large. There developed widespread frustration and rage at the Western technologies and know-how (including the made-in-China variants) that virtually all Muslims had to have but could neither create nor master. The mere fact that “developing” China did master and excelled in these new technologies only added to the Muslim world's frustration and rage. A defiant attempt to confront the West and delink through spectacular strikes at the heart of the West – most notably on 11 September 2001 – only brought Western forces and their local Western-armed allies into the heart of Islamdom in effort to impose by force of arms Western-style statehood and governance. The ensuing grassroots explosion in attempt to confront and rid Islamdom of the West – the Intifada's starting 2011 – forced the Muslim World to finally look deep inside and revisit their ability and willingness to co-exist with the US-led West as well as other ascending forces such as China and Russia. There is no escape for the imperative of having access to modernity and technology have only increased, as have the determination to erase all vestiges of existing socio-political order



and governance, starting with the very existence of the modern state.

The violent self-cleansing eruption of the Muslim World has only begun and is spreading to other parts of the developing world where the same quandaries exist but the rage is, presently, not as intense.

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#### The Fourth Phase

The fourth phase emerges as an unprecedented perfect storm of global proportions. It is driven by several mega-trends where the reluctance or dread of the great powers to confront both reality and problems, and thus seek profound solutions, is markedly aggravating global stability. The inclination to postpone addressing, rather than confronting, reality has reached the point of inevitable eruption or explosion of widespread violence from all those cornered to despair by the moribund yet frozen world elites. The aggregate impact of all these mega-trends, of the emerging perfect storm, is leading to the seeming collapse of the socio-political order of the so-called modern world.

Because of the extent of its frustration and rage, as well as the grassroots' eagerness to kill and die in pursuit of both wrath and revenge, the Muslim World leads the unfolding crisis.

Because of the extent of Washington's inherent ignorance of global-historical mega-trends – the US refuses to accept both the inevitable marginalization from abroad and the indigenous quest for neo-isolationism from home. Consequently, the US has become the main disruptive catalyst of global disorder and mayhem.

Everybody else – the peoples of Bünting's Clover – are stuck in between as the world, and particularly the Eastern Hemisphere, is returning to its roots. In this context, both the ascent of Donald Trump in the US and Brexit in the UK are initial dramatic indicators that the indigenous grassroots in the most developed parts of the world, and not only in the developing world, are now actively rebelling against the erosion of the Westphalian World Order as interpreted and imposed by the US-led West aftermath of the Cold War through the pursuit of "humanitarian interventionism" or the Right to Protect (R2P) in the Balkans in the 1990's and Libya in 2011. There is a grassroots clamor for the revival of genuine quest for self-determination – be it in rejuvenated modern states in the West or in new yet-to-be-defined indigenous entities breaking the stifling legacy of colonial era boundaries. While the shape of the future world is far from clear – there is no turning back from the dramatic and destructive breakout from the current world order.

Recovering from the shock of the dismemberment of the Soviet Union, Russia derives the quintessence of its rebirth and ascent from its rich history as a continental power. Little wonder that Mackinder's Heartland percept was revived as the guiding principle of Russia's grand strategy by Aleksandr Dugin (b. 1962) and adopted by President Vladimir Putin (b. 1952). Dugin introduced the Russian version of the doctrine – Eurasianism – in his 1997 tome *The Foundations of Geopolitics* and a subsequent host of books, monographs, pamphlets and articles. The legacy and message of Eurasianism is relevant for the entire Eurasia – starting with Western Europe. "In the broader sense, Eurasianism can be considered as a form of continentalism for the project of the creation of a European-Russian common space – the Greater Europe stretching from Lisbon to Vladivostok, as declared by Vladimir Putin," Dugin writes.

Ultimately, Eurasianism best defines the soul and world view of Russia. "Eurasianism," Dugin stresses, "is an absolute necessity for anyone who wants to understand the true nature of Russia – its profound identity and its



structures – past, present, or future.” Russian polity and governance are the products of unique history and geography and not the whims of individual rulers, Dugin argues. “In all the principal parameters, the Russian Federation is the geopolitical heir to the preceding historical, political, and social forms that took shape around the territory of the Russian plain: Kievan Rus, the Golden Horde, the Muscovite Czarism, the Russian Empire, and the Soviet Union. This continuity is not only territorial, but also historical, social, spiritual, political, and ethnic. From ancient times, the Russian government began to form in the Heartland, gradually expanding, until it occupied the entire Heartland and the zones adjoining it. The spatial expansion of Russian control over Eurasian territories was accompanied by a parallel sociological process: the strengthening in Russian society of ‘land-based’ social arrangements, characteristic of *a civilization of the continental type*.”

Dugin considers Putin to be “the Symbol of Empire-building” and the driving force behind the revival and restoration of a Great Russia according with the principles of Eurasianism. “The new, large Russia to be resurrected within the Eurasian space is an idea of a new sovereign empire. It is not Soviet, because that ideology is dead, but not Russian either, because we have no common religious vector here. At the new stage Eurasianism proposes the resurrection of the *Large Eurasian Space* in place of the former Russian Empire and the Soviet Union. ... At the outset, the main idea was to integrate Russia into the Western world in order to become, as they said, ‘*a normal country*’. Today’s norm for our political establishment ... is another idea: Russia is a great country, a country re-establishing its universal significance and leading an independent policy free from globalist pressure and the unipolar world. This is a geopolitical programme of empire-building. Eurasianism today opposes two things: liberal-democratic Westernism and narrow nationalism, the latter of which presents Russia as a mono-national state. Putin’s presidential policy is directed by this Eurasian code.”

Because of the unprecedented turmoil engulfing the Muslim World and the entire Islamdom (to include Muslim communities in the West) – most critical are the fault lines and zones of friction between the Hub of Islam and the rest of the world. The proximity of the Hub of Islam to the great continental powers – China, Russia and Europe – makes the evolving dynamics even more explosive. Moreover, both Russia and China are history-driven great powers. Hence, both Moscow and Beijing are cognizant of both the realities of the greater Middle East and the greater framework of the reawakened Mackinderian world order. In contrast, Germany-led Europe is only beginning to grasp the convoluted realities of the region and the world. Europe’s shocked reaction to the still unfolding migrant/refugee crisis will further exacerbate the clash between Islamdom and Judeo-Christian Europe. Presently, however, these great powers are increasingly inclined to focus on preserving their own vital interests in the Hub of Islam rather than attempt to resolve the overall crisis and address its convoluted root causes.

On the macro-level, the world’s gravitating anew to a Mackinderian-based global and regional dynamics is therefore irreversible. Russia and Germany remain the driving forces behind the establishment of a Lisbon-to-Vladivostok Common Eurasian Home order. Being first and foremost a land power, China is seeking to revive its great power gravitas through the extended Silk Road from the Pacific Ocean to the heart of Europe and the greater Middle East. To achieve this, China has to cooperate closely with Russia and Germany-led Europe – thus creating a tripartite arrangement of great powers. Below, there remains Africa – a region perceived to be of no great power role but full of natural resources to be used and abused. On the other side of the Ocean, there emerges Margaret Thatcher’s (1925-2013) dream of an Anglosphere through the expanded Five-Eyes (where the UK is increasingly determined to delink from Europe as demonstrated by Brexit). Brazil is busy consolidating a Latin American bloc aimed to reverse the Monroe Doctrine.



Thus, there profoundly evolved the role of the great powers in the context of the return to a Mackinderian world order. The overall rise of traditional, heritage, legacy ethno-centric entities, as well as geo-strategic and geo-economic dynamics and mega-trends, throughout compelled all governments to react – some better some worse. The main mega-trend is the rise of the Common Eurasian Home doctrine – the tripartite world of Europe-China-Russia at the expense of an increasingly desperate US. No matter how reluctant European leaders might be to break the legacy of the Cold War era's Euro-Atlantic sphere – the pressures arising from the Hub of Islam are pushing Europe into the fold of Russia and China. Meanwhile, the entire Eurasia succumbs to the lure of President Xi Jinping's (b. 1953) One Road and One Belt initiative while dreading the trauma of the US-instigated crises reverberating from the Greater Black Sea Basin, the Middle East and other contention points along the fault lines.

These mega-trends are unfolding in the context of the ongoing decline of the Westphalian State and its replacement by a very unstable and uneasy balancing between supra-state regional dynamics and localized self-rule motivated by quests for self-determination at sub-state and cross-state spheres. The key is the crises and self-doubts facing Europe. The EU has done magic to undermine European nationalism/patriotism and replace them with increasingly loathed Euro-bureaucracy. The economic crisis and the immigration-terrorism crisis hasten the break-up of the EU without any viable substitute other than populist-nationalist movements. The myriad of secessionist movements throughout Western Europe have so far failed to attract sufficient public support to break states. However, these developments will only hasten the decline of Europe due to demographic and economic reasons.

Furthermore, the Western/European state system has been the bulwark of the global state system and the panoply of international organizations (the UN etc.) using states as building blocks for higher dynamics. In the last half-a-century, the Third World followed the West and acquiesced to the imposition of statehood for fear of Western retribution. With the decline of the Western state – the Third World's frustration and despair with existing state-borders drive a quest for non-state solutions to the plight of the populace.

Consequently, the aggregate impact of the failure of states and the socio-economic destitute gives rise to ethno-centric self-identities as the key to finding salvation and realizing manifest destinies. These trends are the strongest and most pronounced in the hardest hit regions of the greater Middle East and Africa. The most important and lingering outcome of the so-called "Arab Spring" is the death of the Arab modern state. Libya, Iraq, Syria and Lebanon are no more, and Jordan and Yemen are not far behind. In their place, there emerged entities based on ethnic and religious self-identities – the Sunni Arab Islamic Caliphate of the al-Jazira heartland, the predominantly Alawite-Druze entity of western Syria, the Shiite HizbAllah land, the Maronite-Druze bloc, the Shiite Arab entity of southeastern Iraq, and the Kurdish land. Yemen is being torn apart between the Houthis, Hadhramautis and smaller groups. Libya is in the midst of a fratricidal orgy of violence between tribes, clans and other power-seekers. These will never agree to lose self-control in favor of return to the erstwhile states that failed them.

The only exception is the Russian and Chinese efforts to convince Iran to amend policies and expectations in lieu of the succession process in Tehran. Moscow and Beijing urge Tehran to revert back to traditional Persian world view and grand strategy – that is, return to being part of the minorities. Russia and China offer Iran a major role in the new Silk Road in return. Alas, this effort is becoming increasingly difficult given the lure of the American promises to make Iran the regional hegemonic power in return for the Grand Rapprochement with Obama. While the great powers can step back in lieu of the mounting pressures from the Obama White House,





the other local powers and actors have no such luxury. They are in the region to stay. Although US incessant pressure will continue till early 2017 – when a new American President and a new Congress take over – there is no telling whether the local powers and aspirant actors will be able to withstand Washington's interventionism. Hence, the specter of regional eruptions.

Meanwhile, the demise of the modern Middle East is providing inspiration to sub-Saharan Africa. The post-colonial Africa has never fully legitimized the decision to keep the colonial-era boundaries as the key to building new states and nations. Military dictators and their superpower sponsors kept most states from collapsing. The key secessionist crises – the Eritrea and South Sudan that succeeded, and the Biafra, Darfur and Somaliland that failed – have kept the dream of non-state self-determination alive. But, the multitude of domestic socio-economic crises plaguing sub-Saharan Africa have brought vast swaths of the populace to a point of extreme despair. They believe that the only way out is to revive localized self-identity frameworks irrespective of existing state borders, and the grassroots are ready to confront and fight the states in order to realize their respective manifest destinies. The modern African states are too weak to contain this up-and-coming grassroots rage. A lot of blood will be spilled before Africa calms down...

Although the US is increasingly marginalized, it cannot be ignored. However, the US refuses to adapt its polity and world view to the unfolding mega-trends – thus adding to the building crises and widening gaps between the Eastern and Western Hemispheres. Back in the early-1940s, Nicholas Spykman (1893-1943) tried to reconcile the theories of Mackinder and Mahan in order to find a common denominator and a single precondition for the control of the world. Spykman came up with the Rimland theory: "Who controls the Rimland rules Eurasia; who rules Eurasia controls the destinies of the world." In 1942-3, at the height of the US crisis during the Second World War, Spykman predicted a US-led alliance with post-war Germany and Japan aimed to contain and prevent the Soviet Union from dominating Eurasia. Spykman also predicted that the UK would remain a major world power while post-war Germany would replace France as the preeminent power on the continent. During the Cold War, the US tried to struggle for Spykman's Rimland – mainly China and central Europe – but failed. While China loosened its affiliation with the Soviet-dominated bloc since the early-1970s, China did not join the US-led anti-Soviet campaign. Despite the preeminence of the US-led Euro-Atlantic sphere during the Cold War, the entire Europe had not given up on returning to be an eastward-gravitating power on its own that is not beholden to the domineering US. Moreover, the struggle for the Rimland – the Developing World's littoral – is also being waged.

Loath to become irrelevant, the US is fighting to stabilize a new line of confrontation – that is, a new Rimland – an attempt at containing the traditional land powers in the post-Cold War world environment. As Jakub Grygiel and Wess Mitchell explained in their 2016 book *The Unquiet Frontier*, the US established a line of "frontier allies" that "are located in close proximity to larger, historically predatory powers – China, Iran, and Russia, respectively – that are international competitors to the United States and within whose respective spheres of influence they would likely fall, should they lose some or all of their strategic independence." These lines of allies stretch from Finland to Oman in the west, and from Japan to Australia in the east – encasing the "predatory powers" between them. Because these allies cannot withstand a military upsurge by the encased powers – the US is convinced they will remain beholden to US hegemony in order to keep the American umbrella providing last resort security.

However, this grand design has already been partially abandoned by Obama who prefers to empower Iran instead of America's traditional allies Israel and Saudi Arabia as part of his atoning for sins of Westernization,



colonialism, imperialism, etc. Other US allies have taken notice. Washington's desperate efforts at instigating and escalating crises and confrontations along the new Rimland – from the Baltic States to Ukraine, and in the East and South China Seas – will not be able to reverse the unfolding mega-trends. While it is too late to change the practices of the Obama Administration, the new US President will have to confront reality upon assuming office in early 2017.

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Back in the 1980s, a wise defector from the Soviet Union reflected on the state of the world after experiencing Ronald Reagan's Washington at its Cold War best. He warmly endorsed Reagan's promise that the modern world would soon "leave Marxist Leninism on the ash heap of history," but then foresaw an assertive stronger Russia arising from the ashes. "Washington may be the Capital of the World, but Moscow is the Capital of History," he explained. Russia's greatness, he elaborated, has always been derived from its ability to "ride the waves of history" – that is, the mega-trends. In the mid-2010s – Russia is clearly riding these waves. The US, in contrast, is not even aware such waves exist.

The world, and particularly the history-conscientious Eastern Hemisphere, is returning to riding the waves of history no longer encumbered by the shackles of the Cold War and the dread of the US-led NATO desperate attempts at preventing by force the emergence of a heritage-based new world order. This is a revolutionary world where the grassroots are striving to revive communal comfort and security in legacy-based modalities of self-determination through the reliance on the unprecedented access to knowledge and interaction made possible by the new era of electronic communication. This is a revolutionary world where the new and chaotic urbanization and populace dislocation from conservative rural areas provides the geo-economic and geo-political gravitas required for making the new-old non-state heritage-based entities viable.

Entering the Fourth Phase defining the post-modern world, the entire Eastern Hemisphere is not only bedeviled by the failure of the Westphalian State, but also by the inability of the supra-state Utopian entities – the UN, EU, AU, USSR, etc. – to deliver remedies to the perceived ills of statehood and nationalism. Hence, the ensuing quest for self-determination at sub-state and cross-border frameworks is unstoppable. The horrific fratricidal bloodshed all over South Asia, the greater Middle East, the entire Africa and beyond testifies to the suffering and agony nations and nationalities are willing to endure in order to realize their self-determination manifest destinies. Europe is so far free of comparable bloodshed solely because the grassroots still give the political process a chance to deliver. Should the grassroots be failed, fratricidal bloodletting will resume – sending Europe anew into the prolonged era of continental wars that, after all, characterizes most of the history of Europe.

By the sword of popular leaders and by the pen of erudite statesmen – the Eastern Hemisphere will ultimately adjust to the return of history. Bunting's "World in a Cloverleaf" is here to stay.

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**Remarks:** Opinions expressed in this contribution are those of the author.