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The War in Ukraine: Putin and the multi-order world

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Abstract

The global rules-based order has been in transformation for more than a decade, whilst the liberal international order has been in crisis and new international orders are emerging. Within this context, the Russian invasion of Ukraine marks what the Germans have called a *Zeitenwende* because the multi-order world is now a reality. The article outlines the main characteristics and implications of a multi-order world and outlines four categories of orders that will populate the multi-order world. The article details Putin's vision for a Eurasian order and how his plans are received within the Eurasian order. The article offers a perspective on how the global dynamics of the new multi-order world might play out, showing that it is likely to be conflictual rather than a cooperative, and that members of the Eurasian order show

little enthusiasm for Putin's vision, resulting in an order held together by force rather than consent.

Key words

The War in Ukraine; Putin; Global Order; Liberal order; Eurasian order

Acknowledgements

Funding information

Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest has been reported by the authors.

Notes on contributors (max 150 words each)

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Petrova); Special Issue 'Russia between East and West, and the Future of Eurasian Order' in *International Politics*, 58(3) 2021 (with Z. Paikin), and a monograph *Resilience in EU and International Institutions* (with T. Flockhart, 2020).

This article starts from the premise that the Russian invasion of Ukraine on 24 February 2022 represents what the Germans have called a *Zeitenwende*—a major historical turning point that will have profound implications on everything from trade, production, supply, and wealth, to security, war, and the ability of the global international society to meet urgent challenges such as climate change, poverty, inequality, and global health. We argue that the *Zeitenwende* represents the final stages of the transformation of the global rules-based order into a new global ordering architecture characterized by diversity and plurality. Such a transformation has been thought to have been in process for years (Acharya, 2014; Kupchan, 2013), which prompted Flockhart (2016a) to suggest in the pages of *Contemporary Security Policy* that the global ordering architecture is transforming into a multi-order world rather than returning to multipolarity. We argue here that the Russian invasion of Ukraine is a clear indication that a multi-order world is now a reality although its more specific characteristics are still unfolding. We therefore concur with the Germans that we are indeed at a *Zeitenwende* and that 2022 will be added to the historical dates that structure the study of International Relations (IR)— 1648, 1815, 1919, 1945, and 1989.

That the new global order will be “multi-order” rather than “multipolar” is no small matter. A multi-order global architecture constitutes a major change because the primary global governance dynamics of a multi-order world will be *within* and *between* different international orders, rather than between multiple sovereign states (Flockhart 2016a). This means that the logic of anarchy applies in relations between international orders rather than between sovereign states, and that logics of hierarchy will apply within orders (Zarakol, 2017). In a globalized world, this constitutes a fundamental change and a tempering of the condition

of anarchy that will place significant pressure on existing governance structures, especially on multilateralism and the rule of law—both key features of the current global rules-based order. The Russian invasion of Ukraine reveals troubling indications for the logics both within and between orders. Putin’s plans for a Eurasian order seem to rest on internal logics anchored in a form of hierarchy that is based on force and subjugation as witnessed in the treatment of Ukraine. The logics between the Russian-led and Chinese-led orders on the other hand, rest on a relationship of friendship between Putin and China’s President Xi, whilst their relationship with the American-led liberal international order seem destined to deteriorate. The character of the multi-order world will to a large degree depend on how these logics unfold.

The transformation of the global rules-based order into a new global ordering architecture along the lines of a multi-order world will bring major change from the global level all the way down to the local level. We previously highlighted the importance of the relationship between the local and the global levels (Korosteleva & Flockhart, 2020) for the resilience of the liberal international order. In this article we continue this line of investigation, by questioning the resilience of Putin’s envisioned Eurasian order and suggesting that his decision to go to war in Ukraine is likely to undermine its resilience rather than build it. We also show the co-constitutiveness between the levels of ordering from the global to the local level. The events that have unfolded since the Russian annexation of Crimea in 2014, including the civic unrest in Belarus, the war in Nagorno-Karabakh, the ongoing war in Ukraine, and thinly veiled threats to the Baltic states, Moldova, and now also to Finland and Sweden due to their plans for joining NATO, demonstrate that the prospects for a cooperative multi-order

world are dwindling as the current events look set to produce hostile and unstable local foundations for decades to come.

The article is divided into four sections, starting by reiterating the importance of adopting a holistic perspective that can encompass ordering levels from the global to the local level and distinguish between international orders and the global ordering domain. The second section outlines four categories of orders that seem likely to populate the new multi-order world and seeks to characterize the likely dynamics *within* and *between* them. In the final two sections the article first outlines Putin's vision for a Eurasian order followed by an analysis of how his plans are likely to be received by the individual members of the Eurasian order and at the local level. By way of conclusion, we offer a perspective on how the global dynamics of the multi-order world might play out and why the Russian invasion of Ukraine probably will not lead to a resilient Eurasian order.

The current transformation and levels of ordering

Order transformations are momentous, rare, and usually unintended junctures in history that can only be understood with the benefit of hindsight (Gilpin, 2002). For those who made the order, they are almost always unwelcome events, whereas others may appreciate the demise of the existing order. Whether welcomed or not, order transformations are associated with uncertainty, loss of control, social upheaval and contestation, and they are experienced by individuals as deeply unsettling and likely to spark extreme political reactions, re-evaluation of values, and re-construction of identities and narratives (Flockhart, 2016b; Hopf, 2018). Order transformations are also often accompanied with powershifts and the threat of

violence or war (Allison, 2018). Although most attention has traditionally been on the global and international levels, it is important to recognize that order transformations are processes that are as much located at the local level as the global level, and they are characterized by complex and interconnected processes of co-constitution between the different levels of ordering (Cooley & Nexon, 2020)

With the benefit of hindsight, we can now see that the current order transformation has been in the making for years, yet determining the nature of an order transformation in progress is extremely difficult in the early stages. Perhaps this is why much of the literature in IR has shied away from contemplating full-scale order transformation and instead focused on specific instances of crisis, change, and contestation, such as the crisis of the liberal international order (Adler-Nissen & Zarakol, 2021; Lake, 2020; Lake et al., 2021, 2021 See also the 75th anniversary issue of IO), democratic backsliding (Flockhart, 2021), the rise of right-wing populism (Albright & Woodward, 2019), powershifts and the rise of China (Jacques, 2012; Pillsbury, 2016). In this article we argue in favour of the big picture, but also for the need to distinguish clearly between different levels of ordering. We advocate to look closely at the individual and domestic levels to focus on the multiplicity of agents as the makers of change (Acharya, 2018) and guardians of order, and to clearly distinguish between the level of international order(s) and the global ordering level.

The distinction between the global and international levels is important because today the global rules-based order is undergoing transformation whilst the liberal international order is “only” in crisis. The distinction between the two is not always obvious, because the liberal international order and the global rules-based order are deeply intertwined, overlapping and

both have been constituted through centuries of liberal/Western power and both are infused with liberal principles and practices. Confusingly, the two terms are often used interchangeably, but they are analytically distinct phenomena, with the global rules-based order being “unbounded” and universal, and the liberal international order being “bounded” and restricted to those who share its core values (Mearsheimer, 2019). The difference between them can be summed up as a difference in the depth and scope of their ideational foundations. The English School distinction between pluralism and solidarism is useful here (Buzan, 2014, p. 16). The liberal international order rests on solidarist liberal values such as democracy, the rule of law, economic and political freedom, freedom of expression, freedom of the press, and freedom of religion. The global rules-based order is less focused on individual rights, prioritizing instead more pluralist state centric principles such as sovereignty and the principle of equality with more space for cultural and political diversity (Flockhart & Paikin, 2022). The distinction between the global rules-based order and the liberal international order allows for both to co-exist in a co-constitutive relationship within one global ordering architecture—conceptualized in this article as a multi-order world.

The multi-order world and categories of orders

The character of the coming multi-order world will depend on the number and character of the international orders that will eventually populate it, and it will depend on the alignment of the individual orders with the extant patterns of power, principles, and practice (PPP) (Flockhart, 2020) at the global order level. It is important to ask the following:

- To what extent is *power* within the international order(s) seen as legitimate and is it maintained through consent and persuasion or through subjugation and force?

- To what extent are the *principles* of the international order(s)—including its conception of the good life—salient and attractive to the members of the order?
- To what extent are the *practices* of the international order(s) supported by members of the international order through norm-appropriate behaviour and/or through established practice in formal or informal institutions?

The character of the multi-order world will depend on the continued support for, and integration into, the institutions of the existing rules-based order and on their attachment to the principle of sovereignty, including for states—such as Ukraine and Taiwan—that previously have been part of imperial expressions of the current/emerging international orders. The issue of sovereignty is pivotal as shown by Russia’s invasion of Ukraine and the rhetoric about Ukraine not being a “real state.” The matrix below outlines four distinct categories of orders. Each category of order displays characteristics vis-à-vis these factors. The matrix should only be seen as an indication of the types of order that might populate a multi-order world—and each category as ideal-types that might be represented by several similar, but separate orders. The four categories of international orders are summarized by outlining current or plausible international orders in the matrix in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Categories of international orders

	Strong attachment to sovereignty	Moderate attachment to sovereignty
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Alignment with the current rules-based order	<u>Conservative Intergovernmentalism</u> Sovereign strategic decision-making based on economic interests emphasizing non-intervention. <i>Chinese-led “Belt and Road” order</i>	<u>Democratic Internationalism</u> Multilateral decision-making based on liberal/democratic values - extending domestic politics into the international realm. <i>American-led Liberal order</i>
Non-alignment with the current rules-based order	<u>Illiberal Nationalism</u> Transactional issue-based decision-making based on populist/traditional values emphasizing strength, order and control <i>Russian-led Eurasian Economic Order</i>	<u>Radical Transnationalism</u> Ideological or issue-based decision-making based on a conviction that the outcome justifies the means and emphasizing the collective over the individual <i>Islamic-led Sharia Order</i>

In the new multi-order world, the liberal international order will continue to exist, albeit no longer with expectations of universality and probably in an adapted form. Crises, change, and contestation will remain part of the new liberal international order, but paradoxically, it seems that the war in Ukraine may contribute to the liberal order’s resilience and cohesion as liberal order states (so far) have shown remarkable unity and resolve in their support of Ukraine and sanction-backed condemnation of Russia’s actions. The astounding turn-around of the foreign policy stance in Germany and the decision by Sweden and Finland to seek membership of NATO, and the June 2022 Danish referendum to abandon the opt-out on defence in the EU, are all testament to the ongoing change and to the surprising vitality and resilience of the liberal international order, despite its many ongoing crises such as democratic backsliding and domestic political tensions in several member states (Flockhart, 2021).

Apart from the continued existence of the liberal international order, the new multi-order world will also include the Chinese-led “Belt and Road order,” and the Russian-led “Eurasian

order.” Other orders may develop, possibly with a regional foundation in Africa, Asia, or Latin America, and there is clearly an ambition for an Islamic-led “Sharia order.” Neither of these orders are yet fully constituted or even certain to develop, but the ambitions for establishing the Chinese-led “Belt and Road order” and the Russian-led “Eurasian order” have been clearly articulated by both President Putin and President Xi. The clearest and most recent articulation of their order ambitions came at the meeting held on 4 February during the Winter Olympics in Beijing where Putin and Xi signed a comprehensive joint statement on “entering a new era,” which codified the establishment of their respective international orders (Kempe, 2022). The elaborate statement can arguably be read as a “manifesto for order transformation,” detailing Moscow’s and Beijing’s views on strategic threats and their shared understanding of democracy and their grievances against what they see as American domination under unipolarity.

The Russian invasion of Ukraine shows Putin’s determination to realize his specific vision for the Russian-led “Eurasian order.” That Putin has a vision for a Russian-led order should not be a surprise to anyone because he outlined it directly to the liberal international order’s top establishment at the 2007 Munich Security Conference (Fried & Volker, 2022). What is surprising today is only the extent to which he is willing to use force for realising his vision. It now seems clear that *power* within the Russian-led Eurasian order will be maintained through subjugation and force rather than through consent and persuasion and that the legitimacy of the order’s patterns of power will be built through strict control of (mis)information and fear. Clearly the *principles* and *practices* of the Eurasian order are anathema to Ukraine as well as Moldova and the former states of the Soviet Union that are now part of the liberal international order. It is more difficult to assess how the patterns of power, principles and

practice are viewed by the current members of the Eurasian order. The big question here is if the Eurasian order can develop into a resilient international order and how its relationships with the other international orders in the multi-order world will be forged. In the next two sections the article will examine Putin's vision for the Russian-led Eurasian order and what the dynamics are within the order—especially if the Eurasian order is likely to be (permanently) based on force and subjugation and what appears to be limited salience of its principles and unenthusiastic convergence around its practices and institutions.

Putin's vision for a Eurasian order: From declarations to invasion

Putin's rejection of the global rules-based order through his illegal invasion of Ukraine started from relatively humble beginnings grounded in his apparent desire to redress the consequences of the collapse of the USSR in 1991. In his state-of-the-nation address in April 2005, Putin called the demise of the Soviet Union the most "major geopolitical disaster of the century" and set out on a mission to change it. On the international stage he intended, as his main objective, to "ensure security of our borders ... for the resolution of our domestic problems." Within those borders he believed Russia "should continue its civilising mission on the Eurasian continent ... in ensuring that democratic values [of Russia's own design], combined with national interests, enrich and strengthen our historic community" (Putin, 2005). Few paid attention to the deep and rather ominous meaning that his statement contained which effectively aimed at restoring Russia's historic lands, culture and influence—and which with time would produce the *Russkii Mir* (Russian world)—a kind of spiritual space of Russia's dominance. The intentions to eclipse everything that is even remotely related to

Russia, became loud and clear in Putin's stately address on February 21, 2022, before the invasion of Ukraine:

My address concerns the events in Ukraine and why this is so important for us, for Russia. Of course, my message is also addressed to all our compatriots... Ukraine is not just a neighbouring country for us. It is an inalienable part of our own history, culture and spiritual space... Ukraine was entirely created by Russia... [During the Soviet days] these territories were transferred along with the population [to Ukraine] of what was historically Russia... Russia has done everything to preserve Ukraine's territorial integrity... Everything was in vain... Russia has every right to respond in order to ensure our security. That is exactly what we will do. (Putin, 2022)

The statement epitomises the very essence of Putin's vision for the Russian-led Eurasian order, born out of his "single-minded focus on restoring what he defined as the geographical integrity and honour of the Russian state" (Starr & Cornell, 2014, p. 5) in the early days, to later become his civilising mission to re-write history and to re-build a virtuous Russian World, purified, revered and feared by all. This grand vision took several twists and turns of recent history, and various means—from cultural, to economic and military—to acquire a full-fledged meaning by 2022. The vision consistently challenged the supremacy of the liberal international order. From his first arrival to power, Putin strongly believed in the idea that global powers should be rebalanced, and to achieve that, a new union of republics could be built on the same territory as the USSR, to be joined by economic interests and cultural ties, and eventually through deeper integration—to include politics, security, and a new understanding of history. To advance this vision, it is now clear that he was prepared to use

all means necessary, if cooperative dialogue between the West and Russia were not achieved, as his Berlin speech in 2001 indicated (Putin, 2001).

So, what of the strategy and means for realizing his vision? In 2002, Putin mobilised Kazakhstan, Armenia, Belarus, Tajikistan, and Kyrgyzstan to reinvigorate the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) as a military alliance, which was effectively put to use in January 2022, to thwart the uprising in Kazakhstan to remove disagreeable Nazarbayev from power, and to restore “order” and force Lukashenko’s loyalty in the unravelling Belarus. Real military measures were already deployed in 2008, during Russia’s brief war with Georgia, resulting in two break-away republics of North Ossetia and Abkhazia, thus undermining Georgia’s ambition to europeanise by joining NATO. To justify Russia’s actions in the Caucasus, then President Medvedev (2008) stated that Russia was not just interested in securing its borders, but it was also motivated to retain its sphere of influence throughout Eurasia.

Some scholars would argue Putin continued using whichever means necessary to bring his vision closer to fruition, including in 2010 in Kyrgyzstan during the national uprising to oust President Bakiyev from power (Baev, 2014; Blank, 2014; Starr, 2014). Putin’s hand, working on a restoration of the new/old Eurasian order, during that period could be seen in other countries as well—such as in Armenia, Georgia, and Moldova—albeit to various degrees of success. The crunch point however came when Russia succeeded in manipulating the corrupt Yanukovich regime in Ukraine into submission in 2013, this way paving the way to the beginning of the carving up of Ukraine in 2014, with the annexation of Crimea and the emergence of two separatist republics of Donetsk and Luhansk.

The “sphere of influence” claimed by Russia as the emerging Eurasian order, has been built gradually. In addition to military means, Putin also used economic pressure to subjugate countries, like Belarus into submission. Notably, in 2011 he proclaimed his new vision for a pan-Asiatic integration project—the Common Economic Space of Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan—to become “a powerful supranational association capable of becoming one of the poles in the modern world ... Alongside other key players and regional structures, such as the EU, the US, China and APEC, the Eurasian Union will help ensure global sustainable development” (Putin, 2011). Soon, this vision grew into the project of “integration of integrations,” securing China’s interests and BRI investment alongside (Korosteleva & Paikin, 2021). While China is difficult to fool, Russia instead coined a loose policy of *sopryazhenie*¹—gradual alignment between powers, each pursuing their specific national interests. As time has shown, Russia’s interests became “principally incompatible” (Suslov 2016, in Korosteleva & Petrova, 2021) with the West, but also seeing frictions with China, quietly disapproving Russia’s game for power, while the latter advocated in favor of what Lavrov (2019) called a “Greater Eurasian order” by Russian design.

The full-blown invasion of Ukraine and earlier recognition of Luhansk and Donetsk People’s Republics as independent sovereign states testify to the fact that Putin openly believes that his vision could only survive if Russia keeps expanding its sphere of influence, at whatever costs, and despite demonstrating the order’s utmost vulnerability—that it can only survive by use of force and subjugation. Putin predetermined the fate of Kazakhstan back in March 2014,

¹ *Sopryazhenie*’ (Russian: сопряжение) can be understood as a degree of coordination of strategies, projects and resources developed under different regional strategies.

when in his speech to the Duma, he remarked that Kazakhstan was never a state before 1991, and it was Russia (once again) which gave this country its sovereign status (Pannier, 2020). These ideas have been expounded by a series of “geopoliticians” and “Eurasianists”—Sakwa (2021), Lukyanov (2018), and Dugin (2022) being the most articulate among them. As Blank (2014, p. 18) notes:

Although there are different streams within this current, the central motif is that Russia must be a great power (*Velikaya Derzhava*) and that means an empire, reuniting the lands of the former USSR under its control. In practical terms ... it means that the sovereignty and integrity of those other states are, in Russian eyes, merely expedients, not something enshrined in international treaties and laws even if Russia has signed those accords.

This was clearly exposed by the superficiality of the Budapest Memorandum on security assurances in connection with Ukraine’s accession to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons of 1994, guaranteed by Russia, United Kingdom, and United States, whereby the three powers confirmed to “respect ..., refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of Ukraine” (1994, p. 169), and neither acted as deterrent to stop the culprit (Russia) from its assault of Ukrainian territories (See also Sherr, 2013, pp. 61–62). The same could be said about the Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Partnership signed between Ukraine and Russia in 1997, which guarantees mutual respect, support and cooperation in all spheres of life between the two countries, and more so, the Vienna Convention on Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage and the Geneva Convention of 1949 insisting on refraining from nuclear threats and operation near nuclear

plants, by conflict parties (All mentioned by Novikova, 2022). Neither of these International Treaties, signed by Russia, seem to have had any influence to prevent Russia from violating the norms, and the rules of the global rules-based order.

The result of this development over the past two decades manifested in Russia's total disregard of international law, is that by February 24, 2022, the grand vision for a "Greater Eurasian order" as rehearsed by Lavrov, and others in Putin's inner circles, soon was meant to turn into *Novorossia* (New Russia), this way including newly captured Ukrainian and newly occupied Belarusian territories, at the behest of Lukashenka, but against the will of the Belarussian people. For the time being Russia's war in Ukraine continues, suggesting that while the multi-order world may have emerged, its shape is not at all clear. However as the consequences of the war in Ukraine already has a grim human cost with millions displaced and many thousand civilian deaths, the collective memory of hatred will surely feed the narratives and identities of the future and will probably take generations before any emotional reconciliation can conceivably occur.

Perspectives on the Eurasian order

As indicated above the dynamics in the multi-order world are played out within and between international orders, where the dynamics *within* orders will be hierarchical and where the dynamics *between* orders will be anarchical. An important question to ask is therefore what the specific dynamics are likely to be within the Russian-led Eurasian order. The quiet occupation of Belarus, the stationing of peace-keeping troops in Nagorno-Karabakh, Transdnistria, Abkhazia and North Ossetia in the Caucasus, and the full-scale invasion of

Ukraine with the clear intent for brutal subjugation of the Ukrainian people into Russia's vision for the Eurasian order indicates that the hierarchical dynamics within the Eurasian order will be based on force and fear rather than attraction and consent (as arguably is the case in the liberal international order).

While Russia has been using any means possible—from clandestine cyber warfare (The Guardian, 2022) to overt state propaganda, and pervasive media presence (RT - Russian TV channel)—to inculcate its vision of the new Eurasian order across the post-Soviet space, and where possible beyond, it is only recently that Putin promoted his “mission” as a “collector of Russian lands” (*собиратель русской земли, sobiratel' russkoi zemli*). It is extremely disconcerting to observe how Putin's propaganda machine succeeds in brainwashing millions of Russians into a zombified state of approval, including condoning atrocities in Ukraine, and passivity by staying silent for fear of persecution or loss of income. And yet, it is important to gauge the endurance of Putin's Eurasian vision, in the public eye, to see if the top-down version, in its most aggressive form—through the invasion of Ukraine—is likely to secure genuine followers.

Although it is extremely difficult to assess the “public mood” in Russia as it slides toward totalitarianism, there are some indications about how Russians see the war and how they support Putin's vision. At the beginning of the war, a “silent majority”—about 60% of Russian respondents—indicated that they endorsed the “special military operation” in Ukraine (Kizolova & Norris, 2022). According to the Levada Centre (2022), most (60%) blamed the United States and NATO for the escalation of tensions in Eastern Ukraine, while only 4% blamed Russia. The polls suggest that net public approval of Putin has surged by about 13

percentage points since December, a rally-round-the-flag effect, with almost three-quarters (71%) expressing approval of Putin's leadership by February 2022. Those who expressed their dissent, were violently persecuted in Russia, with thousands of anti-war demonstrators (Lonas, 2022) arrested to date, and thousands fleeing abroad (Demytrie, 2022). The crackdown on protesters, and the free media for now works in favour of Putin's regime—spreading fear, censoring information and silencing those who disagree.

While Russian propaganda, to a degree, may be succeeding in silencing and convincing their own people of the righteousness of the Russian order, this is not the case in the neighbouring states, which Russia still considers its privileged sphere of influence. This serves as a testimony to the emergent counter-orders, with Ukraine being in the forefront. Even before the 2022 war, Ukrainians never perceived Russia as their ally and their opinions have solidified since the Russian invasion, whereby according to the ELN opinion polls (Ashcroft, 2022), 98% of Ukrainians—including 82% of those of Russian ethnicity—did not believe that any part of Ukraine was rightfully part of Russia. 97% of the respondents had a strongly unfavorable view of President Putin; 94% had an unfavorable view of the Russian military and 62%—a very unfavorable view of the Russian people—that is, 2/3 of the population, who were previously culturally and historically aligned with Russia.

What about the local support of Russian order ambitions, in the *de facto* Russian-controlled territories of the post-Soviet space: How do they respond to Putin's vision for a Eurasian order? The answer is not as unified or as enthusiastic as Russia might have hoped for. Even a subjugated and intellectually decimated Belarus after the 2020 protests, resulting in tens of thousands incarcerated, tortured, fled, and even murdered, still believes (97%) that Russia's

invasion of Ukraine was wrong. Most instructively, Lukashenka himself, while desperately needing Putin's investment, still resists (at the time of writing) from committing Belarusian troops to the war. Kazakhstan, another loyal party to Putin's regime, especially after the recent cleansing of the government from Nazarbayev's supporters, too showed "uncharacteristic leniency in allowing public rallies in support of Ukraine ... and abstaining from recognising the separatist republics of Donetsk and Luhansk" (Dave, 2022). It is unclear at this stage, how other members of the CSTO and the Eurasian Economic Union, which are heavily dependent on Russia in their security and trade, will respond to Russia's call for engagement. So far, none of them have stepped forward to commit their troops in support of Russia's war (Ruehl, 2022). Azerbaijan (not a CSTO member) is also expected to ignore any calls for rising in defence of Russia and is actively sending humanitarian aid to war-torn Ukraine.

Although it is difficult to get a clear view in a highly fluid situation, it seems that Putin's vision for the Eurasian order is far from enthusiastically shared—even by members of the order. If the Eurasian order turns out to rest on "false truths," manipulation, brainwashing, force, and subjugation—that is, in line with our discussion above, an illegitimate and coercive power; breaking every possible international norm and proving through practice its shortsightedness—this order is unlikely to last.

What kind of multi-order world lies ahead?

Writing about developments as they occur is always difficult and will necessarily involve a degree of uncertainty. Nevertheless, a much clearer picture of what kind of multi-order world lies ahead has emerged since the Russian invasion of Ukraine and since the signing of the

statement on “a new era” between Putin and Xi. Given that logics of anarchy determine the relationships between international orders, the nature of the multi-order world will depend on whether the emerging inter-order relationships will be based on conflict, competition or cooperation (Wendt, 1992) and to what extent the existing global multilateral institutions and rule of law will remain functioning. So far, the statement between Putin and Xi indicates that the relationship between the Chinese-led “Belt and Road order” and the Russian-led “Eurasian order” will be a cooperative relationship although it is unclear how far Xi will go in supporting the brutality of Putin’s war in Ukraine. The relationship between the liberal international order and the Eurasian order on the other hand, looks set to be a conflictual one with a significant potential for escalation of the current conflict to inter-order war even with the danger of nuclear use. Much will depend on the relationship between the American-led liberal international order and the Chinese-led Belt and Road order and on the alignment of the “fence sitters” including India, Brazil, and several African countries. Whilst some of these might be reluctant to whole-heartedly join the liberal international order, they will also be concerned about the Russian disregard for national sovereignty and the brutality used for achieving Putin’s goals and many of those who initially signed up for the Belt and Road initiative are beginning to realize that the benefits of the association is not going to be cost-free (as promised) and could lead to economic dependency in the long term.

The current situation is unstable and the outcome of the war in Ukraine is not settled. However, even if Russia should be able to conquer all, or parts of Ukraine, it is unlikely that Putin will succeed in establishing a resilient Eurasian order because the order will be anchored in force and subjugation, illegitimate power, low salience, and lack of enthusiasm for its principles and vision, and a low degree of convergence around the order’s institutions and

practices. This should be contrasted with the liberal international order, which despite the persistent contestations from within, largely rests on consent and attraction, legitimate patterns of power and, what appears to be a rapid return to full engagement with its practices and multilateral institutions. From this perspective the liberal international order emerges—surprisingly—as a highly resilient international order, which surely was not part of Putin’s plans.

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