



Beware  
making  
moves  
you may  
come to  
regret...



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# STRATEGY: THE ART OF MANAGING CONSEQUENCES

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During the immediate aftermath of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022, in an attempt to offer early thoughts on a complex crisis, a number of visitors to, and interlocutors with, the CHACR (including several from within Defence) made similar observations about the nature of, and supposed solution to, the conflict on the borders of Eastern Europe. These observations were often echoed in the press, in the wider media, by some of the armchair generals and pundits, and by the wider watching ‘chatterati’. The first step of the train of thought stated that the war in Ukraine was not Russia’s war – it was Putin’s war. The second, rather superficial, and perhaps naively optimistic strand, went that the majority of the Russian people were at best apathetic towards the war in Ukraine and in many (most even?) cases very much against it. The announcement of ‘mobilisation’ only went to increase the view that the Russian population was likely to oppose and destabilise Putin’s war effort. The third, and still seemingly logical, step of the theory therefore suggested that to solve the problem one merely needed to remove the cause and the whole pack of cards would come tumbling down in a most satisfactory (if slightly messy) fashion. Hence: orchestrate the removal of Putin; the cause of Putin’s war is removed; the war ceases; problem solved. There is a solid logic to this argument (in the sense that the forehead of a bull is solid). The simple clarity of the argument thus gained traction in early and mid 2022, as a very large number of sources – some very sharp and well-informed; some not so much; and some just the engaged or passingly-interested observers of the watching world – tried to make simple sense of the complex and frightening problem that had emerged.

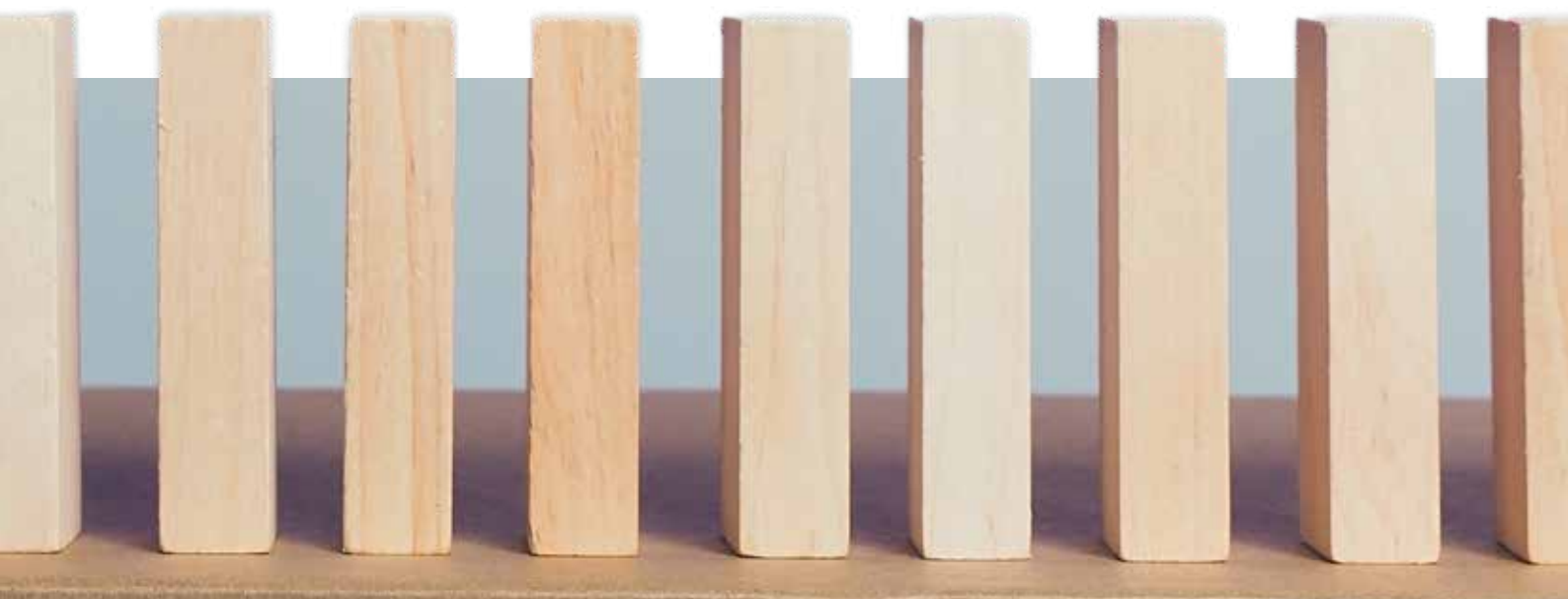
Alarmingly, however, an increasing number of well-respected thinkers and agencies gave credence to this logic and argued that a ‘strategy’ of regime change in the Kremlin was a sensible approach to take (often, to be fair, not as the entire solution to this complex issue, but, at least, as an important

element of it). Among some of the more thoughtful observers this train of thought sent worried hares running.

First, the Russia analysts with the most insight and experience were fairly unanimously of one view: Russia is not a creation of Putin – Putin is a creation of Russia. That’s not to say that without Putin the war in Ukraine would have been inevitable, but it is to say that ‘Putins’ in their various guises have always made, and will continue to make, ‘Russian decisions’ in their domestic and foreign policy formulation. Furthermore, removing Putin would be highly unlikely to resolve a complex situation that involved such elements as: the various shades of disputability of territorial claims (Donbas, Crimea, Ukraine itself even); the Ukrainian-ness or Russian-ness of elements of the population; the UN charter and principles; war crimes and accountability; wider European and even global security; etc.

Furthermore, argued the Russia experts, nature abhors a vacuum and thus creating a vacuum in the midst of a crisis was highly unlikely to produce a neat solution. If the known quantity of Putin were removed, they pointed out, he would be replaced by an unknown (or, at best, known, but untested in power) quantity from a very dubious line-up of alternatives. The naively optimistic, of course, felt that it was obvious that the Russian people, fed up with authoritarianism and now war, would somehow spring Alexei Navalny, or someone like him, from his jail cell and carry him shoulder-high to the Kremlin and Russia would suddenly have a new and bright future.

Others looked with some concern at the less-than-appealing gallery of Kremlin power-brokers. The list does not offer much appeal. Dmitry Medvedev is a survivor, but perhaps only by being a Putin-puppet, and not a strong one at that. Mishustin, the Prime Minister, and Lavrov, the Foreign Minister, kept a very low profile during the Wagner ‘march on Moscow’ – until it was over: wily politicians for sure, and dangerous, but hard-liners both, and tarred with associated guilt for the events since February 2022. The grey men behind the political front (Borotnikov, the head of the FSB, and



Patrushev, the Chairman of the National Security Council) are Putin's creatures, and they too kept an interestingly silent front while the Wagner putsch unfolded. The divided ranks of the uniformed (Shoigu, Gerasimov, Zolotov, et al) do not offer a pleasing (or, seemingly, competent) alternative prospect. And then there are the various warlords, such as the Chechen Kadyrov or even Wagner's Prigozhin, lurking in the wings sowing confusion. These are all just the more obvious alternatives to Putin – and none of them are either predictable or particularly pleasing from a pro-western, liberal point of view.

Putin, of course, has generated this 'unappealing alternatives' state of affairs in order to bolster his own position in power. A strong leader becomes stronger if he removes strong alternatives. Making sure that there is no obvious successor makes it more obvious that there does not need to be a successor. And, if one fears that the not-so-strong deputies may find strength by uniting against the leader, then divide and rule has long proved to be a useful tool for autocrats. Of course, divide and rule brings with it its own problems (or strategic consequences) as the divided deputies turn their grudges into open confrontation – and, perhaps, march on Moscow, or at least march on each other.

Furthermore, as the last 25 years of international events and interventions outside Russia have reminded us, regime change as an end in itself has not worked either predictably or well – or at least regime change with a belief that the accomplishment of that change would be likely to lead to self-creating positive outcomes has not proved to be a sound basis for decision making. Iraq, despite the scenes of jubilation on the streets of Baghdad in 2003 has still, more than 20 years later, not been without a catalogue of the most negative of consequences; nor has the fall of Kabul and the removal of the Taliban regime in 2001 post 9/11. Finally, as we dwell on Putin, Ukraine, and the hasty thinking that generated the reaction in the CHACR that has resulted in this publication, one needs no more stark a reminder that strategy is not just about forming plans and policies, and making decisions to act, but about managing the consequences of those decisions after they are made. Putin's every waking hour is, surely, currently consumed with dealing with the strategic consequences of his decision to invade Ukraine.

Second, therefore, it may be worth taking a moment to think rather more deeply about the concept of strategy itself. The word 'strategy' has become over-used and much mis-used. It has lost its original meaning and, all too often, metamorphosed into a throw-away word meaning, simply, 'a plan', as in: "The manager had a clear strategy to win the game." Even in ministries of defence, where, of all places it should be clearly understood and used in the correct context, the term has become confused, being used as often as not to mean the conduct of the business of running a modern defence department of state, rather than its original meaning of the conduct of generalship in the management of a campaign or, more accurately, the stringing together of a series of battles to conduct successful campaigns to bring a war to a winning conclusion in alignment with a nation or state's interests. The abuse of the term, coupled with a perception that there is a casual understanding of strategy, especially in Western democracies, has led to considerable recent academic examination of the term and the activity.

Beatrice Heuser has explored in some detail the origins of the term and its surrounding terminology before exploring its application throughout history. She examines an evolution of definitions of the word, quoting as particularly effective Lawrence Freedman's definition: "Strategy is about the relationship between (political) ends and (military, economic, political etc.) means. It is the art of creating power."<sup>1</sup> She goes on to say that: "Strategy is a comprehensive way to try to pursue political ends, including the threat or actual use of force, in a dialectic of wills – there have to be at least two sides in a conflict. These sides interact, and thus Strategy will rarely be successful if it shows no adaptability."<sup>2</sup> Colin Gray also opens his work on Modern Strategy by examining historic definitions, and finds much merit in both Liddell Hart and, of course, Clausewitz. He adapts Clausewitz's words to offer a short and pithy definition of strategy as: "The use that is made of force and the threat of force for the ends of policy."<sup>3</sup> Although one could consider this to be too narrow a definition and too focused upon the use of force, rather than other instruments of government, it has merit in its simplicity as an aid to understanding. Having explored the force-centric nature of this definition, Gray offers a much broader thought, which provides a very useful context for the capture of the idea of 'strategy': "It does not matter precisely which form of words are preferred for a working definition, but the essence of strategy must be identified unambiguously. That essence lies in the realm of the consequences of actions for future



When General Charles Krulak spoke about the strategic corporal he didn't mean that every corporal needed to be trained in the Machiavellian art of strategy in order to be able to serve their country well – but simply that every tactical corporal needed to understand that their tactical actions might well have operational effects that would result in strategic consequences

outcomes.”<sup>4</sup> It is in this observation that the essence of this issue of *Ares & Athena* can be found.

Strategy is, in military parlance at least, frequently defined as the balancing of ends, ways and means; by which is meant that the ends are set, the means must then be provided and the ways devised. In this construct, the ends are closely linked to the policy set that has initiated the involvement of a nation, with the means representing capability (of all sorts, military and civil), and the ways being the plan of action for the application of the capabilities provided.

All of the above is true. But surely, above all else, strategy is about the conduct of national affairs (or international affairs to national advantage) in an arena that will always be contested and frictional, and thus unpredictable and chaotic. Thus those involved in strategic assessments, planning and execution must have, at the core of their activity, an understanding of the opposing human dynamics as they go about their business: this will be a key factor not only in their original formulation of policies and thereafter plans, but also in their on-going dynamic management of strategic process and outcomes. “... [S]trategy is about a state coupling means and ends in the context of international competition, both in peacetime and in wartime, and both during potential as well as actual conflict”. And “strategy never exists in a vacuum; it implies an opponent, a conflict, a competition, a situation where somebody is trying to achieve a goal against somebody else”.<sup>5</sup> Certainly, it's about forming plans and policies that start (and ought to finish) with the ‘why’ (or the ‘in order to’, or the ‘ends’); work out the ‘how’; and deliver the means to those charged with executing the strategy and turning it into action. But that, surely, only just gets the strategist to their start point – thereafter strategy must always be about managing the consequences of the earlier decisions, plans, policies and actions, and doing so in a chaotic and competitive context where others are actively working to their own interests. Resolving Iraq did not (and could never) end with the removal of Saddam. Resolving post-9/11 Afghanistan did not (and could never) end with the removal of the incumbent Taliban regime.



<sup>1</sup>Heuser, B; *The Evolution of Strategy*; (CUP, 2010); p 27

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid*; pp 27-8

<sup>3</sup>Gray, Colin; *Modern Strategy*; (OUP, 1999); p 17

<sup>4</sup>*Ibid*; p 18

<sup>5</sup>Platias and Koliopoulos; *Thucydides on Strategy*; (Hurst & Co, 2010); p 3.

Many years ago, when serving in a strategic role in defence, I shared a platform at the RUSI Land Warfare Conference with the then Foreign Office Head of Strategy. I, I thought rather amusingly (although he didn't agree), observed to him as we were waiting for our panel to begin, that I was surprised by his title, as the Foreign Office didn't seem, to my mind, to be doing much strategy. “On the contrary,” he replied, “unlike the MoD we conduct the execution of strategy all day every day, globally”. After the panel I asked him to explain what he meant by that. He said something to the effect of: the UK finds itself in an international order that is based upon the UK's position in the 1950s; it is no longer as powerful, by some margin, as it was in the 1950s; thus preserving that world order, out into the 21st century, that continues to deliver to the UK its above-reasonable-expectation level of power and influence is all-important; so there is little point in formulating grand plans and trying to sway the world to our advantage: we already have that advantage; much better to wait and see, watch what others do and manage the situation to our continued advantage, especially relative to the international order status quo. In my military naivety I was horrified. I knew that the acme of tactical, operational and strategic art was to seize, hold and maintain the initiative in order to retain control of events; to make plans, contingency plans, branches and sequels such that we could always maintain the controlling hand – to be on the front foot not the back foot. This sounded to me like an awfully reactive national stance and approach to strategy. Age, experience and wisdom, however, has shown me that, as in most things, the answer is never that clear cut, and a large measure of ‘it depends’ always applies. The very point that my Foreign & Commonwealth Office interlocutor was making was that strategy is only in part about formulating and balancing ends, ways and means, for that is just the start point – thereafter it is about managing the consequences of our actions, predicted, unpredicted, welcome, unwelcome, positive or negative, and continuing to balance ends, ways and means as they unfold thereafter.

For those that like a military cliché, what all of this is telling us is that when General Charles Krulak spoke about the strategic corporal he didn't mean that every corporal needed to be trained in the Machiavellian art of strategy in order to be able to serve their country well – but simply that every tactical corporal needed to understand that their tactical actions might well have operational effects that would result in strategic consequences – consequences that other people would be dealing with long after their tactical tours of duty were over.

But, if all of the above is so concerning that one might conclude that the best thing to do is to stand back from the stage of international engagement and/or intervention, it is worth reminding ourselves that a decision to do nothing is not an avoidance of decision, but a decision in itself – and the consequences of that inactivity will need to be assessed, understood... and dealt with.

# BEWARE PERSONALISING THE PROBLEM

*Duncan Allan*  
*Associate Fellow, Chatham House*

It is difficult to avoid personalising the war in Ukraine: ultimately, this is Putin's war. Its origins lie in his fixation with Ukraine, which he sees as an extension of Russia itself. Russians and Ukrainians, he claims time and time again, are 'one people' with a common destiny. The war is his latest, albeit his most extreme, attempt to destroy Ukraine as a sovereign entity: to compel it to accept satellite status at the heart of a Russian sphere of influence. Equally, the final decision to launch an all-out invasion of Ukraine was Putin's. He kept most of his associates in the dark about his intentions until shortly before he authorised the attack. Their ignorance of what he had in mind reflects the reality that, under him, Russia's political system has degenerated into a personalist autocracy that has crushed organised opposition and largely silenced dissent.

But Putin's attempt to subjugate Ukraine should be understood in a wider context. For him, it is part of an even more ambitious objective (which previous Russian leaders also sought): to rewrite the European security order. In Putin's mind, Russia is a great power with privileged rights and status. As such, it should be entitled to veto security initiatives that it dislikes (such as the enlargement of NATO) and to limit the sovereignty of its smaller neighbours (so that they do not accede to NATO or integrate with the EU). Putin has set out these demands many times, most recently in late 2021, when Russia published a draft treaty with the US and a draft agreement with NATO. The first document sought guarantees that the US would not permit ex-Soviet countries to join NATO and would not engage in military co-operation with them. The second envisaged the withdrawal of NATO forces positioned on the territories of member states since May 1997 and a commitment from NATO to refrain from military activities in Eastern Europe, including in Ukraine.

In other words, the war in Ukraine is the manifestation of irreconcilable conceptions of sovereignty. Russia wants a preferential position in Europe that would enable it to restrict the sovereignty of smaller adjacent countries. This demand is incompatible with the interests and values of Western countries, which see the sovereign equality of states as the foundational principle of security and stability on the continent.

Meanwhile, the war has already proved to be a calamity for Russia. In effect, Russia has 'lost' Ukraine, the centrepiece of its self-proclaimed sphere of influence: its genocidal actions there have alienated the vast majority of Ukrainians, possibly for good. Russia's army, only recently lauded as the second most powerful in the world, has been decimated. Russia's position elsewhere in the post-Soviet space is weakening as other neighbours hedge against it. By reinvigorating the EU and prompting the further enlargement of NATO, the war has tilted the balance of power in Europe even more sharply against Russia. Such influence as Russia had in parts of the

West has been largely destroyed for years to come. Commercial links with the West have collapsed following the imposition of sanctions and the departure from Russia of hundreds of foreign companies. In response, Russia has turned inwards and is deepening ties with non-Western countries, particularly China. But this adjustment is unlikely to revive its long-term economic fortunes. And because Russia's relations with the West are broken, growing dependence on China is a deeply uncomfortable prospect. Above all, it means that Russia can no longer balance between East and West, thus threatening its self-image as an autonomous great power. Might the disaster in Ukraine therefore be a catalyst for a rethink of Russian policy?

Anecdotal evidence suggests that many members of Russia's elites are well aware that Putin's all-out invasion of Ukraine has been a catastrophic mistake. Their unease echoes the despair that many of their forbears voiced in private in the late 1970s and early 1980s as the latter contemplated the failures and decrepitude of a succession of ageing Soviet leaders. One might suppose that the passing of the Putin era will create the political space in which more pragmatic minds could begin to rebuild relations with the leading Western countries. There are, however, three reasons why this line of reasoning is flawed.

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One might suppose that the passing of the Putin era will create the political space in which more pragmatic minds could begin to rebuild relations with the leading Western countries. There are, however, three reasons why this line of reasoning is flawed.

First, it overlooks the possibility that Putin might be in power for many years to come. For sure, history is littered with examples of authoritarian systems that seemed stable until, suddenly, they were not. As the 'Prigozhin mutiny' indicates, Putin's regime is less secure and more brittle than it once appeared to be. It would, however, be a grave error to underestimate its staying power. The mutiny has shaken Putin's domestic position. Yet it also shows that no move against him will succeed without the active support of the security services – the siloviki. The upper reaches of these agencies remain loyal to him. Weakened though Putin may be, a substantive reappraisal of Russian foreign policy will not happen as long as he is in power.

Second, even if there is backstage concern (even alarm) among some in Moscow about the war, it does not follow that Putin's departure would necessarily lead to a resumption of harmonious relations with the West. Core components of Putin's world-view have shaped the thinking of Russian leaders for decades if not centuries. As such, they are shared by many if not most members of Russia's elites (and by many if not most ordinary Russians). Two elements of this world-view stand out: the proposition that Russia was, is and always will be a great power; and the related claim that Russia is therefore entitled to a privileged position in a revised European security architecture, including the right to oversee the affairs of adjacent countries, primarily Ukraine.

Third, as far as we can tell, these assumptions are entrenched in the minds of senior members of the siloviki. The linchpin of the Putin regime, Russia's security services will almost certainly play a defining role in any leadership succession. No-one can say how and when that is likely to take place.



Picture: Don Fontijn/unsplash

Yet a post-Putin regime, in which the siloviki were a central influence, would be most unlikely to view the global system and Russia's place in it in ways that differed appreciably from the outlook of the current leadership.

Indeed, Putin's successor might see the world in even darker terms than he does. It cannot be ruled out that a new leader would pursue a militantly isolationist and nationalist foreign policy that deepened the gulf between Russia and the leading Western countries. A regime like this would almost certainly assert Russia's 'special interests' in the post-Soviet space and Europe. If the war had not concluded when the succession took place, it is likely that a new hardline leadership would continue, or even escalate, the use of military force against Ukraine, perhaps backing this up with full-scale internal mobilisation; if Russia had been defeated, the new regime would probably attempt to destabilise a Ukraine that was rebuilding and rearming with Western support. Either way, a meaningful rapprochement with the West over the future of European security would be virtually unimaginable.

Yet if a more transactional and pragmatic leader replaced Putin, the outlook for East/West relations would still not be encouraging. Western governments would continue to insist that a post-Putin regime recognised Ukraine's 1991 borders and sovereignty, including the right to join the EU and NATO (along with the payment of reparations and the punishment of alleged war criminals). Even if a new leader did not share Putin's obsession with Ukraine and his visceral animosity

towards the West, they would struggle to swallow these terms, which they and many Russians would consider humiliating. If the war had not ended when a new leader assumed power, a post-Putin regime might press on with the fighting in an attempt to force concessions from Ukraine and its Western partners; if Ukraine had already prevailed, Western demands would almost certainly remain unacceptable to mainstream Russian opinion. Again, neither outcome would reconcile radically discordant Russian and Western visions of European security.

As they contend with the aftershocks of the war in Ukraine, Western decision-makers face a wider and fundamental disagreement with Russia over the foundations of security in Europe. As long as Putin is in power, Russia will demand privileged rights for itself, particularly a sphere of influence that limits the sovereignty of the countries of Eastern Europe – first and foremost, Ukraine. It is most unlikely that a post-Putin regime will take a different view. This stance clashes with the long-standing position of Western governments, which insist that durable security and stability in Europe can only be built on the basis of sovereign equality. These differences cannot be reconciled. The strategic challenge for Western policymakers is two-fold. First, to acknowledge the starkness of what confronts them. And second, to manage the friction and conflict that these differences over sovereignty generate in ways that are consistent with Western interests and values. If that entails a lengthy and potentially dangerous geopolitical stand-off with Russia in Eastern Europe, then so be it.

# BEWARE REMOVING KINGS

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The removal of leaders and governments throughout history has been a process fraught with unforeseen consequences. From Caesar to Henry VI, history is littered with monarchs strong and weak, and always in their shadow are those who would depose them. Yet rarely, if ever, have even the best-laid plans of regicide gone as their perpetrators foresaw. The likelihood that the same would not be true in the present day and into the future remains little to none. Indeed, in today's multipolar political landscape of chaotic governance, particularly outside of a somewhat sheltered Western world, the lessons of history have never been more relevant. Twenty-first century efforts to globalise democracy have revealed a global South that does not appear ready for it. While successful experiments are few, there are countless examples where endeavours have led to the establishment of weak governments with weak leaders. Without fail, weakness leads to competition; competition to collapse; collapse to civil war and an endless cycle of violence. Weak kings are the result of attempts to fix complex and chaotic situations with comparatively simple solutions. Never has such a solution fixed the underlying issues and tensions that create and sustain conflict. The inevitable result is the growth of dissent and rise of those who would institute 'real' change and depose a weak king.

The primary concern with this is that those who would take on weak kings tend to have placed themselves at the other end of the spectrum. More often than not, what follows a

weak king is just as great a problem. Just as the troubled Second Spanish Republic of 1931-1939 fell victim to Franco's Nationalists and a vicious civil war, so these lessons apply today; shadows of the past can be traced in Afghan President Ashraf Ghani's inability to impose himself as an uncontested leader in the build-up to the Taliban's 2021 takeover. Herein lies the inverse of weakness at the top of the ladder: strong kings can be just as problematic as weak ones.

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In today's world, perhaps they are even more so. In fact, our two most prominent long-term strategic adversaries, Russia and China, are both in the grip of authoritarian leaders. But what should be done? It is a popular, if somewhat naïve, belief in the West that getting rid of Vladimir Putin or Xi Jinping would get rid of the problem. Yet history is riddled with examples of depositions that prove the polar opposite is more likely to be the case. Cutting the head off the snake rarely works; indeed, the 'snake' has often turned out to be a hydra, with countless consequences growing from a single poorly-considered decision. The lesson of Julius Caesar's fateful death on the Ides of March 2,000 years ago remains just as relevant now as it ever has been: be careful what you wish for. Brutus and the conspirators murdered a dictator. What they got in return was a bloody civil war, out of which rose a long line of emperors and the destruction of their republican dreams. It is naïve to think that the removal of a strong autocratic leader in the modern day would work out any differently.





## Weak Kings: Lessons from the Spanish Civil War

Spanish history from the 1800s to the modern day is riddled with political instability, regionalism, and, most importantly, temporary solutions to long-term problems. Through monarchy, revolution, republic, restoration, dictatorship, and republic again, the course to Franco's coup and the start of the Spanish Civil War in 1936 reveals a fractured nation riven with political division and tensions.

What this meant in the build-up to war was a weak republic with weak leaders; men who had neither the support nor will to control a nation. Spain in the 1930s was a failed system that barely had control over its own constituent parts. It was a system that was fully exploited by strong military leaders who saw themselves as Costa's 'iron surgeon' and thought they would save their country. A succession of presidents and prime ministers acted as little more than placeholders among constantly recalled and bitterly contested elections that were only ever won by the narrowest of margins.<sup>1</sup> But while very little was done to slow the indomitable march towards political polarisation, it was only upon a military coup to 'fix' Spain that a weak but idealistic government finally lost its power to prevent the complete breakdown of the republic. It was only upon a military coup that the system failed spectacularly and Spain was launched into the bloodiest civil war Europe had ever seen – what Bowers referred to as a “dress rehearsal” for the Second World War – ending in the establishment of a repressive dictatorship.<sup>2</sup> In the name of saving Spain from weak kings, Franco and his military junta delivered untold suffering upon its people.

Just as political division and ideological polarisation caused issues in Spain that could not be overcome, so too have these very same problems created weak kings in the modern day. Ghani's Afghan government is perhaps the most poignant example. Forced into a power sharing agreement in which his rival Abdullah Abdullah could assign half of his cabinet, Ghani's time as president was “divisive and unpopular”, which analysts maintain severely affected the “management and planning of the war” against the Taliban, not least through a constant turnover in key security personnel.<sup>3</sup>

There is clearly no need to explain why the Taliban takeover is far worse than the ineffectual but comparatively benevolent Ghani government. However, the problem of the Taliban existed long before the Ghani government – the new issue was the inability of Afghan leaders, whether Ghani, Abdullah or any of the various heirs of the Northern Alliance, to resist an inexorable Taliban resurgence without the monumental international aid they had the first time around. Unlike Spain, where a weak government created a perceived need for a military coup, Afghanistan's problems stretch much further back. Perhaps, then, the critical lesson here is not about the specific action of removing a weak king; rather, these leaders

<sup>1</sup>Tim Rees, 'Battleground of the Revolutionaries: The Republic and Civil War in Spain, 1931–39', in *Reinterpreting Revolution in Twentieth-Century Europe*, ed. by Moira Donald and Tim Rees (London: Macmillan Education UK, 2001), pp. 113–39 doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4039-4026-1\_7

<sup>2</sup>Julián Casanova, *A Short History of the Spanish Civil War: Revised Edition* (Bloomsbury Academic, 2021) doi.org/10.5040/9781350152595

<sup>3</sup>Frud Bezhani, 'Ashraf Ghani: The Deeply Polarizing President Who Oversaw the Fall of Afghanistan', *RadioFreeEurope/RadioLiberty*, 16 August 2021 rferl.org/a/ashraf-ghani-afghan-president/31413459.html [accessed 20 April 2023].



Picture: CC BY 2.0

Ashraf Ghani's time as president was 'divisive and unpopular', which analysts maintain severely affected the “management and planning of the war” against the Taliban, not least through a constant turnover in key security personnel

tend to be stopgaps, set in place as an attempt to press pause on a tinderbox situation.

The main takeaway should instead be about the systems that create weak leadership positions; the kind of positions where election to office becomes something of a Pyrrhic victory. In 1930s Spain, this system was the offspring of republicanism in a time of political and ideological extremes, but today it has been created in the global South through the forcing of democracy upon nations and states that fundamentally operate differently to the West. There is an important lesson here, perhaps, for proponents of foreign intervention in the form of democratic evangelism. Addressing the problem of weak kings and the consequence of their removal means addressing the flawed systems that create them. We must be careful not to be the progenitors of these very systems as we have in the past.

It is not too difficult to see how flawed systems and their production of weak kings are recipes for cycles of factionalism, violence and internal conflict. Political instability and fragility are hallmarks of states where this is allowed to happen. The critical consequence comes when the fuse is lit on such a tinderbox and the process of regime change takes over. Those like Franco and Akhundzada, those with power, influence and a strong will to do what they deem necessary; these are the leaders who invariably take control in chaotic situations, diametrically opposed to those they are tearing down. They are history's 'strong kings', who bring with them a host of their own problems.

## Strong Kings: Lessons from the last days of the Roman Republic

The half-mythical figure of Julius Caesar defines the issues that strong kings generate. His assassination on the Ides of March 44 BC is one of the most iconic removals of a dictator throughout history. Culminating in his appointment as dictator perpetuo just before his murder, Caesar radically

redefined the heights one could reach in Roman politics.<sup>4</sup> He was not just dictator, but also one of the people's tribunes, a consistently 'elected' consul, Pontifex Maximus (the chief of Roman religion), and Rome's greatest commander. Caesar not only placed himself at the centre of the political system, but actively moulded it around himself.<sup>5</sup> Through gradual (and not-so-gradual) advance of power, Julius Caesar created a Rome that was reliant on him.

The aftermath of his death stands as an example of what happens when a governing system that has become dependent on one figure loses that leader. Brutus and his conspirators did not appear to have a plan for restoring the republic; rather, they seemed to naively believe that it would be the natural next step from Caesar's death – that Rome would rally to them and their abstract claims of liberty.<sup>6</sup> In reality, the result was the passing of initiative straight back to the Second Triumvirate of Octavian (later Augustus), Mark Antony and Lepidus, an alliance that spelled the end of the so-called 'Liberators'. So influential had Caesar been that something had to fill the void left at the top of the system. The Triumvirate was an ambitious attempt, but internal conflict and self-interest derailed it to the point of civil war.

Only the complete victory of Augustus at the battles of Actium (31 BC) and Alexandria (30 BC) created a political situation stable enough for peace. This was the Augustan Principate, and the birth of imperial rule in the Roman world. Despite a facade of republican appearances, Augustus did as his uncle Caesar had. Placing himself at the centre of Roman politics, he added one crucial step: the passing of his power to his son Tiberius, and in doing so the creation of an imperial dynasty.<sup>7</sup> It is a cruel irony, yet an important lesson, that Caesar's assassination led to exactly what it was supposed to prevent – the death of the Roman Republic.

In a world that seems to be taking an

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<sup>4</sup>J. S. Richardson, *Augustan Rome 44 BC to AD 14: The Restoration of the Republic and the Establishment of the Empire*, in *Augustan Rome 44 BC to AD 14* (Edinburgh University Press, 2022) doi.org/10.1515/9780748629046

<sup>5</sup>Geoffrey S. Sumi, *Ceremony and Power: Performing Politics in Rome between Republic and Empire* (University of Michigan Press, 2005) doi.org/10.3998/mpub.97634

<sup>6</sup>Luciano Canfora, 'Julius Caesar: The People's Dictator', in *Julius Caesar* (Edinburgh University Press, 2022) doi.org/10.1515/9780748629008

<sup>7</sup>Daniel J. Soyantek, "'Make Haste Slowly': Augustus Caesar Transforms the Roman World", *Journal of Management History*, 5.6 (1999), 292–306 doi.org/10.1108/13552529910288046

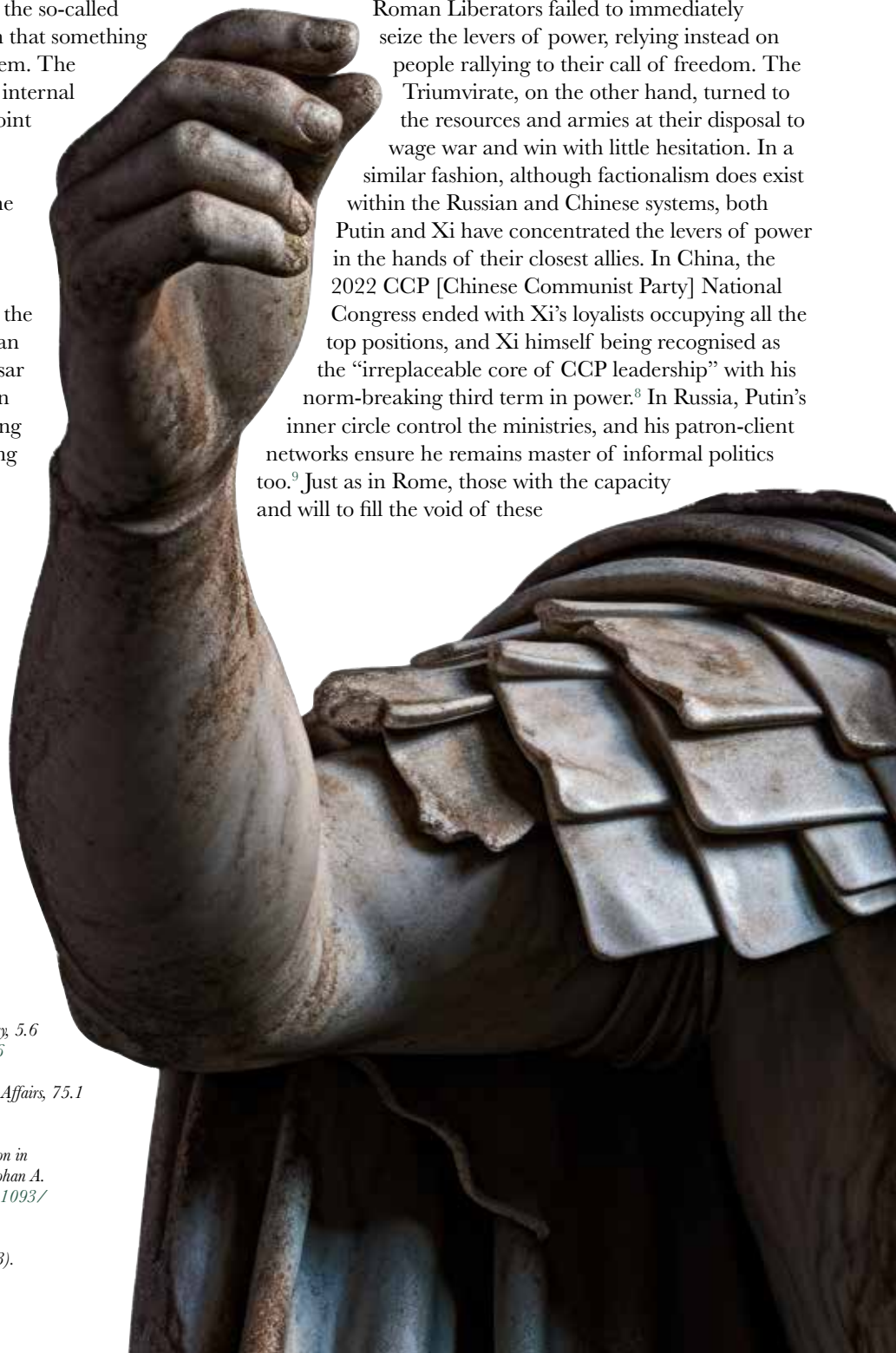
<sup>8</sup>Jenny Li, 'China Under Xi Jinping', *Journal of International Affairs*, 75.1 (2023), 261–71.

<sup>9</sup>Alexander Baturo and Johan A. Elkink, 'Regime Personalization in Russia', in *The New Kremlinology*, by Alexander Baturo and Johan A. Elkink (Oxford University Press, 2021), pp. 1–20 doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780192896193.003.0001

<sup>10</sup>Jade McGlynn, *Russia's War* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2023).

authoritarian turn, modern-day strong kings are popping up everywhere. Undeniably, the two most important of these, Putin and Xi, represent our most important long-term strategic considerations. Both are authoritarian statesmen who have solidified not just control over the mechanisms of government, but the support (or, at least, the acquiescence) of their national populations. The Russian and Chinese threats are well-known, and it is a popularly-held belief that the removal of these leaders would, in essence, fix the problem they represent. This is at best naive, and at worst dangerous: history has shown us that cutting the head off the snake, so to speak, is rarely the all-encompassing solution it is presented as.

Let us return to the example of Caesar's conspirators and their plans, or rather lack thereof, for succession. In a similar vein, some today are keen to proclaim the removal of Putin or Xi as the endgame, without considering the wider contexts and implications critical to such an ambitious claim. The Roman Liberators failed to immediately seize the levers of power, relying instead on people rallying to their call of freedom. The Triumvirate, on the other hand, turned to the resources and armies at their disposal to wage war and win with little hesitation. In a similar fashion, although factionalism does exist within the Russian and Chinese systems, both Putin and Xi have concentrated the levers of power in the hands of their closest allies. In China, the 2022 CCP [Chinese Communist Party] National Congress ended with Xi's loyalists occupying all the top positions, and Xi himself being recognised as the "irreplaceable core of CCP leadership" with his norm-breaking third term in power.<sup>8</sup> In Russia, Putin's inner circle control the ministries, and his patron-client networks ensure he remains master of informal politics too.<sup>9</sup> Just as in Rome, those with the capacity and will to fill the void of these



all-powerful leaders are their closest supporters, who maintain similar ideologies and objectives.

If these leaders were to fall, creating meaningful change in their systems of power is the only way to ensure someone similar does not emerge from the chaos, as happened during the last days of the Republic. This would require the will and means to do so on a monumental scale – revolution. Yet, Dr Jade McGlynn’s work on wider Russian support for Putin and the war in Ukraine puts into context just how fruitless such expectations are. As many platitudes as there are about

removing Putin and freeing Russia (and similarly for Xi and China), it requires a shift in the psyche of an entire nation.<sup>10</sup>

Just as weak kings are a symptom of flawed political systems, so strong kings are the mirror image, moulding systems around them to make themselves indispensable to governance. In doing so, they sink their claws into the levers of power, creating a situation where removing them may well cause more issues than it solves. We must beware removing kings weak and strong. The challenges each present must be handled delicately and with a mind to the future. We must ask ourselves: what happens next? The risks and potential consequences of any such arbitrary action must be carefully considered, lest we end up like Brutus and create what we most fear through our attempts to prevent it.

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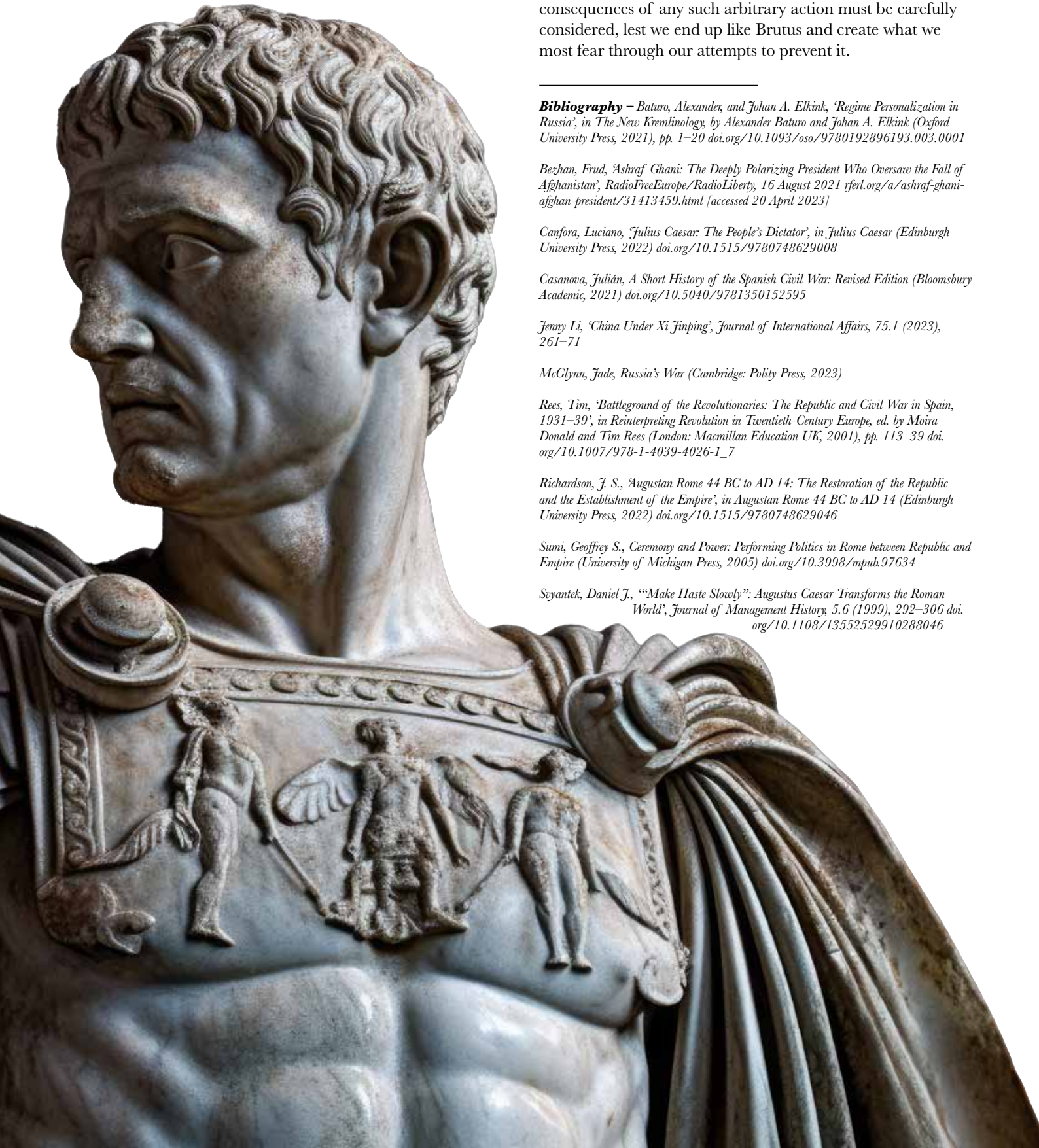
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# BEWARE SHORT-TERM SOLUTIONS

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2023 marks the 20th anniversary of the toppling of the Iraqi Ba’athist regime of Saddam Hussein by a US-led ‘coalition of the willing.’ The vast array of consequences from the invasion and occupation of Iraq in 2003 have been the subject of countless books, papers, articles and general commentary in the ensuing 20 years. This paper will look specifically at the consequences – unintended of otherwise – of Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) Order Number 1: ‘DeBa’athification of Iraqi Society’<sup>1</sup> issued on 16th May 2003.

Acting on the authority of UN Security Council Resolution 1483, the CPA assumed authority for the governing of Iraq from 21st April 2003 until the transfer of power to the Iraqi Interim Government on 28th June 2004. During those 14 months, the CPA issued 100 orders which either intentionally implemented or unintentionally triggered fundamental changes to virtually every aspect of Iraqi law, government, institutions, and wider society.

The 1980-88 Iran-Iraq War, the 1991 Gulf War, post-1991 international isolation and biting post-war sanctions, and finally the 2003 invasion, all had a deteriorative effect on the coherence and effectiveness of the Iraqi state. Arguably two final nails in the coffin of state cohesion were CPA Order No. 1, swiftly followed by Order No. 2: ‘the Dissolution of Entities.’<sup>2</sup> These CPA Orders respectively directed the removal of Ba’ath Party members from the top three tiers (and, in some cases, beyond) of government ministries, state corporations and institutions, and the dissolution of whole Ministries (including the Ministry of Defence, Ministry of Information, and the Iraqi Intelligence Service) and all of their subordinate organisations (such as the Iraq Army, Air Force, Navy and Air Defence Forces).

Estimates vary, but these two pen strokes by Administrator L. Paul Bremer, the head of the CPA, resulted in the redundancy (and subsequent disempowerment, alienation and potential poverty) of well over 120,000 Iraqis<sup>3</sup> of varying degrees of loyalty and allegiance to the former regime. Some estimates put the figure at more than 500,000, many of whom would be armed and who would have access to networks, weapons and other resources that would be invaluable kindling for a subsequent insurgency.

The disbandment of key elements of the security structure of Iraq caused an immediate and comprehensive security vacuum, closely followed by an epic surge in looting, vandalism, violent reprisals, and lawlessness across the country, but particularly evident in Baghdad. Many readers may vividly recall the chaotic scenes in Basra during the immediate aftermath of the invasion. 17 of 23 central

government ministries were destroyed during this period,<sup>4</sup> significantly impacting on the CPA’s ability to reconstitute these ministries and their functions in the immediate future.

As the bureaucracy of Iraq had melted away, partly resultant of the purge of Ba’athists – many of whom would purely have been members of the party as a pre-requisite for employment by the state – so the hopes of the of the CPA (and its forerunner the ORHA) of a swift transition of power and control to an Iraqi authority melted with them. The effort to rebuild the bureaucracy and institutions of Iraq that had been corrupted by Saddam’s regime and subsequently attrited by war, sanctions and the effects of CPA orders, is still ongoing today and will likely continue long into the future, and the outcomes are far from certain.

Over many years before the invasion, Iraq had witnessed a steady growth of ethno-political factions (with supporting military wings) that represented ethnic and sectarian agendas and security requirements and fought an ongoing campaign against the Ba’athist security apparatus. These organisations often provided opportunity for involvement in Iraq by proxy for both regional and global actors with an interest in shaping Iraqi politics. Removal of the regime and the security structures that acted as a bulwark against the outgrowth of these organisations allowed them the oxygen to expand and inhabit the post-invasion political space. They became de-facto pillars of post-Saddam governments, enriched and empowered by appropriation (also known as theft) of state funds through control of key ministerial budgets and revenue.

Nouri al-Maliki – hitherto the ‘grey man’ (a Putin-like ‘moth?’) compromise candidate of post-invasion Iraqi politics – ascended from a minor functionary in the dissident sh’ia Dawa Party to Prime Minister in April 2006. Maliki’s subsequent centralisation of power and his

capture and control of the judiciary, intelligence and security services and of the lower echelons of the military, are illustrative of a future where succeeding rulers mimic the ways and means of those they overthrew. It represents a stark retreat from the ‘polyarchic state’ – as described by Robert Dahl<sup>5</sup> – that Bremer and his coterie of advisors and staffers would have



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<sup>1</sup> CPA/ORD/16 May 2003/01: [nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB418/docs/9a%20-%20Coalition%20Provisional%20Authority%20Order%20No%201%20-%20205-16-03.pdf](https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB418/docs/9a%20-%20Coalition%20Provisional%20Authority%20Order%20No%201%20-%20205-16-03.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> CPA/ORD/23 May 2003/02: [nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB418/docs/9b%20-%20Coalition%20Provisional%20Authority%20Order%20No%202%20-%20208-23-03.pdf](https://nsarchive2.gwu.edu/NSAEBB/NSAEBB418/docs/9b%20-%20Coalition%20Provisional%20Authority%20Order%20No%202%20-%20208-23-03.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid*, p145-6.

<sup>4</sup> David L. Phillips, *Losing Iraq: inside the post-war reconstruction fiasco* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 2005), p135.

<sup>5</sup> Robert A. Dahl, *Polyarchy: participation and opposition* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1971).



envisioned as the end state for Iraq after regime change. Indeed, fast-forwarding to today, the ethno-sectarian nature of Iraqi politics is so ingrained, with each political bloc able to call on militias with significant military resources, that ‘third way’ centre-left politicians and functionaries – many of whom might have been previously identified as Ba’athists in the past – ironically represent a potentially promising way forward.

The liberation of Iraq has not delivered a US-aligned beacon of freedom and democracy in the Middle East to which neo-conservatives in the West would have aspired. The lack of condemnation of Russia’s invasion of Ukraine is an illustration of that. Indeed, the evolution of an Iranian-dominated Shia Crescent through the Middle East has connected and aligned Iranian allies and proxies against Western, Saudi and Israeli interests. The removal of Saddam Hussein and the Ba’athist infrastructure as a counter-balance against Iran, the political vacuum seized by Iranian-aligned Shi’a groups, and the rise, decline and resilience of Da’esh, have all accelerated the growth of Iranian power and influence in the region. This emboldening of Iran, allied to the acceleration of its nuclear programme, has led to a change in the MENA regional balance of power, sparking fears of a new conventional and nuclear arms race between Iran and Saudi Arabia and Israel as the other regional counterpoints. The risk of this arms race spiralling out of control presents grave consequences for the region and the world.

A tapestry of events, including the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Soviet Union, the defeat of the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait, the liberation of Kosovo (invoking the Chicago Principles), the removal from power of the Taliban in Afghanistan in October 2001, and the toppling of Saddam Hussein’s regime seemingly set the US at its zenith as the undisputed sole superpower – a first in the post-Westphalian world.

A key tenet of this edition of *Ares & Athena* is the management of consequences as a key facet of strategy. The story of the post-invasion US occupation of Iraq is one of a decline of moral authority, and fixation on nation-building (similarly in Afghanistan). The sheer array of many-ordered consequences to be managed as a fallout from the invasion, occupation and

refashioning of Iraq, has undeniably had an impact of the ability of the US to apply the same tenets elsewhere in its world view. The diversion of strategic bandwidth and resources to Operation Iraqi Freedom and subsequent regime change and nation-building allowed the Taliban in Afghanistan breathing space and a road back to power that culminated in the summer of 2021. It has also distracted the US and its allies from the growing presence and political, informational, military and economic might of China and revanchist Russia.

The intent of CPA Order No. 1 was to ‘ensure that representative government in Iraq is not threatened by Ba’athist elements returning to power and that those in positions of authority in the future are acceptable to the people of Iraq’.<sup>6</sup> The sentiment of the CPA staff who would have drafted these words is understandable and morally laudable. It appears to be guided by the principle that, by solving the immediate problem in front of you, the wider problem is solved. However, the last 20 years have been a living, evolving testament to the consequences – insurgency, genocide, state failure, Da’esh, and many more – unleashed by a breathtakingly simplistic approach to a set of fundamentally wicked problems by a US Proconsul and a staff who were largely hermetically sealed off from the realities of Iraqi politics, society, the security situation and military practitioners on the ground, and indeed the need for a longer-term view that spans decades rather than months.

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# BEWARE HUMILIATING YOUR ENEMY

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Earlier this year, I had the pleasure of hearing Air Marshal (Retired) Edward Stringer – former Director General of Joint Force Development, Strategic Command – speak at a University of Exeter lecture on ‘Ukraine versus Russia: What is the End Game?’. Poignantly, before beginning his discussion of strategies, foreign support and the like, Air Marshal Stringer opened with a warning. A warning to us, an audience of civilians who have never experienced large-scale conflict, about what war is really like. In his words, it is “brutal” and “visceral” – the very worst of humanity. On both individual and collective levels, then, we should not be surprised that the aftermath of conflict is a time fraught with emotional tensions – grief, despair, relief, but also the thought of retribution.<sup>1</sup> Retribution against those that caused such carnage; retribution for the victors against a defeated enemy that will inevitably take the blame. Human history is the history of conflict; a cycle of victories and subsequent humiliations that, as often as not, spark the next war. From the conquests of Rome, to the Treaty of Versailles, and into the 21st century, humiliating a defeated enemy has a habit of leading to the birth of that adversary’s successor. We must learn from the mistakes of our predecessors, and ensure that the idea of vengeance never replaces that of justice in the aftermath of today’s conflicts.

Perhaps the most striking and enduring example of a humiliation creating a greater foe is the Treaty of Versailles following the First World War. Signed on 28th June 1919, five years to the day since the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand dragged Europe into war, the treaty was the epitome of prioritising punishment over reconciliation.

<sup>1</sup>Catherine Lu, ‘Justice and Moral Regeneration: Lessons from the Treaty of Versailles’, *International Studies Review*, 4.3 (2002), 3–25.

<sup>2</sup>Michael S. Neiberg, *The Treaty of Versailles: A Very Short Introduction*, *Very Short Introductions* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019); Alan Sharp, ‘The Versailles Settlement: The Start of the Road to the Second World War?’, in *The Origins of the Second World War: An International Perspective*, ed. by Frank McDonough (London: Continuum, 2011), pp. 15–33; A. J. Nicholls, *Weimar and the Rise of Hitler: The Making of the Twentieth Century* (London: Macmillan Education UK, 1991) [jstor.org/stable/4270000](https://www.jstor.org/stable/4270000); <https://www.federation.com/federation/init?entityId=https%3A%2F%2Flibrary.exeter.ac.uk%2Fidp%2Fshibboleth&returnUrl=https%3A%2F%2Flink.springer.com/10.1007/978-1-349-21337-5> [accessed 8 June 2023].

<sup>3</sup>Sharp.

<sup>4</sup>Neiberg.

<sup>5</sup>Gordon Martel, ‘A Comment’, in *The Treaty of Versailles: A Reassessment after 75 Years*, ed. by Manfred F. Boemeke, Gerald D. Feldman, and Elizabeth Glaser (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

<sup>6</sup>Nicholls.

<sup>7</sup>Neiberg.

<sup>8</sup>E. H. Carr, *International Relations between the Two World Wars (1919–1939)* (London: Macmillan, 1965).

<sup>9</sup>Nicholls.

Germany’s losses were immense: 10–13 per cent of its sovereign territory was forfeited; its proud armed forces were gutted from four million to 115,000 with no allowance for air capacity or tanks; the reparations bill was beyond monumental, at £6.6 billion; its imperial colonies were stripped and shared out amongst the victors; and allied troops were to remain in the Rhineland for a minimum of 15 years.<sup>2</sup> To make matters worse, Germany’s hopes of a more lenient deal had been raised by US President Woodrow Wilson’s ‘Fourteen Points’ speech. Was the Treaty of Versailles beyond the pale? The Ruhr and Saar crises of 1923 are evidence that it was indeed “vindictive and unworkable” in the first place.<sup>3</sup> It may have been no worse than the terms Germany had forced upon France at the end of the Franco-Prussian war,

but then again, that is not a high bar to meet.<sup>4</sup> Regardless, it perhaps does not matter either way; because, as Gordon Martel wrote, it is clear “that Versailles had been fundamentally flawed, that it led to Nazism, the war [the Second World War], and the Holocaust”.<sup>5</sup>

It is certainly true that Versailles made the rise of Hitler and the Nazi party in interwar Germany far easier. ‘Inevitable’ is a term that historians are loathe to use, and the breakdown of the Weimar Republic is not attributable to any one cause.<sup>6</sup>

Versailles, however, is definitely among the most important. Firstly, just a year after the signing of the treaty, it came under criticism for the economic issues it might cause. The influential British economist, John Maynard Keynes, was adamant in 1920 that the sheer scale of reparations could not be upheld by Germany, and thus posed a deadly threat to the entire European economy.<sup>7</sup> As it happened, when the Wall Street Crash and Great Depression hit in 1929, the terms of Versailles had weakened Germany’s economy to such an extent that the Weimar Republic’s economy collapsed with the withdrawal of American support. In the following years, in Neiberg’s words, Versailles then became “a symbol of their [German] defeat” and “empowered a wide variety of narratives developed by people frustrated by the wreckage of the First World War”. Unfortunately for Weimar Germany, Europe, and indeed the world, one of those frustrated people was Adolf Hitler. With a dominating and vocal presence in interwar German politics, Hitler would use the humiliation of Versailles as the basis for the Nazi propaganda which would go on to carry him on popular shoulders first to the Chancellorship and then to dictatorship as the Führer.

The Treaty of Versailles contributed heavily to several strands of Nazi propaganda, but one of its most important impacts was how it “fixed in the consciousness of the German people the conception of a ‘dictated peace’”.<sup>8</sup> Importantly, the German people believed they had been fighting a defensive war during World War I, and so in their own eyes were not at fault for the conflict.<sup>9</sup> Yet punishment had been inflicted on them, nonetheless. The Nazis were able to feed on this grievance and nurture the burning coals of resentment into a raging fire of hatred for those who had humiliated a proud nation. This fed into another myth, that of the Dolchstoß, or ‘stab-in-the-back’. This particular line of propaganda held that Germany had not lost the war on the battlefield, but

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had been ‘stabbed in the back’ by weak-minded politicians at home – the very same politicians who had gone on to sign the outrageous terms of Versailles.<sup>10</sup> The more sinister side of this narrative, of course, involved placing the blame on the Jewish population for funding the traitors and organising the downfall of the German economy. By declaring that he would punish those responsible, Hitler was able simultaneously to grow his own support while systematically demolishing that of his more moderate rivals whom he denounced as traitors to the German nation. In this fashion, the Allies’ decision to impose humiliating terms on Germany at Versailles unintentionally built the platform from which the Nazis could rise, and from which both the Second World War and a horrific genocide could be launched.

But what relevance does all this have in the modern day? With a war being fought on European soil, we can assume there will at some point be a winner and a loser, and a peace deal with high stakes not seen since the Cold War. If the war goes Russia’s way, Ukraine will cease to exist; but if a situation arises where Ukraine, and the West as allies, have a dominating say in negotiations, then care must be taken to learn the lessons of Versailles and ensure justice rather than vengeance. Leading experts, including Chatham House’s Keir Giles, have highlighted the need for Russia to suffer a comprehensive defeat in Ukraine in order to deter it from behaving similarly in the future.<sup>11</sup> However, in this hypothetical scenario, and indeed any future conflict, the aftermath must be handled properly.

Without stretching the comparison too far, some similarities can be drawn between the circumstances interwar Germany found itself in and those the Russian population are currently in. First, that the domestic disinformation campaigns bear remarkable similarities and feed off similar feelings of grievance and resentment, particularly around narratives of foreign interference.<sup>12</sup> Second, and perhaps more importantly, is the buy-in (or, at least, acquiescence) of the general

population to the actions of the government. Just as Hitler was able to convince the German people he was in the right, so too has Jade McGlynn’s recent work shown how the Ukraine conflict is “Russia’s war, not just Putin’s”.<sup>13</sup> As the German example shows, a population primed by war for extreme views is a tinderbox. Whatever treaties and negotiations would end the Ukraine conflict and any other future wars we may be unfortunate enough to see, it is important that they allow fallen adversaries to heal their wounds and reconcile without leaving the same scar tissue that Versailles grafted onto Germany, so as not to set light to that tinderbox.

The peacemakers at Versailles thought that they could solve the issues left by World War I quickly through a harsh treaty, and instead created the conditions for an even greater conflict.<sup>14</sup> Here is the key lesson: we must try and leave excessive emotion aside, even in such unthinkable circumstances, and consider future consequences. Ultimately, national humiliation of a defeated enemy is a recipe to create a new monster in the future. Where blame needs to be apportioned and punishment delivered it should be targeted, measured, impartial and wisely administered. Retribution and humiliation will never create a truly peaceful world. If we want to bring about global liberal peace and Fukuyama’s “end of history”, then we must collectively, consciously and consistently choose justice over vengeance.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>10</sup>Nicholls.

<sup>11</sup>Keir Giles, ‘Ensuring Ukraine Prevails Is Now the Only Moral Choice’, Chatham House – International Affairs Think Tank, 2022 [chathamhouse.org/2022/04/ensuring-ukraine-prevails-now-only-moral-choice](https://chathamhouse.org/2022/04/ensuring-ukraine-prevails-now-only-moral-choice) [accessed 9 June 2023].

<sup>12</sup>CHACR, *Ares & Athena – Issue 19*; CHACR, 2022 <<https://chacr.org.uk/2022/05/05/ares-athena-issue-19/>> [accessed 5 May 2023].

<sup>13</sup>Jade McGlynn, *Russia’s War* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2023).

<sup>14</sup>Sharp.

<sup>15</sup>Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (London: Penguin Books, 2012).



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