



# The United States and historical forks: domestic politics

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## **Доклад: «Ukraine, Europe, and the re-routing of globalization»**

**Докладчик: Алан Кафруни**, профессор международных отношений Колледжа Гамильтона США

Since February 2022, the world has been moving in a multilateral direction. This tendency is taking place in the spheres of trade, energy and international currencies. On the one hand, large majorities in the UK (77%), the US (77%) and nine EU member states regard Russia as an adversary. On the other hand, a large number of people in China (76%), India (77%) and Turkey (73%) think that Russia is stronger or as strong as ever and they see Moscow as a strategic ally and a necessary partner for their countries.

The G7 is progressively dividing from the rest and it is simultaneously becoming consolidated, as evidenced in political and military expansion of NATO into Finland (and probably Sweden in the nearest future) and growing energy linkages between the US and Europe. NATO has always been the central piece of American power in Europe, so the war in Ukraine has obviously contributed to consolidation of this structure.

However, there are fundamental divisions arising within the West, mostly because of the Ukrainian war and the US policies concerning it, which are highly destabilizing for Europe. This particularly reflects the economic situation in Germany, that plays an important role in the EU economy and transatlantic relationship. There are two major factors which affect this worsening situation: energy issues and recent protectionist policies of the US.

Before the Eastern Europe crisis, 41% of German energy was coming from Russia. The loss of Russian energy (Nord stream 1 & 2) gave rise to significant inflation in the country and in the whole Europe. As a result, German companies became less competitive, which forced them to find alternative ways (Germany's major chemicals conglomerate, BASF, started production in China in 2022 explicitly due to the energy prices). Daniel Yergin, a distinguished global energy analyst, stated that remapping of global energy has restored US to its post-war leadership role, so the country has turned into the largest exporter of oil and the second largest exporter of gas.

Implementing protectionist measures has become a 2022 trend in the US, which places the EU at systematic competition with China and to some extent with the US. In 2022, two major policies were introduced: the Inflation Reduction Act and the CHIPS and Science Act. According to the first act, approximately \$369 billion will be invested in Energy Security and Climate Change programs over the next ten years. It is also implied that national or international companies can be relocated in the US. The second act is aimed at ensuring the US leadership in the technology that forms the foundation of everything from automobiles to household appliances to defense systems. This act is primarily aimed at China, but it also

has a major impact on the EU and produces a significant resentment in its countries. These policies are in particular a very serious problem for German industry. For instance, German automobile companies were driven out of Russia (the world's 12th largest automobile consumer market) and Chinese auto companies entered the market instead. In addition, Germany has recently doubled its rearmament budget in the context of the US military industrial complex.

In conclusion, *zeitenwende* (a turning point) in German economic, political and military spheres is a fundamental challenge for the country. It is possible that a very new Germany is likely to emerge in the next few decades.

It is also worth mentioning that the US is seeking to decouple from China, although it is a complicated process. In the future this can lead to more pressure on German firms to pull out of China or reduce their role there. Western unity at the present time is robust in the short term, but in the long term it is fragile so that the US is no longer able to underwrite its own and European prosperity.

## **Доклад: «November Surprise: Winners and Losers of the 2022 midterm elections in the United States»**

**Докладчик: Андрей Коробков**, профессор Университета Теннесси

Recently, the US has been in a deep systemic crisis. Generally, the world map is evolving and new challenges are emerging in the system. The US, as any great power in the world, is not willing to accept the new reality, and it does create serious problems not only in terms of foreign policy, but in terms of domestic policy as well.

However, there are some dimensions concerning crisis that are not taken into account by political analysis. The first aspect is a demographic crisis, which contributes to deepening the divide within American society. Throughout the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and the initial decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century the US population was growing by roughly 3 million a year. 2 million was a natural growth rate and about 1 million came from immigration. Immigration was also divided 2 to 1 into the legal and unlawful immigration (the 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of the flow). Unexpectedly, last year the US population grew by 393 thousand people. Some factors of it were spontaneous: including COVID and strict limits that were introduced in immigration policy. This situation led to significant labour shortages. In fact, the Administration perceives these changes as a great achievement, but in reality they represent a huge problem to the economy. Although the unemployment rate stays at a functional level (3.5%), this is a pretty serious issue that might not be resolved in a short run.

Besides, there is a quick change in the racial composition of the society. Whites who are now the dominant group will lose their majority by the year 2045 and will become a plurality. The share of Hispanics that was minuscule at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (500 thousand people) will reach 25%. The share of African Americans will remain almost the same — slightly above 14%, while Asian Americans will sharply increase and get to nearly 10%. These shifts influence many aspects of American life including results of the elections. Even though the Democrats, who consider themselves the representatives of minority interests, look with unease at the political shifts in Hispanic and Asian communities — many of them are increasingly becoming republican. In addition, there is a crisis in the field of infrastructure demonstrated in the loss of monopoly within the international system as well as the fact the Cold war generation of politicians is still holding on to power, but starts to lose its control.

The second aspect of the crisis is formation of political coalitions. In 2015 Donald Trump started to be a member not only of business and media elite, but also a member of a political one. He caught the moment of formation of two new coalitions that were very different from what had existed before. Trump started to represent the white middle and working classes and the real sector of the economy that was really concerned about the loss of industrial facilities and outsourcing them to such countries as China. The Democrats, while losing their industrial worker base, started to get support increasingly from the minorities and from the financial and

hi-tech capital — a strange coalition with clearly defined interests. In 2020 Trump won the elections and for four years of his presidency there was a constant attack against him, because he was perceived as a systemic threat not only by the Democrats, but also by the Republican establishment.

During the 2022 midterm elections a number of interesting peculiarities emerged. First of all, within the period of Trump's presidency he demonstrated that he had a tremendous control over the Republican party — that became a testing ground for 2024 elections. The conclusions of the elections can be called ambiguous. On the one hand, Trump was able to support most of his candidates within the Primaries process. He also went after people who voted against him and — most of them lost their seats, like Liz Cheney, who lost the Primaries with a about 40 point gap. On the other hand, many Republican candidates have lost the elections (including those supported by Trump). Still, the Republicans had about 2.8 points advantage over the Democrats in the House elections and they ended with 9 members more than the Democrats. In the Senate the results were pretty pitiful — the Republicans lost one seat, which gave a majority to the Democrats (51 vote). However, the majority turned out to be unstable, because at least two Democratic Senators demonstrated independence from the party. That has forced the left wing to move to the center in a number of initiatives.

In fact, the losing side was the political center, because now left and right groupings have control over their affections. That was deliberately demonstrated during the elections of the speaker, when Kevin McCarthy had to go through real humiliation. The pro-Trump group has clearly shown that they can do whatever they want, which makes the achievement of any compromises practically impossible. There is a constant shadow of no confidence vote over McCarthy. Now just one member of the Republican delegation can request no confidence vote, so McCarthy would have to cooperate with the right wing. In the Democratic fraction the situation is similar — 30 members of the Democratic delegation are pushing the political agenda sharply towards the left.

The midterm elections did not live up to general expectations. The victory of the Democratic party became a pleasant surprise for many of the members. This advantage also means that Biden has retained serious chances of being the party's nominee in 2024. Despite the fact that there are no strong challengers for Biden within the Democratic party, the lack of serious potential challengers is an issue for the Democrats (only 32% Americans indicate that they will support Biden running for the second tour). Even the members of Biden's party prefer to see another candidate.

Trump is essentially an unchallenged leader of the Republicans, which is seen mostly as a problem due to the lack of other potential nominees. The beginning campaign against him by the Establishment resulted in six different blocks of investigations that could lead to trials. The recent arrest in New York has increased his support as a nominee of the party from 43% to 58%. In spite of legal attacks on Trump, he is not losing his eligibility to take part in the presidential elections in 2024. The public reaction to the campaign remains unknown, as the reaction to the recent arrest was opposite of what had been predicted. Even though the

personnel crisis is relevant to both parties, the Republicans are more stuck with Trump than the Democrats are with Biden.



## **Доклад: «The internal dimension of the security dilemma on the example of discussions about foreign interference in the internal affairs of the United States»**

**Докладчик: Никита Липунов**, аналитик отдела стратегического развития Института международных исследований МГИМО

Most analysts are accustomed to thinking of the security dilemma (SD) in terms of foreign policy, which refers to the classical definition of the term provided by Robert Jervis. According to Jervis, the security dilemma is a situation when one state undertakes certain foreign policy or military measures in order to enhance its security. Then, such measures are sometimes perceived by another country as aggressive and lead to a response of that state. However, there is an alternative perception of the term offering a closer look at the internal dynamics of the country. For instance, Andrej Krickovic implies that 'internal insecurities can also catalyze security dilemmas between states by giving rise to fears in one state that other states will exploit their internal vulnerabilities and foment internal unrest. Fears of internal meddling are generated not so much by the policies of other states as by the state's internal vulnerabilities themselves'.

The illustrative cases of internal insecurities provoking security dilemma between the states are the US-Russia and the US-China relations. The US has accused Russia of meddling into its domestic affairs and also China has charged the US for doing the same. It is reasonable to expand the empirical base and to study the whole case of the United States. The first case study is connected to the 2016 elections, when the US declared the fact of foreign interference in its domestic affairs, mainly because of the unexpected election results. From the internal point of view, 2016 elections provoked talks about the lack of integrity of democratic institutions. That became a serious issue, because they were and remain the cornerstone of the US. Speaking about the external background of the elections, it included deteriorating relations with Russia and the crisis of the US global leadership. This mixture of domestic and international factors led to outburst of accusations against Russia as one of two main geopolitical rivals of the United States. The Mueller report, which provided a description of the investigation in terms of Russian meddling, showed that foreign interference was perceived by the US only as interference into the election process. The report also proved the irrelevance of the United States' accusations against Russia.

Although during the presidential 2020 elections in the US the issue of foreign interference was also present, but there were less heated debates about it. Moreover, in that period of time a new term 'foreign influence' was introduced.

As time passed, interference became a tool of the US domestic political rivalry. In 2022, right before the midterm elections, the United States released a new National Security Strategy, where interference was called a national security threat for the first time. It is worth noting that interference as a national security threat was listed in a section devoted to strengthening the

US democracy mostly due to repeated challenging of the American democratic institutions. During the midterms the US perception of foreign interference expanded: it included not only electoral, but also any external subversion (information manipulations, attempts to disrupt the rule of law, etc.). So, it can be assumed that the US perception of foreign interference reflects its concerns about the integrity of its democracy (institutions in particular).

Increasing tension between the states concerning foreign interference can be represented in a form of the spiral of escalation. For instance, after the 2016 elections the US banned Russian media (e.g. RT) claiming that Russia influenced the result of the elections (internal dimension). In the external dimension the United States took a tougher stance on Russia and continued ideological confrontation. Undoubtedly, Russia perceived those measures as an unfriendly step. It all resulted in a complete loss of trust and further deterioration of Russian-US relations. However, the interference-related 'incentive-response' cycle was just one of the factors contributing to the relations escalation process.

This case study broadens the empirical base of research on the internal security dilemma which can expand the range of phenomena studied, deepens the analysis, gives the whole concept of SD greater explanatory power and therefore merits further consideration



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