

# The Shifting Geopolitical Landscape: From the Cold War to Today

“In 1987, Georgi Arbatov, a senior adviser to the Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, had warned: 'We are going to do a terrible thing to you - we are going to deprive you of an enemy.'”

This statement, made near the end of the Cold War, foreshadowed a profound challenge for the United States and its Western allies. Without the Soviet Union as a clear adversary, the global power structure was bound to shift in unexpected ways. Looking back, we see that the West quickly sought new adversaries, reshaping the world through a series of conflicts and geopolitical realignments. Today, with the war in Ukraine, the rise of China, and ongoing instability in the Middle East and North Africa, we are witnessing another era of profound uncertainty.

## The War in Ukraine: A Failed Proxy Strategy?

The war in Ukraine, now officially recognised as a proxy conflict, was meant to weaken Russia militarily and economically. Instead, Russia has emerged more resilient, strengthening its economy, deepening ties with China and the Global South, and reinforcing its military capabilities. Now, under Donald Trump's administration, the U.S. is shifting its approach, seeking negotiations with Russia to end the conflict. If successful, this could mark the beginning of a new geopolitical era—one where Russia regains strategic autonomy and reaffirms its status as a global power.

## The U.S. Strategic Miscalculation: Strengthening the Russia-China Alliance

A key mistake made under Joe Biden's administration was the simultaneous confrontation of both Russia and China, effectively pushing them into a closer strategic partnership. Zbigniew Brzezinski, in his book *The Grand Chessboard*, warned against such a scenario, arguing that preventing a strong Eurasian bloc was essential for maintaining U.S. hegemony. The outcome of recent policies has accelerated Sino-Russian cooperation, particularly in:

- Economic and energy deals denominated in non-dollar currencies.

- Military cooperation, including joint exercises and technology sharing.
- De-dollarization efforts and financial integration within BRICS.

The growing Russia-China alliance represents a serious challenge to Western dominance, one that could have been mitigated by a different approach.

## Trump's Strategy: Detaching Russia from China?

Now that Trump has returned to office, his administration appears to be pivoting toward **engaging Russia diplomatically** to weaken its dependence on China. His likely approach includes:

1. **Negotiating an end to the Ukraine war**, possibly pressuring Ukraine into territorial concessions.
2. **Easing sanctions on Russia** to reintegrate it into Western markets and reduce its reliance on China.
3. **Reevaluating NATO's role**, potentially leading to a more independent European foreign policy toward Russia.
4. **Shifting focus toward China**, intensifying economic restrictions and geopolitical containment strategies.

This move aligns with Brzezinski's geopolitical logic: **divide and rule**—ensuring that neither Russia nor China becomes too powerful by keeping them at odds with each other.

## The Consequences of U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East and North Africa

Beyond Europe and Asia, the consequences of U.S. interventionist policies are deeply felt in the Middle East and North Africa. The 2011 NATO-led intervention in Libya, which led to the fall of Qaddafi, triggered mass migration flows into Europe. Similarly, interventions in Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan created power vacuums that fueled regional instability and prolonged conflict.

## The Uncertainties Ahead

As Trump's administration moves to reshape U.S. foreign policy, several key questions remain:

- **Will Russia accept U.S. overtures, or is it now too deeply aligned with China?**
- **How will Europe respond?** Will countries like Germany and France push for better ties with Russia to restore economic stability?
- **How will China react?** Will it seek to counterbalance any U.S.-Russia rapprochement with stronger strategic moves of its own?
- **Will the U.S. maintain long-term stability, or will it seek a new enemy after Russia?**

Arbatov's warning in 1987 remains relevant today. The quest for a new enemy has shaped U.S. foreign policy for decades, and how the next chapter unfolds will determine the balance of global

power for years to come.

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