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Rearming Europe

New Disorder, Geopolitical Transition and Militarization of Europe

- Features - Rearming Europe -

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The new era that the reactionary bloc grouped around Trump aspires to impose on a global scale has just begun, but we are already seeing the contradictions and resistances of different scope that are manifesting themselves in the face of that project. I will try to point out in this article some of the features that characterize this historical moment to then enter into its implications in Europe.

The fundamental trend that characterizes this period at the political-ideological level on an international scale is the rise of a reactionary authoritarianism, which has as its reference an “end-time fascism” (Klein and Taylor, 2025), headed by Trump and his intellectual techno-oligarchs (Morozov, 2025), its extreme manifestation being the genocidal State of Israel headed by Netanyahu. A process that is unfolding within the framework of a global polycrisis – a set of intertwined crises, among which the climate and ecosocial crisis stands out – which, in what we are interested in addressing more specifically here, is calling into question neoliberal capitalist globalization and the imperial hierarchical system that has predominated since the fall of the USSR.

In reality, as analysed by Arrighi and Silver [1], Günder Frank and Wallerstein, among others, the trend towards the decline of US hegemony, which is now being expressed definitively within the framework of the current polycrisis, goes back a long way. All of them placed it in the transition from the 20th to the 21st century and, more specifically, in the changes taking place in the world economy – especially with the rise of China and East Asia – as well as in the consequences of the failure of the US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and its crisis of strategic overextension.

Moreover, after the Great Recession of 2008 and the pandemic crisis of 2020, these geopolitical changes have been developing in the context of the crisis of a largely financialized digital capitalism which, despite technological advances and the enormous degrees of exploitation, appropriation and domination it practices over the majority of humanity and planet Earth, is unable to create the conditions to emerge from the long period of stagnation that began at the end of the 1970s.

From the reactionary moment to the new global era

In this general framework of qualitative transformation of the type of capitalism known up to now (Velasquez, 2025) and of the crisis of global governance, the exhaustion of liberal democracies, the decline of progressive neo-liberalisms and the failure of the cycle of the various leftists in government (symbolized mainly in the European framework by the defeat suffered in Greece in 2015) have made way for the consolidation of an international extreme right that is conquering political-cultural hegemony through an alliance of different social forces – from oligarchic fractions to native popular sectors – around different versions of a xenophobic, anti-feminist and climate crisis denialist ethno-nationalism.

The latter appears today mainly reflected in the already old great American power with the constitution of a bloc in which the intellectual techno-oligarchs, fossil capital and sectors of the white middle and working class converge. This is how an oligarchic and protectionist white supremacism, has come to power, ready to carry out its MAGA project in the face of what, in the expression of its most millenarian wing, means the entry into an apocalyptic phase in which the most urgent thing is to build, as Klein and Taylor (2025) also denounce, an “entrenched nation” ready to secure all the necessary – and increasingly scarce – resources to survive the imminent cataclysm.

It is within this general framework that Trump's turn in foreign policy can be understood, both on the trade front – as we are seeing with a tariff war, especially with China, which is becoming a boomerang for the US (Katz, 2025) – and on the geopolitical front. On this front, through the attempt at a new imperial expansion (Greenland, Panama Canal...), on the one hand, and, on the other, a neutralization of the old Russian enemy around the war in Ukraine through an agreement with Putin, with whom he does not hide his ideological affinities. On both levels, moreover, this turnaround implies a change in relations with the EU, although it remains to be seen what scope it will have, especially with regard to NATO and the US military presence in European territory.

Rearmament of the European pillar of NATO

While it should be remembered that the systematic monopoly of the concept of Europe by a divided EU and with its German locomotive in decline remains a self-serving abuse of the old Western Eurocentrism, it seems clear that its elites are now taking advantage of the alibi offered by Trump to revitalize their falsely named project of “strategic autonomy”. They thus aspire to halt their growing loss of centrality on a global scale by redefining their role in the economic and commercial sphere by associating it closely with the military, as can be seen in the Defense White Paper (Jaén, 2025).

A plan which contains a budget of 800 billion euros (of which 150 billion will be obtained on the capital market) up to 2030 (with a maximum of 1.5% per year), which allows the States to circumvent the rules of the fiscal deficit, and which, moreover, will mainly benefit the US military industry. A plan which, on the other hand, does not appear to be incompatible with the presence in NATO – which, by the way, is mentioned 25 times in this document –, quite the contrary.

In reality, therefore, what will end up happening is that NATO's European pillar will be strengthened. A military alliance which, let us not forget, continues to attach strategic importance to the threats coming from the southern fringe, i.e. Africa, where, beyond the persistence of the old role of French imperialism, an intense competition is already developing for the plunder of key minerals, especially by China, considered a systemic rival by the US and NATO.

To justify this leap forward in their militarization, the European elites have definitively chosen to consider Russia as an existential threat to the democratic values they allegedly defend, when in fact they themselves continue to violate them with each passing day. Clear examples of this are their complicity in the Israeli genocide against the Palestinian people (as we are also seeing in the Spanish case, with government contracts with Israeli companies [\[2\]](#) and the application of a racist migration policy that violates fundamental rights such as the right to asylum. To all this is added the growing criminalization of the protests of many social movements, as we are seeing in the Spanish case with the persecution of solidarity with Palestine or with the repression and imprisonment of anti-fascist activists (like the Zaragoza 6) and striking workers (like the Swiss 6).

Moreover, the use of the term rearmament is a clear example of *Newspeak*, since these elites pretend to give the impression that Europe is not armed when in fact, as Gilbert Achcar reminds us, “the European Union has more than three times the population, more than ten times the economy and three times the military expenditure, including the United Kingdom, than Russia; despite the fact that Russia is directly involved in a large-scale war and therefore in full capacity, unlike Europe. Under these conditions, it would be absurd to seriously consider a Russian invasion of Europe” (Desnos, 2025).

If neither the ideological nor the purely military argument holds water, there are other compelling reasons to reject the thesis that Russia constitutes an existential threat to the EU. First, because the main threat to this Europe is in its

interior, in the advance of a reactionary extreme right that may reach the government in the coming years in key countries such as France and Germany and that would also count, by the way, with Trump's support; second, because the balance sheet more than three years after the unjust invasion of Ukraine shows that Russia has not been able to occupy more than 20% of its territory, so it is hardly credible that it could undertake new military adventures in other countries of its western front. In relation to these it is evident that it is ready to resort to various means of pressure in order to be able to count on friendly regimes, as is already the case with Hungary but it is not through greater militarisation of neighbouring countries that this hybrid war will be neutralized.

It seems clear, however, that Putin would be willing to take advantage of the window of opportunity that Trump is offering him to reach a mutual recognition of their spheres of influence (you with Ukraine, me with Greenland, the Panama Canal and my vassal states...) which, let's not kid ourselves, would ultimately be accepted by an EU where his ideological allies continue to expand. Some of the reflections of ideologues close to Putin, who are more interested in directing their expansionism towards their "near abroad" in the Eurasian space, are along these lines³. [[3](#)]

Because, as Hélène Richard rightly points out:

The risks run by Moscow to keep Kiev within its orbit by force are not comparable to those it would have to take to bring others into it, even those that are home to Russian-speaking minorities, such as Lithuania, Estonia and Latvia. Even if we were to admit that Moscow is afflicted by an insatiable hunger for territory, it would be hard to satisfy it. Attacking the Baltic states would be tantamount to confronting a NATO coalition that could include some 30 European countries, not counting the United States (Richard, 2025: 13).

Finally, let us not forget that, unlike the former USSR, Russia is now a capitalist social formation with features that differ from those of the West, but which is interdependent on the West for key resources, as demonstrated by the failure of the sanctions policy that was sought to be applied after the start of the Russian invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

What is undeniable is that Putin's Russia has a Greater Russian nationalist project that poses an existential threat to Ukraine. That is why it is legitimate to support the Ukrainian people in their just resistance – and, within that resistance, the left-wing sectors that criticise Zelensky's neoliberal and pro-Atlantic policies – against the Russian occupation, as well as in their demand for a just and lasting peace that does not lead to the division of their lands and resources between Putin and Trump.

But that does not mean using this war as an excuse for a rearmament that is openly offensive, as this would mean entering a new phase in the arms race (including nuclear weapons, as Poland is already demanding, against the power with the largest nuclear arsenal), with the risk of provoking an escalation in a war that would then be directly inter-imperialist.

So the ReArm Europe Plan only makes sense in terms of helping to force a leap forward in the reinforcement of the EU as an imperial bloc in order to regain its leading role in the growing inter-imperialist competition on a global scale for the control of scarce resources and the plundering of more common goods in both the North and the South. In short, it is of establishing a military Euro-Keynesianism as a new version of the shock doctrine, which would not only fail to contribute to a way out of the crisis of capitalist profitability (Roberts, 2025), but above all would be detrimental to the most necessary and urgent struggle against the climate crisis, as well as to the social, cultural and democratic gains that have not yet been taken away from us after the long neoliberal cycle. This scenario would undoubtedly be

even more favourable for the rise of the far right in our own countries and for the regime change advocated by J. D. Vance at the Munich Summit.

What security, what defence?

It is therefore urgent to refute the militarist, security-based and racist discourse of “security” being put forward by the European elites and their culture of fear – with the accompanying social discipline – and to oppose it with a discourse based on the search for eco-social and demilitarized security on a European and global scale.

To this end, the alternative left and radical pacifism cannot ignore the debate on defence models in the face of those who accuse us of not offering alternatives. In fact, as Jorge Riechmann (2025) recently recalled, interesting contributions and lively debates on these issues took place in the 1980s within the European peace movement and also in Spain.

At that time, the aim was to respond to the arms and nuclear build-up at European level, as well as to the defence of continued membership of NATO by the government of Felipe González, which culminated in a referendum in which we were defeated for reasons that we have been able to recall in other works. [4] To this end, we had the opportunity to reflect on proposals for alternative models of defensive defence, in no case aggressive, which excluded weapons of mass destruction and which should give priority to practices of active and non-violent resistance based on popular self-organization. This was the line taken by the model developed by Horst Afheld, mentioned by Riechmann in his article, as well as others discussed at successive conferences of the CEOP (State Coordination of Pacifist Organizations), which also included important figures in this field, notably Johan Galtung, who sadly passed away in February 2024.

At that time, we were told that we had no alternative to the arms race and NATO, but in fact we were building one by committing ourselves to the denuclearization of Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals and to non-alignment with either of the two blocs, NATO and the Warsaw Pact. We did not win the battle, but a pacifist and anti-militarist culture endured, continuing in the movement against compulsory military service, in the No to the Iraq War campaign and in various research centres and anti-militarist and peace groups that are still active in different parts of Europe and Spain and developing proposals on these and other issues.

Now, in a different but more dangerous scenario, it is up to us to recover and update those debates and proposals to demonstrate that we do have alternatives to the trend towards rampant climate, social and militarist catastrophe to which this capitalism of disaster is leading us, which is the real threat to the sustainability of life on this planet.

Obviously, the commitment to alternative models of defence is inseparable from the broadest possible united mobilization today against the Rearmament Plan, for the dissolution of NATO and the withdrawal of all US military bases from this continent, in order to move towards a decolonial, denuclearized Europe that is willing to make peace with all peoples and with this planet.

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[1] Let us recall what Arrighi and Silver wrote back in 1999: 'If the system [referring to the "world system"] finally collapses, it will be primarily due to US resistance to adjusting and accommodating itself to the growing economic power of East Asia, a necessary condition for a non-catastrophic transition to a new world order' (2000: 292).

[2] Let us not forget that although one of them has been overturned, others remain to be clarified.

[3] See the text by Sergei Karaganov, director of the Russian Council on Foreign and Defence Policy, in 'A lebensraum for Putin's Russia: Karaganov and the geopolitics of Greater Eurasia', *Le Grand Continent*, 18/03/25.

[4] See, for example, the dossier "Diez años de la OTAN" in viento sur, 25, March 1996, pp. 111-126, with articles by Enric Prat, Ramón Adell and Consuelo del Val. For my part, I noted some reflections in chapter V of my book *Guerra, paz y sistema de Estados* (Madrid, Ediciones Libertarias, 1990): "Movimiento por la paz y democracia participativa. Lecciones del caso español".