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## THE GEOECONOMIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE UKRAINE WAR\*

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*This article examines the nature of the Ukraine War as a geoeconomic confrontation. It clarifies the factors that make Ukraine worth fighting for from a geoeconomic perspective. Subsequently, it explains the response of the collective West to the Russian invasion of Ukraine, as well as Moscow's asymmetric countermeasures. As a corollary, it argues that the fate of a post-war Ukraine might be shaped by geoeconomic realities.*

**Keywords:** *geoeconomics; Ukraine War; Russia; economic warfare.*

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In the early post-Cold War era, it was widely believed that — as a result of the rise of globalisation — traditional geopolitical rivalries would be replaced with peaceful collaboration and harmonious economic competition under the umbrella of a “rules-based order”. Such assumption, anchored to the worldview of classical liberalism and its intellectual iterations, held that the end of the 20th century would give birth to an era of unparalleled prosperity, everlasting peace and institutionalised collaborative governance. According

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to this reasoning, conflict would no longer make sense in a world in which everybody could profit on a mutually beneficial basis. The rewards of trade would perpetually discourage the scourge of war. In a world of thriving global markets, bullets would become little more than an outdated anachronism, a relic from a bygone era. The anthropologically optimistic promise of ‘Whig historiography’ about an inevitable march towards ‘progress’ would finally be fulfilled. The end of history had been declared by the likes of Francis Fukuyama and his intellectual disciples.

However, such viewpoint — usually championed by orthodox neoclassical economists, technocratic policymakers, idealistic scholars and some transnational business interests — overlooks the weight of history, the propensity for confrontation as an unavoidable feature of human nature, the recurrence of irreconcilable interests and the structure of the international system as an anarchic arena in which danger and uncertainty are commonplace. These realities can be ignored for ideological preferences, but states cannot afford to ignore their consequential problematic ramifications. They cannot neglect the possibility that hostile forces might target them. Considering such threats is a must in terms of national security, foreign policy and grand strategy. After all, the quintessential concept of the political entails the deadly collective distinction between friends and enemies made by polities in a ruthless metaphorical jungle where struggles can potentially turn vicious and nasty [1]. Hence, thinking permanently about conflict and developing an appropriate preparedness is a matter of life and death, as Sun Tzu [2] observed many centuries ago.

However, conflict is a kaleidoscopic phenomenon whose permutations are constantly evolving, like ancient and contemporary theorists of war have explained [3]. In this respect, the ascent of complex interdependence has not invalidated the logic of conflict, but its structural impact has not been irrelevant either. Specifically, it has increased the sophistication of warfare and reshuffled its grammar in the arenas in which new expressions of strategic competition are flourishing. In this respect, in an environment of interconnectedness, exchanges, links and interactional conduits can be weaponised. Hence, the economic sphere of markets, commerce, industry, finance and money has become a fierce battlespace in which threats of disruption, manipulation, control, conquest and subordination are present. Hence, hybrid neo-mercantilist paradigms — which combine strategic, political and economic contents — like geoeconomics [4], economic statecraft [5] and mercantile realism [6] have been formulated to approach these phenomena.

In this regard, the 2022 ongoing Russian invasion of Ukraine dissipated remaining doubts about the extinction of inter-state war as a forceful way to settle unresolved geopolitical disputes in the 21st century. Although other precedents pointed in the same direction, the large scale of this conflict and the far-reaching tectonic resonance of its shockwaves demonstrate that hard power is an instrumental tool that states can resort to in order to advance

their interests, even if that entails the fateful decision to open Pandora's box. Nevertheless, this conflict is not just being fought through purely military means. In fact, this confrontation is also reflected in the domains of cyberspace, the clash of contrasting civilisational worldviews, and the circulation of propaganda throughout the info-sphere. Plus, the belligerents are also engaging each other in the geoeconomic operational theatre, and Ukraine itself is worth fighting for from a geoeconomic perspective.

### **UKRAINE AS GEOECONOMIC PRIZE**

Ukraine's relevance goes beyond its role as a perpetual battleground, contested borderland, buffer state and geopolitical pivot that great powers constantly seek to control for their own imperial pursuits. This Eastern European state is relevant from a geoeconomic viewpoint as well. It contains infrastructure that connects Russia with the European peninsula, including vast networks of natural gas pipelines and motorways. Therefore, it can operate as a corridor of trade and energy flows. Additionally, the Dnieper River — a navigable waterway — and Ukraine's access to the Black Sea through the port of Odesa means that Ukraine's geography offers an optimal gateway to participate in international trade and, through the development of economic exchanges with the wider world, harness the resulting benefits for fostering growth, development and prosperity. It must be noted that, unlike several landlocked post-Soviet states, Ukraine has access to warm waters.

Likewise, Ukraine was one of the most developed republics of the Soviet Union and its GDP is the third largest in the post-Soviet space, after the Russian Federation and Kazakhstan. Furthermore, despite prolonged economic hardship, Ukraine retains important industrial capabilities in the fields of steelmaking, aerospace, shipbuilding, chemicals and the manufacture of military equipment. Moreover, thanks to a well-educated human capital and foreign investments, Ukraine has nurtured a dynamic high-tech sector with comparative advantages in the production of software, IT services and research and development activities. Thus, far from being a peripheral backwater, Ukraine has the profile of an emerging economy with a substantial potential.

Finally, regarding natural resources, Ukraine contains deposits of both coal and metallic minerals such as iron, titanium, manganese and uranium, all of which are needed for various industrial applications. This country is also an important source of neon, a gaseous chemical element that is crucial for the production of chips and lasers. Another remarkable aspect is that Ukraine possesses fertile land (known as chernozem or 'black soil') that is suitable for growing cereals — such as wheat, corn and barley — as well as cash crops like potatoes, sunflowers, pumpkins and sugar beets. Tellingly, Ukraine's role as a breadbasket is even depicted in the colors of its national flag: it represents a landscape of a bright yellow wheat field below a blue sky. Notably, the profits earned through exports of Ukrainian grains provided

funding for Stalin's ambitious plans to hasten Soviet industrialisation in order to close a gap that placed the URRS in a disadvantageous position vis-à-vis advanced Western capitalist powers. Plus, one of the reasons why the Third Reich's strategists were strongly interested in conquering Ukraine was because Nazi Germany was not self-sufficient in the production of food [7].

Therefore, considering its geoeconomic profile, Ukraine constitutes a highly desirable prize. As such, great powers are willing to go to great lengths to determine its orientation and, if possible, to control it in accordance with their interests. For Russia, the successful completion of the Eurasian Economic Union — a geoeconomic bloc under Moscow's leadership — requires the integration of Ukraine into said framework. This project, conceived to encourage reintegration in the post-Soviet space through the conformation of a single economic space, contemplates the removal of trade restrictions, the establishment of transnational industrial structures, the circulation of investments, the generation of synergic complementariness and even monetary and financial unification in the long run. Thus, Ukraine would be the crown jewel of this Russian project, as well as a pivot to deepen ties to the rest of Europe. Nevertheless, as a result of the 2004 Orange Revolution and the Euromaidan protests that broke out a decade later, Kyiv has assumed a pro-Western orientation instead. This realignment is reflected in the quest for membership in the European Union, the bloc headed by Germany. For the EU, Ukraine could be a convenient junior partner as a source of both cheap labour and raw materials, a magnet for profitable investments and as an attractive consumer market that could absorb exports from EU core countries. In turn, Kiev prefers to directly attach itself to Brussels' geoeconomic orbit for both business opportunities and political reasons related to an interest in not returning to the Kremlin's sphere of influence.

Nonetheless, formal membership is doubtful for several reasons, despite the Europhile views held by many Ukrainians. The country has a fairly large population (more than 40 million people) and its GDP per capita is substantially below the average EU members, let alone the wealthiest. Furthermore, a hard currency like the euro would hardly operate in a functional manner in Ukraine. Likewise, Ukraine's rising inflation levels represent a problem which fuels instability. Addressing these imbalances would be challenging in a context in which the EU is already struggling with its own internal problems, disagreements and shortcomings. Moreover, Ukraine's political conditions are chaotic due to factors like its compromised territorial integrity, geopolitical volatility and bitter internal rivalries, not to mention the presence of Russian troops. Likewise, there are also political obstacles that would have to be faced, such as corruption or democratic standards. As a response to the recent invasion launched by the Kremlin and as an act of solidarity, Poland has proposed that Ukraine be admitted to the EU but good will alone will not suffice to overcome these issues or cover reconstruction costs once the ongoing war is over. Much more than benevolence and friendship would be needed to make it happen in the near future.

## WESTERN PUNITIVE SANCTIONS

The Russian invasion of Ukraine sparked outrage and heightened strategic anxieties in Washington and Brussels. Nevertheless, a military intervention by NATO forces was unthinkable. Such course of action could rapidly escalate to dangerous proportions, especially considering that both sides have large nuclear arsenals. Therefore, along with material and diplomatic support for Ukrainian forces, the West resorted to coercive financial sanctions — by now a staple of economic statecraft — in order to punish Russia. Such measure was chosen because it is much less risky than a direct kinetic engagement. This is a powerful reminder that the role of the American dollar as the world's dominant reserve currency and Western control over the nerve centres of international financial circuits confer strategic advantages that can be readily weaponised. Plus, as American statesman [8] has argued, there is a close connection between the SWIFT network — a private cooperative — and the US intelligence community.

The first sanctions announced by the Biden administration were rather symbolic and they only targeted Russian elites. However, after a transatlantic consensus was reached (not without the initial reluctance of several European states), much stronger sanctions were implemented. In fact, the decision to exclude multiple Russian banking entities from the SWIFT network — an option that has been referred to as ‘the financial equivalent of a nuclear strike’ — represents a heavy blow because it restricts the ability of the Russian economy to engage in international transactions. Nevertheless, this strategy sought to minimise the impact for some of Russia's European trade partners. Hence, exceptions were made for the supply of Russian energy to European consumer markets, the purchase of Russian diamonds by jewelleries headquartered in Antwerp and the exports of Italian luxury items. A key consideration was that a significant disruption in the flow of fossil fuels would make prices skyrocket all over the world and paralyse several European economies, something that could deepen the global economic downturn provoked by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Moreover, in order to increase the projection of Western economic firepower, the holdings of Russia's Central Bank were also hit. Specifically, the US, the UK, the EU and even Switzerland decided to freeze its assets held in their jurisdictions, which constitute the majority of Russia's reserves of 630 billion USD. Although seizing an enemy's wealth is not uncommon in war, the purpose of this move is to bring down the exchange rate of the Russian rouble and to undermine Moscow's ability to implement a monetary policy that operates as an effective anchor of macroeconomic stability. The expectation is to unleash a destruction of wealth through bank runs, hyperinflation, the bankruptcy of Russian businesses, a massive credit crunch, the evaporation of savings, the rapid depletion of remaining foreign currency reserves and perhaps even the implosion of the entire Russian financial system. Needless to say, these effects would be detrimental for Russia's war effort and for other components of national power. As French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire

explained, the West is “waging a total economic and financial war against Russia.” Yet, the Russian ownership of that money has not been revoked, likely because Western powers need to keep some sort of upper hand worth leveraging in eventual negotiations with Moscow and also because said measure can backfire since it would encourage non-Western states to redouble their efforts to design alternative financial and monetary systems.

In addition, the White House decided to restrict the exports of high-tech items and semiconductors to Russia. The point is to hamper the strategic modernisation of Russia’s military-industrial complex and the upgrade of Russian aerospace and robotics capabilities. Without such components, it will be difficult for Russia to develop comparative advantages which could harness the promising potential derived from the wave of innovation known as the “Fourth Industrial Revolution.” In turn, Germany refused to greenlight the Nord Stream 2 natural gas pipeline. In a truly unprecedented move that signals a groundbreaking departure from its position of strategic neutrality, Switzerland agreed to adopt the full package of EU sanctions. Even Western private companies joined this campaign. Particularly, hundreds of large Western companies from many sectors — including car-making, food and beverages, industrial manufacturing, energy, finance, aerospace, high-tech, telecom, logistics, digital services, social media, tourism, fashion, luxury items and sports, amongst others — have abandoned their business operations in the Russian market either totally or partially. In addition, heavyweight rating agencies have downgraded Russian credit to the speculative status of ‘junk’, which means that Moscow’s ability to borrow money in international markets has been substantially diminished.

From a long-range perspective, this combined counteroffensive of economic «Blitzkrieg» demonstrated the cohesiveness of the Western bloc and a strong resolve to face a rival great power seen as increasingly aggressive and unpredictable. Nevertheless, the reach of this campaign could go much further than simply trying to evict Russian forces from Ukrainian soil. In fact, since it would inflict a considerable damage, its objective is to unleash the outright collapse of the Russian economy as a whole, a development that could trigger civil unrest, widespread turmoil, a destabilising power struggle in Moscow or even regime change as a result of either a ‘color revolution’ or a coup d’état launched by the «sylovyky» clan or senior military commanders that are not satisfied with the counterproductive results of Vladimir Putin’s dangerous strategic gamble. Indeed, Germany’s Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock — one of the most outspoken advocates of a hard-line Atlanticist approach — openly acknowledges that the endgame is to “ruin Russia.” Similarly, the Canadian Foreign Minister Melanie Joly has confirmed that the ultimate goal of the transatlantic bloc is “to suffocate the Russian regime”.

Concerning the viability of said outcome, finishing off Russia as a functional national state might sound far-fetched, but the idea of provoking its demise is not unconceivable. Actually, the dissolution of the Soviet Union was strongly conditioned by factors such as: i) the inability to sustain a pro-



longed and costly arms race against a rival great power that was economically and technologically superior, ii) the lethargic stagnancy of the Soviet economy, unable to reform, modernise or revitalise itself, iii) the depletion of resources as a result of the Soviet military intervention in Afghanistan against the Mujahideen and the control of Warsaw Pact satellites, increasingly engulfed by socio-political agitation, and iv) the intentional fall of oil prices, engineered by Washington and Riyadh. Moreover, the Russian economy is vulnerable due to its limited re-industrialisation and its overreliance on the exports of raw materials — whose prices in international markets cannot be controlled by Moscow — as a source of hard currency.

Then again, it is important to highlight that sanctions are no silver bullets. In other words, the deliberate infliction of economic hardship can fail to achieve its intended outcome. After all, ‘rogue states’ like Iran, North Korea and Venezuela — much smaller than Russia by all accounts — have been under sanctions for a while and their external aggressiveness and internal stability have not been undermined in any meaningful way. Despite their status as pariahs in much of the Western world, the three countries are still ruled by hardliners whose ironclad regimes still behave boldly. In the particular case of Russia, it is pertinent to emphasise that historical record shows that great powers are willing to sacrifice economic benefits if they believe that their national security or strategic national interests are at stake. Such states are often willing to endure economic pressure if they believe it is the cost that has to be paid to preserve their survival, sovereignty or to engage in defiant attitudes in the pursuit of victory.

## **RUSSIAN ASYMMETRIC COUNTERMEASURES**

It is unclear if Russia was strategically prepared to deal with the impact of the retaliatory onslaught that is coming as a result of its attempt to conquer Ukraine through hard power. Especially considering the reaction to their takeover of Crimea, the Kremlin must have anticipated the imposition of sanctions as an expected Western response, but it is unknown if their full extent was foreseen. As an initial reaction to restore short-term stability, the Kremlin introduced monetary restrictions, higher interest rates and the internationalisation of the Financial Message Transfer System (SPFS), a structure launched more than five years ago as a domestic alternative to SWIFT that, with a current membership of nearly 400 entities (mostly Russian banks and a handful of banks from countries like Belarus, China, Cuba, Kazakhstan and Tajikistan), has been used mostly to process domestic electronic payments. From now on, the SPFS will be much more open as a conduit for the settlement of international transactions so that foreign partners can continue doing business with Russian counterparts [9].

Yet, in order to achieve long-term resilience as a defensive shield that substantially mitigates the damage, Russia would likely have no choice but to im-

plement a wide range of import substitution policies to compensate for the loss of access to Western manufactured goods — the so-called “Fortress Russia” economic plan, — enhance the productiveness and sophistication of its own producers of advanced technologies to overcome the so-called ‘tech blockade’ and to deepen ties to China as a trade partner, source of investment and provider of credit. It is important to emphasise that, considering its deficits and problems, access to international capital markets and foreign advanced technologies is an essential priority in terms of national security for the Russians [10]. Without such ingredients, Russian national power will likely diminish further, which is why Moscow needs to do everything in its power to sanctions-proof its economy. Likewise, Russian control over Ukraine could provide substantial geoeconomic benefits. For example, controlling the Ukrainian network of gas pipelines would render the cancellation of Nord Stream 2 inconsequential. However, there is no guarantee that the invasion will go as the Kremlin originally intended. On the other hand, the pursuit of autarky is a no-brainer under the circumstances but there are reasonable doubts about whether Beijing will provide a helpful lifeline for Moscow. From China’s perspective, there are strong reasons to argue both for and against this course of action.

Nevertheless, the Kremlin can also respond with asymmetric geoeconomic countermeasures. In fact, Russian space agency «Roskosmos» has already interrupted the supply of rocket engines to the United States. In the near future, the Russian state could also nationalise the assets of Western companies which left the Russian market, including their infrastructure, patents, business models and intellectual property. Furthermore, considering Russia’s role as a “full-spectrum commodity superpower” which supplies lots of minerals on a global scale, it can restrict the sales of titanium, palladium, neon and uranium to Western consumer markets [11]. These raw materials are needed for applications related to aerospace, chipmaking, lasers, nuclear power, electronics and weaponry. Hence, disrupting their global supply chains would unleash substantial economic fallout. Another offensive possibility would be for Moscow to launch cyberattacks against geoeconomically significant corporate Western targets such as investment banks, hedge funds, stock exchanges, big tech firms and transnational corporations involved in large-scale business operations related to agriculture, energy, high-tech, logistics, telecom and the production of military hardware. Hubs like Wall Street or the City and offshore financial centres aligned with the West can also find themselves in the crosshairs. Considering that the actions undertaken by Washington and Brussels intend to set in motion a chain of events that could lead to the downfall of the Russian government, the Kremlin could possibly reach the ominous and dangerous conclusion that there is no incentive to show restraint. A cornered Russian Behemoth might conceivably believe that desperate circumstances require desperate measures.

In addition, increasing the volume of Russian natural gas supplied to China — a rising great power that is seen by several Western states as a stra-



tegic competitor — is another response. Indeed, in an effort to avoid a disproportionate reliance on European consumer markets (eager to decouple from Russian hydrocarbons in the near future anyway), the state-owned energy firm Gazprom has announced an agreement to design the Soyuz-Vostok pipeline, a project that will deliver Russian gas to China via Mongolia. Said deal, described as one of the biggest ever, could carry as much as 50 billion cubic meters of gas per year to the ‘Middle Kingdom.’ This plan would strengthen Beijing’s energy security (potentially at the expense of European nations) and generate a reliable source of cash for Russian coffers.

Finally, Russia could resort to its gold holdings, the borderless structures of decentralised stateless cryptocurrencies (such as Bitcoin, Ethereum and even Dogecoin) clandestine networks of financial intermediaries and the emerging financial platforms organically associated with the Chinese yuan — like the Cross-Border International Payments System, operated by Beijing — in an attempt to bypass the dominant international arteries controlled by Western states and dollar-denominated transactions. Perhaps this could not compensate the full loss of access to international finance but at least the partial usefulness of these conduits offers alternatives worth exploring. It must be borne in mind that Russia has been one of the leading instigators of a global campaign that seeks to challenge the supremacy of the US dollar as the world’s top reserve currency, so it makes sense to orchestrate schemes whose purpose is to target the greenback and reduce the influence of Western finance. After all, this Russian experience can convince other states with revisionist geopolitical aspirations that the financial and monetary strength of the West needs to be curtailed and maybe even challenged. Indeed, some financial analysts believe that the unprecedented use of financial weapons by the Western bloc against a great power might prompt the development of a parallel financial system.

## **LESSONS LEARNED**

The current Ukraine crisis indicates that warfare is an increasingly complex phenomenon whose expressions transcend the purely military sphere. Although the war is being fought with bullets and projectiles on Ukrainian soil, the projection of its geoeconomic shadow has already reached a transnational scale. This conflict illustrates how the realm of geoeconomics is a confrontational chessboard whose players rely on unconventional weapons and shields. Hence, it has become a key battlespace in Cold War 2.0. Nevertheless, although less lethal than nuclear weapons, economic warfare is dangerous because it can generate devastating consequences, bring unintended impacts, and even exacerbate tensions beyond a critical boiling point.

Predicting with precision the outcome of this chapter is hard, but it is relevant to bear in mind that heavy collateral damage to European economies, an increasingly resentful and ostracised Russian bear, a growing strategic confrontation in the monetary domain and a revanchist urge to abruptly reshuffle the

structure of the global financial ecosystem could give birth to an environment that is more uncertain, chaotic and perilous. Under these conditions, national power, conflict and hegemony are being redefined in accordance with the parameters of geoeconomic criteria. Therefore, the reality of an escalating geoeconomic arms race has game-changing implications for the reassessment of grand strategy, national security, foreign policy, intelligence and statecraft. Paraphrasing the Prussian military philosopher Carl von Clausewitz, the deadly art of geoeconomics has become the continuation of warfare by other means.

#### **COROLLARY: SEARCHING FOR THE GEOECONOMIC PLACE OF A POST-WAR UKRAINE**

As a major systemic turning point, the trouble ignited by the Ukraine War cannot be properly understood without its heavy geoeconomic overtones. Similarly, the geoeconomic field can offer solutions for what comes next once fighting stops. Specifically, the eventual reconstruction of a post-war Ukraine poses meaningful geoeconomic challenges — related to the availability of financial resources, the involvement of heterogeneous stakeholders, growing domestic economic instability and the need to overcome the disruptions unleashed by the Russian invasion — but it also presents valuable opportunities. If the Ukrainian state manages to survive and preserve much of its territorial integrity, it will have to harness geoeconomic forces to achieve a strategic position which strengthens its national security, hedge its bets through the diversification of its partnerships and increase its national power as an assertive state that is capable of determining its own fate, rather than being a mere satellite, bargaining chip or a junior partner. Such pursuits are vital in an environment in which key geoeconomic phenomena are driving the behaviour of contemporary international relations.

Concerning potential courses of action, as the gravitational weight of the Russian economy recedes, Ukraine is uniquely positioned to act as a pragmatic bridge that facilitates interconnectedness between the European Union and the ambitious geoeconomic Chinese projects that seek to cover the whole Eurasian landmass. Likewise, Ukraine could leverage both its assets and favourable systemic circumstances to do so. As the scrutiny of its geoeconomic profile reveals, it has several cards to play, including its pivotal location, infrastructure, comparative advantages in strategic industrial sectors, deposits of natural resources, arable land and human capital. Furthermore, Ukrainian statecraft and scholarship can learn from the experience and best practice of states like Israel, China, Singapore, South Korea, Brazil, India, Turkey and New Zealand, all of which have been successful in the long-term incremental upgrade of their geoeconomic position. Therefore, a better and deeper knowledge of the geoeconomic domain can represent a navigational compass that can help Ukraine make wise decisions and mastermind plans that lead to convenient trajectories in the coming decades. Otherwise, its future will be decided by external interests.

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#### ГЕОЕКОНОМІЧНЕ ЗНАЧЕННЯ ВІЙНИ В УКРАЇНІ

Детально розглянуто війну в Україні як конфлікт, який крім кінетичного виміру на традиційних полях битв включає також протистояння між західними державами і РФ на гео економічній шахівниці. У цьому нетрадиційному театрі бойових дій усі види економічних інструментів, активів, ресурсів і можливостей перетворюються на зброю і використовуються — у безпрецедентних масштабах — як вектори проєкції влади. Щоб прояснити цю складну тему, визначено різні елементи, які роблять контроль над Україною вартим боротьби з гео економічної точки зору. Зокрема, це її інфраструктура, перспективний економічний потенціал, стратегічне положення для міжнародних економічних обмінів і родовища сировини. Висвітлено підстави й деталі заходів покарання, запроваджених так званим «колективним Заходом» проти РФ як невоєнна відповідь на вторгнення в Україну. Розглянуто безліч реальних і потенційних асиметричних контрзаходів Москви. Своєю чергою, у відповідних висновках узагальнено повчальні уроки, які можна винести з цього ще незавершеного епізоду щодо сучасного значення й динаміки економічної війни. Як підсумок стверджується, що остаточну долю післявоєнної України може певною мірою визначити вплив гео економічних реалій.

**Ключові слова:** гео економіка; війна в Україні; РФ; економічна війна.

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**Хосе Мігель Алонсо-Трабанко** народився в Мексиці, здобув ступінь бакалавра з міжнародних відносин у Монтеррейському інституті технологій і вищих досліджень (Мехіко). Він отримав ступінь магістра зі стратегічної розвідки і національної безпеки в Мексиканському інституті Ортега-Васконселос. Зараз він є здобувачем ступеня доктора філософії з досліджень у галузі оборони й безпеки в Університеті Мессі (Нова Зеландія). Його докторський дослідницький проєкт спрямовано на детальне вивчення геополітичного виміру цифрових валют та їх вплив на безпеку. Він має професійний досвід аналітика, дослідника, виконавчого радника, консультанта, професора, викладача і автора наукових статей для рецензованих журналів. Його дослідницькі інтереси охоплюють геополітику, гео-економіку, безпеку, державне управління, мінливий характер національної влади, міжнародне суперництво, економічні війни, конфлікти, еволюцію глобальної гегемонії, велику стратегію, нові арени стратегічної конкуренції і зростаюче значення фінансових і монетарних питань для геополітичних реалій XXI ст. Його спеціалізовані аналітичні праці регулярно публікуються в канадському експертному оглядовому виданні *Geopolitical Monitor*.